

for elsewhere—in the temporary dislocation of conditions and the movement of the population consequent upon the outbreak of war.

The deputation then suggested that the position would be relieved if registered nurses who cannot at present find work were employed at first aid posts in preference to Nursing Auxiliaries. Miss Horsbrugh pointed out the difficulties of this course, and said that it would involve changing the staff at first aid posts immediately casualties were heavy and the services of the trained nurses were needed elsewhere. She promised, however, that she would put the deputation's suggestion before the Minister of Health.

THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE'S OPINION.

The Emergency Committee report that the deputation were only able to reach agreement with Miss Horsbrugh on one point, that being real unemployment does exist amongst nurses.

The Ministry explained this sharp contrast with the pre-war acute shortage of nurses by the suggestion that there were fewer demands for hospital beds and nursing attention. We nurses, however, cannot very well accept this when we hear, from our colleagues, of steadily lengthening waiting lists, and, in London, with the return of evacuees, of busier and busier out-patients clinics. To-day, many authorities will only obtain their nursing staff from the Civil Nursing Reserve where state registered nurses are outnumbered by nursing auxiliaries 80,000 to 15,000. Those first aid posts which will bear the first brunt of any aerial attack are almost impenetrable to the trained nurse. Several nurses have been forced to take A.R.P. jobs at an auxiliary nurse's salary. Miss Horsbrugh said it was impossible to use trained nurses for this work, mainly for financial reasons. Nurses are only too keen to form, in Mr. Elliot's own words "the steel framework on which the nursing care of the sick and wounded in wartime is built." When we have to report the result of this deputation, I am afraid there will be very great disappointment, for Miss Horsbrugh, while admitting the gravity of the situation, can suggest nothing to ameliorate it. Whatever the Ministry's attitude may be, 30,000 Nurses are determined to see that the nursing needs of the country in wartime are going to be the first charge upon their profession, and that the auxiliary nurse is given the place for which she volunteered—that of helping, not displacing, her trained colleague.

At a mass meeting of 500 nurses held at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, on December 13th, at which Lord Horder was to have taken the chair, but having consulted the Royal College of Nursing, failed to do so, the audience warmly supported the policy of the Emergency Committee as advocated at the Ministry of Health on the previous day.

We quote the following article from *Time and Tide*, which appeared on December 16th last, and offer warm appreciation of its generous support.

NURSES AND THE PUBLIC.

"The fact that Lord Horder was obliged to cancel his engagement to take the chair at the meeting of nurses on Wednesday night has perhaps done a considerable service to the Nurses' Cause, since it attracted a good deal of publicity to the meeting. Lord Horder was guided, as he has plainly stated, by the views expressed by the College of Nursing. The College is the largest association of nurses in the United Kingdom, and he must naturally take account of its wishes.

But what are we to say of the College of Nursing? Strong, numerous and influential, they should be the first to speak for their profession when it is suffering injustice.

Why are they, on the contrary, using their influence on the other side? Because, as we have before pointed out in this paper, they are an association which has on more than one occasion been run, not for the benefit of the nurses, but for the benefit of their employers. Far from upholding the just claims of the nursing profession, they have sometimes been known to act as policemen for the authorities against whom those claims were made.

There is a grave shortage of trained nurses. In an emergency, an epidemic or an aerial bombardment, there is an urgent danger that lives will be lost for lack of nursing care. The College of Nursing know this. They might have done historical service to their country and their profession, but they have lost their chance. Every other nursing association in the country is against them. There is a strong body of rebels rising in their own ranks. The time is at hand when they will have to give way to an association really representative of the rank and file of the profession, and eager to safeguard the public interest.

The deputation from the Guild of Nurses and Association of Nurses which went to Miss Horsbrugh before the meeting got little change out of her. They asked for bread and she gave them an assurance that every other profession was making sacrifices. This is, of course, true, and the nursing profession, although one of the worst paid and hardest worked, has always been willing to make necessary sacrifices, but no Government should sit down content when sacrifices are being made which may have serious effects on the public welfare, and which could be averted by the use of a little common-sense. Miss Horsbrugh admitted that a very great many trained nurses were out of work. The deputation suggested as a remedy that they should be restored to the posts in hospitals and on first aid stations at present occupied by auxiliary nurses with the minimum of training.

Miss Horsbrugh's reply was the now familiar cliché that in the event of aerial bombing there would be work for all, and that trained nurses could not at present be attached to first aid posts, as they would all then be needed in hospitals, where the work would be more important.

Those who have had many months of experience of aerial warfare in Spain might dispute this statement, and do indeed say that it is at the first aid post that expert skill and knowledge may save most lives. But even if it is true, there seems to be no reason why all paid nursing posts should not now be occupied first by trained nurses. If aerial bombing begins there will at once be inevitable shifts and readjustments. Trained nurses will be sent wherever they are found to be most valuable. Auxiliary nurses will be called up to fill the gaps. The one certain thing is that the public will not get the best nursing service from nurses who have for some months been out of work, and may suffer severely for lack of nursing if women who might have entered the profession are withheld by the obstructions placed in the way of training, and by impossible conditions."

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING GETS A MOVE ON.

Public action upon the part of Nurses' organisations which are not associated with the Royal College of Nursing has at last roused that body to take action apart from merely supporting the policy of the Ministry of Health, and in consultation with Miss Horsbrugh has put forward recommendations for the reorganisation of the Civil Nursing Reserve. The fact that the Royal College has had representation from its inception on the Committee of the Civil Nursing Reserve, makes it in part responsible for its notorious inefficiency, exposed by the Guild of Nurses and the Emergency Committee.

There are 60,000 Registered Nurses in this country who are opposed to the lay and medical control of the Royal

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