

DEPUTATION TO THE MINISTER OF HEALTH ARRANGED BY THE REGISTERED NURSES' PARLIAMENTARY COUNCIL.

The twelve months thus expired in March of this year, when, with the change of Government, the Right Hon. John Wheatley, M.P., was Minister of Health.

At the meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales in February of this year, its Registration Committee presented a report on the Scheme of Election of registered nurses, and took very strong exception to Major Barnett's amendment to leave the eleven places for registered nurses on the Council open to all registered nurses. They themselves provided six seats for matrons of training schools, and left only two open seats for the nurses on the General Part of the Register.

That the Council are by no means unanimous on the question is shown by the fact that when Miss Villiers, seconded by Miss du Sautoy, moved an amendment to the original recommendation—following the system adopted in Scotland—"That the whole of the eleven seats for representatives of nurses on the General Part of the Register be thrown open." Six members voted for it, and nine against.

On March 11th Mr. Wheatley received a Deputation at the Ministry of Health arranged by the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council, and introduced by Major Barnett.

The Deputation presented to the Minister two Memoranda, one as to Prescribed Training, and another on the Prescribed Scheme for the election of Registered Nurses as the direct representatives of the Registered Nurses on the General Part of the Register, and claiming that the qualification of persons to be elected should be simply eleven Registered Nurses, to be elected by the Registered Nurses (*i.e.* Nurses Registered on the General Part of the Register).

The Minister, in reply, promised to confer with his advisers and to communicate his decision to the Deputation.

On June 4th, in the House of Commons, Major Barnett asked the Minister of Health whether the General Nursing Council for England and Wales duly submitted its amended election scheme before March 14th, 1924, as required; if so, whether such scheme has met with his approval and will be laid upon the Table of the House; and, in the event of such scheme not having been submitted or not having been approved, what steps he proposes to take to give effect to the decision of his Department, as approved by the House?

Mr. Wheatley replied:—"The General Nursing Council have submitted proposals for the amendment of the election scheme, but as their precise intention was not clear, they have been asked to give further consideration to certain points. Pending their reply, I am unable to come to any decision as to sanctioning the amendments, but I hope to be able to lay amended Rules on the Table of the House before the end of the Session."

Now the fortunes of war have once more brought Mr. Neville Chamberlain back to Mr. Baldwin's Cabinet, as Minister of Health. He will, therefore, be conversant with the question when it comes before Parliament.

We have dwelt at length on these two questions because they are the most vital ones before the nursing profession at the present moment, the one for the nurses in training, the other for those who are trained

and registered. Matrons are admitted to the State Register as Trained Nurses, and should stand for election as such, and should not claim that because they control pupils in training, by right of place they should assume control of those who are trained and registered.

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

The preparations for the meeting of the International Council of Nurses, and Congress of Nurses convened under its authority in July of next year, are now in active progress and nurses in many lands are looking forward to resuming the international relations which were a source of such pleasure to them before the war.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TRAINED NURSES.

The National Council of Trained Nurses in this country has the matter well in hand, and it is hoped that a good contingent will be present from Great Britain and Ireland—the cradle of the International Council.

Space does not permit us to enter in detail into the work of the self-governing organisations affiliated to the National Council. They include some of the most highly-respected and altruistic members of the Nursing Profession, and have accomplished much good work.

THE HEALTH OF THE SCHOOL CHILD.

The Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for the year 1923, just published, is a most interesting and inspiring document.

Sir George Newman says that there can be no doubt of the beneficial effect of the National Organisation now in being for the Medical, Surgical, and Dental Treatment of School Children.

"A review of the results of the school medical work over the years 1913-23," writes Sir William Hamer, "leads to the conviction that the mountain of disability and suffering which the School Medical Service at its inception had to face has indeed begun to move. Independent observers, in a position to know, state that the London child is now a different being. Not only is the improvement marked as a whole, but analysis shows a steady advance year by year, at each age and in each sex, in a most consistent way."

These facts are significant. They are not accidental or intermittent in occurrence. They represent a trend and a tendency—in spite of two contrary influences, *viz.*, that 35 per cent. of the incoming children are defective on their admission to school, and that the home environment does not show an improvement at all comparable with that of the physique of the child. The mountain of disability, as Sir William Hamer calls it, has begun to move. There still remains the mountain, but we know the way to move it. We see also where pressure must be brought to bear. First, the pre-school child problem should be tackled much more boldly. The tap should be turned off as early as possible. Secondly, the boy of eight tends to have bad teeth, oral sepsis, enlarged glands and under-nourishment; the girl of twelve tends to have poor eyesight, anæmia and spinal curvature. We must concentrate upon these things, and from an earlier age.

We are glad to hear that the University of London is contemplating the establishment of a Diploma in Nursing. Our readers are aware that the University of Leeds already grants such a Diploma.

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