

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

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No. 2060 Vol. 88.

MARCH, 1940.

Price Sevenpence.

EDITORIAL.

CIVIL NURSING RESERVE.

CONDITIONS AND TERMS OF SERVICE.

Six months have passed since the declaration of war, and the organisation of the Civil Nursing Reserve has been tested and found wanting.

The basic principle of the organisation of professional work is that the expert should have ample authority to define its principles and practice. Because this basic principle has been determinedly ignored in the organisation of the Civil Nursing Reserve, it has signally failed—as was inevitable—and had the war not been conducted on entirely new methods the sick and injured would have suffered severely. Indeed, there is ample evidence that unless the Civil Nursing Reserve is to fail ignominiously the Registered Nurse must be recognised as its organiser, in so far as her own professional work is concerned.

THE CIVIL NURSING RESERVE ADVISORY COUNCIL.

The Nursing Profession has learned with relief that at last Mr. Walter Elliot, the Minister of Health, has realised the necessity of bowing to public and professional opinion in this connection, and has decided to entrust the advisory functions of the Civil Nursing Reserve to a new body, to be known as the Civil Nursing Reserve Advisory Council, which is being so constituted as to represent the nursing profession together with the employing authorities and the voluntary societies concerned—a decision being warmly welcomed by Registered Nurses, who have the welfare of sick and wounded in war so warmly at heart that, sooner or later, had not the means for reform been placed at their disposal, they would have been compelled to make public the serious results of the ineffective system of nursing recently in force. Many of the hospitals staffed by the Reserve Committee are being militarised, and will be numbered and known, as in the last war, as General Hospitals, the medical and nursing staff of which will be complete, composed of experienced officers. This is following the example of the hospitals on the Western Front, in France, where the nursing is being controlled by Registered Nurses of ample and exceptional experience directed by experienced medical officers.

APPOINTMENT OF REGIONAL NURSING OFFICERS.

In order to co-ordinate the work of Medical Officers of Health in promoting the local development of the

Reserve and that of the hospital authorities in arranging the staffing of hospitals in the Emergency Hospital Scheme, the Minister has appointed a Regional Nursing Officer in each of the Civil Defence Regions. This officer, who will be on the Ministry's Regional Staff, will work in association with the Hospital Officer, and will act as intermediary between him or the headquarters of the Ministry and the Sector Matron in the Region. She will take an early opportunity of getting into touch with the Medical Officer of Health.

A NATIONAL ORGANISED FORCE.

It appears to the Minister that special measures are necessary to maintain and develop the Civil Nursing Reserve as a National Organised Force. Whether the members are whole-time or part-time, mobile or immobile, and where they are allocated to Hospitals, First Aid Posts or District Nursing, they form and should look upon themselves as belonging to a distinct National Service, on whose efficiency and enthusiasm much may depend in the future.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

Recognition as a National Service will have the enthusiastic support of Registered Nurses elected on to the Advisory Council—and to accomplish this a multiplicity of lay organising officials must be avoided. The present failure of the Civil Nursing Reserve has resulted from this lack of expert control, and in future it will be the fault of the Registered Nurses and Medical Officers of Health if, through lack of courage and initiative, an efficiently organised national nursing service is not put into effect at the earliest possible date.

OUR POLICY.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, the organ of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, is the only journal which has continuously claimed the right of direct professional representation on Nursing Committees set up by the Ministry of Health during recent years. This basic right and privilege, long denied, has now been conceded, thus not only the brain but the soul of the Nursing Profession become national assets—not for personal gain, but as its contribution to the comfort of those who have fallen sick in our service, and in the saving of their precious lives. Thus may we help uphold the honour of our dear country.

Let us hope that by the time the War is at an end, the Ministry of Health will have realised that Registered Nurses must be conceded the status which is their legal right, and not confused with unprofessional persons.

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