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EDITORIAL.

THE NEW YEAR.

Since our last issue the New Year has brought with it the dawn of new hope. While the inspiration of that hope is fresh and clear, let us briefly consider what are likely to be some of our occupations and obligations during the year which has now begun its swift race, and how we may best fulfil them.

The International Congress of Nurses.

Many trained nurses are planning to attend the Quadrennial Congress of Nurses in Canada in July next, convened by the International Council of Nurses, and meeting in Montreal on the invitation of the Canadian Nurses' Association, an early constituent society of the I.C.N. That Association is acting as hostess, and assuming the responsibility for the organisation of this great Congress, and those who hope to participate in it will do well to consider how they can contribute to the enrichment of its knowledge and the promotion of its aims. The Canadian Nurses' Association is planning to give us a most enjoyable time, and we should endeavour to take our share in making the Congress a success.

The Right of Nurses to a Prescribed Training.

The question of the right of Nurses under the Nurses' Registration Act for England and Wales to a prescribed training, which was before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the General Nursing Council in 1925, is still one which demands settlement. The provisions of the Act, in our opinion, leave no doubt as to the right conferred by Parliament on nurses in training to a Syllabus of Prescribed Training in the nursing of the sick, but the General Nursing Council for England and Wales has never insisted on this right being secured to them, nor has the Ministry of Health obtained the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown as to the interpretation of the Nurses' Registration Act, in this respect, although this opinion was called for during the proceedings of the Select Committee by Major Sir Richard Barnett.

Registered Nurses should make it their duty to assimilate and understand the provisions of the Act, especially on this question of "prescribed training," and should then take an opportunity of acquainting their Members of Parliament with the position.

The Inspection of Training Schools.

The power of the General Nursing Council to inspect Training Schools for Nurses before they approve them is another point demanding settlement. We should have thought it a self-evident fact that if the approval by the Council of a Nurse Training School is to be of

value, it must be based on knowledge, and the requisite knowledge can only be obtained by inspection. We cannot gather that there is opposition to such inspection on the part of the Committees of Voluntary Hospitals, or, indeed, of Boards of Guardians, who are usually proud of their Nursing Schools and quite willing that they should be visited, but we believe that a difficulty has arisen owing to the objection of the Ministry of Health to such inspection in Poor Law Hospitals. This is an important question with which Members of Parliament should be conversant.

The Examination of Mental Nurses.

The unjustifiable demand of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association for the recognition of its examination as a qualification for admission to the State Register of Nurses is likely to be an acute one at an early date. Parliament has placed the duty of conducting the examinations for such admission upon the General Nursing Councils, and if they stand firm their position is impregnable; but nurses must beware—and Members of Parliament should be warned of the danger—lest the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, unable to obtain the assent of the General Nursing Councils to its proposals, should endeavour to obtain its way through a side channel. That this is a real danger may be judged by the fact that, in November, 1927, a general meeting of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association carried a resolution, resolving "that the Royal Medico-Psychological Association makes every endeavour, by negotiation, or failing that, by obtaining the insertion of a provision in any new Lunacy Bill, to secure that the possession of the Certificate in Mental Nursing of the Association entitles the holders thereof (both present and future) to be registered, on payment of the fees, in the Mental Sections of the Registers of Nurses of the General Nursing Councils."

The professional and economic consequences of this proposal to Mental Nurses, if carried into effect, would be disastrous.

This again is a question upon which Members of Parliament should be informed.

The Nursing Homes Registration Act, 1927.

Further, the administration of the Nursing Homes Registration Act by County Councils, County Borough Councils, and District Councils, will require very careful watching.

We have drawn special attention to these questions because nurses at the next General Election, now not far distant, will have the right to the Parliamentary Suffrage, and they should, therefore, ascertain the views of candidates for election upon the above and kindred questions before deciding whom they will support. They will find that the opinions they put forward during an Election will be received with attention.

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