

WOMEN PROTEST INTIMATE EXAMINATION OF NURSES BY CITY EMPLOYEES

The tears of humiliation of young women who took the last examination for city nurses have roused a cry of protest from nearly every women's organization in Chicago.

To the ordinary rigid examination has been added another called the "secondary examination." This has been decried by leaders of women as an outrage to human decency.

The second examination was given for the first time last week when examinations were held for school and tuberculosis nurses. While older nurses had protested against the new stunts as nonsensical, unnecessary and indecent, they did not fully grasp what it was until those who took the examination related its horrors.

When the facts became known a wave of indignation swept the nurses' organizations and spread to other women's bodies. The storm brewed slowly till it broke today with a fury of vitriolic adjectives heaped upon the head of the examining board and all responsible for the now thoroughly obnoxious examination.

Most all who took the examinations last week were young nurses. They were not prepared for what they were to encounter. Some of them were thrown into an extremely nervous state because of the shock.

Physicians of renown of both sexes have expressed the opinion that such an examination of the pelvic organs of candidates for city nurses is unnecessary.

People like Miss Harriet Vittum, chairman of the Civil Service Reform ass'n committee; Miss Jane Addams and Miss Mary E. McDowell, president of the Woman's City club, have termed the examination an outrageous insult and are today working for its abolition. They say that unless it is abolished self-respecting women will be driven out of the city service.

"Men employes in the city hall giggled and snickered when the alleged tests were made," said Miss Edna L. Foley, superintendent of the Visiting Nurses' ass'n. "Many seemed to know an attempt was being made to 'put something over.' The women of Chicago won't stand for such indignities. It is an insult to womanhood."

"It is wholly unnecessary," said Miss Minnie H. Ahrens, superintendent of the Infant Welfare society. "There is no reason for such a preposterous examination. But if the board feels that it must be held then we want a radical change in the conditions of giving it. If it must be held it can be held with less humiliation and more decency than it was given last week."

Miss Elnora Thomson, director of the Mental Hygiene society, says there is no precedent for such an examination, that it is held no other place in America.

The women have as of one accord taken up the cudgel of the nurses. They are waging war upon a physical examination of young women by masculine city employes; an examination that is stricter, they say, than that given by an insurance company or any municipality in America. If the tests are to be made they want them made with much more privacy than was the case last week.

Miss Vittum, Mrs. Jas. E. Quan and Dr. H. B. Favill compose a committee which is today prepared to take formal action against the test.

Civil Service Commissioner Joseph P. Geary said: "The standard of nurses necessitates the examination. We will have to change the standard to do away with the examination."

Two Clearing schools, annexed to Chicago, made part of two nearest city schools for purposes of supervision.