

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in any way hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

## WHAT NEXT?

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I note with agreement that you advise correspondents to sign their names to letters addressed to the B.J.N. on the burning question of the proposal recently made in the General Nursing Council by Miss Cox-Davies, to exclude the record of Certificates of proficiency of Existing and Intermediate Nurses from the State Register, and I hasten to comply with your suggestion. May I make quite clear what is meant by Existing and Intermediate Nurses, as so many of my colleagues appear befogged in the matter? An Existing Nurse is one who, according to the Rules for the General Part of the Register (a) holds a certificate of training for not less than three years' training in a General Hospital or Poor Law Infirmary, or (b) has had not less than twelve months' training in a General Hospital or Poor Law Infirmary, together with two years' subsequent practice as a nurse in attendance on the sick before November 1st, 1919.

An Intermediate Nurse is one who holds a certificate for not less than three years' training in a General Hospital or Poor Law Infirmary between November 1st, 1919, and July, 1924, when the Rules for Examination come into force.

These terms of classification, "Existing" and "Intermediate," have really nothing to do with qualifications, and it is on the question of what qualifications shall appear in the State Register that nurses have a right to express an opinion, and whose duty it is to do so *before it is too late*.

That any member of the General Nursing Council should be so out of touch with well-trained nurses as not to realise the value which they attach to their Certificates, and be willing to play the part of the White Queen in "Alice in Wonderland," and with one fell swoop sweep them all away as of no significance whatever, is amazing, and only proves how human it is to err, and, moreover, how all important it is that the meetings of the G.N.C. should be open to the Press.

In this deplorable instance, had the Resolution been passed behind closed doors, 3,000 certificated nurses might have found themselves deprived by half a dozen votes, when the Register appeared, of their most cherished possession—the documentary evidence of their efficiency as highly qualified professional nurses; evidence which has always been recognised and inscribed in the Registers of analogous professions.

Parliament, influenced by reactionary employers, has kept the Nursing Profession waiting twenty years for legal status, but during that time the Training Schools have not stood still. They have trained—and trained well—these thirty thousand women, and by constituting themselves the

Examining Bodies have created a generally-accepted standard, without documentary evidence of which the leading appointments in the profession are not obtainable. Are these documents to be contemptuously treated as scraps of paper by the G.N.C.? Are the votes of the Matrons of Training Schools to deprive their colleagues of the record of Certificates awarded to them by the Governing Bodies, of which they themselves are salaried officials? Surely the Managers of the Training Schools should take some action in this matter, or instruct their Matrons to warn the Nursing Staff that the Certificates awarded are a snare and a delusion! But that Nurses should be deprived of the record of their Certificates of proficiency on the State Register is unthinkable.

*It would mean professional degradation and economic damage, as once the State Examination is in force to qualify for Registration, and a Certificate awarded to this effect, "Existing" and "Intermediate" Nurses would merely rank as "old bond fides," unless the record of their honourable qualifications appears in the published Register. Could any suggestion be more unjust? May I invite my colleagues by every means in their power to help to avert such a catastrophe?*

Yours faithfully,

HENRIETTA HAWKINS.

## LEADING THE WAY.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—With reference to your account of the opening of the Nurses' Home in this week's B.J.N., I beg to say that the Paddington Board accepted the Syllabus recommended by the G.N.C., and that the nurses have been working according to it for the last six months with the object of entering for the State Examination in 1924. The trained members of the staff have in many cases applied for Registration.

Yours faithfully,

GERTRUDE E. COPEMAN, *Matron*.

Paddington Infirmary, W.

[We have received quite a number of private letters welcoming the Syllabus from Matrons whose Boards have, by making some reforms, and additions to the teaching of probationers, made it possible to prepare them for the State examination to be held in 1924. The smaller hospitals and infirmaries, and those of a special nature, are not able to figure out just how they can meet the requirements of the G.N.C.; and it is just this very urgent part of its duty to consider and define a system of conjoint training that, with others, is being held up for the time being.—ED.]

## PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTIONS.

December 24th.—Give a general description of the ear. Point out how infection spreads from the throat to the ear.

December 31st.—What may give rise to haemorrhage during the first three months of pregnancy? Indicate the treatment.

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