

Mr. Blair has so well put before you already—72 percent of the graduating nurses were from diploma schools. We have these figures in our exhibit II.

Despite decreasing enrollments, accredited diploma schools will need continuing assistance for some time to come to make their needed contribution to the nurse supply.

We favor, third, the removal of the statutory ceiling on formula grants, special project improvement grants (sec. 211), and nurse teacher traineeships (sec. 221), and the increase in maximum annual loans to students, together with the more liberal provisions for the cancellation of those loans (sec. 222). If there should be need to limit funds appropriated for loans in this year of tightening budgets, we urge that priority be given to graduate students in order to insure the leadership essential for the best education and utilization of the current and future nurse supply.

My organization must, however, respectfully object to the insertion of the phrase "or by a State agency," in Part D: "Definition of Accreditation," section 231. We raise our objection for two reasons:

First, the specific meaning of "State agency" is unclear and could conceivably refer either to a State board of education, State board of nursing, or some other State agency.

Second, standards set by such State agencies as boards of nursing vary widely from State to State; these standards are, in any case, aimed at minimum acceptable achievement rather than at excellence in educational preparation.

In raising this objection, Mr. Chairman, I am speaking particularly for the 1,043 schools of nursing included in the membership of the National League for Nursing. I am also endorsing the testimony of the American Nurses Association in its support of national accreditation as the basis on which a nursing education program should be declared eligible to receive Federal funds under the Health Manpower Act of 1968.

These 1,043 schools representing every constituency in the United States have joined together voluntarily through the mechanism of the National League for Nursing to improve nursing education so that patient care services will reflect the best that nursing can provide. In so doing, they conduct a continuing program to improve nursing education across the country—to help schools of nursing meet and maintain high standards.

The nursing school members of our organization participate in voluntary accreditation through the league as one means of improving their own education programs and, at the same time, stimulating all schools to similar self-improvement efforts.

Their belief in accreditation is not limited to nursing education. They are applying what the former executive director of the National Commission on Accrediting, William K. Selden, has described as society's call "for imagination and enlightened initiative in the establishment and enforcement of academic standards . . ."¹

In doing so, nursing schools assume responsibility for self-evaluation and voluntarily submit themselves to judgment by their peers. Standards of educational excellence are developed and maintained in this

¹ Selden, William K., "Accreditation—The Struggle Over Standards in Higher Education," New York: Harper & Row, 1960, p. 92.