

## NURSES' ORGANISATIONS.

### REGISTERED NURSES' PARLIAMENTARY COUNCIL.

Members of the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council have worked consistently to secure (1) the enforcement of the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, in regard to the right of probationary nurses, in hospitals approved by the General Nursing Council, to be trained under a compulsory Prescribed Scheme of Training, before submitting themselves to a prescribed examination, as required by the Council, for admission to the State Register, and (2) to a free and democratic basis for the election of Registered Nurses on the General Part of the Register. They will, therefore, learn with pleasure that the Minister of Health (the Right Honble. Neville Chamberlain, M.P., P.C.), has acceded to the request of Major R. W. Barnett, M.P., as notified in our last issue, that he will consider the desirability of appointing a Select Committee to deal with these matters, and the Minister of Health has informed the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council that arrangements have now been made for the appointment of such a Committee.

That is a great step gained.

It now remains for Registered Nurses to convince the Members of the Committee, and through them Parliament itself of the justice of their claim.

The demand on the part of some of the Matrons on the General Nursing Council for England and Wales to dominate the Nursing Profession is absolutely untenable. It must always be remembered that the Council is not only an Educational Body, but is endowed with penal powers over every Registered Nurse, and every Registered Nurse should, therefore, have equal powers of protection before the law. Because a woman has a highly paid post that should not give her supremacy over her peers.

### THE FEVER NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

By permission of the Metropolitan Asylums Board the Annual Meeting of the Fever Nurses' Association was held at the Offices of the Board, Victoria Embankment, E.C., on May 23rd. Dr. Randall, the outgoing President, who was in the chair, referred to item 7 on the Agenda, "to discuss the future status and functions of the Fever Nurses' Association." It was necessary that this should be considered because a good deal of the work formerly undertaken by the Association was now being done by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales. He expressed the view that probationers should not be taken into the smaller hospitals.

He then invited the new President, Miss S. A. Villiers, S.R.N., R.F.N., Matron of the South Western Hospital, Stockwell, S.W., and a Member of the General Nursing Council, to take the chair and deliver her Presidential Address.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

We are met to-day on what I believe is the fifteenth anniversary of the Fever Nurses' Association, and, as we are later to discuss the future usefulness of the Association, I should like to pay a warm tribute to the work it has done in the past in standardising the training of fever nurses, and to remind ourselves once more of the inspiring work of Dr. Biernacki, the founder of this Association, which has been of so great use to us in our special branch of work.

I believe it was owing to the impetus given by the Fever Nurses' Association that the Metropolitan Asylums Board organised a system of training for their probationers, which, I do not hesitate to say, has greatly improved their status, and I have no doubt that the provincial hospitals have also received help and encouragement from time to time from the Association.

But although we gladly recognise its good work in the past, we have to remind ourselves that standards are changing in the nursing, as in every other profession, and that we must not rest upon our laurels, but adapt ourselves to the requirements of the younger generation of nurses, whose demands upon us in the future will, I imagine, be more exacting than they have been in the past.

(1) The first thing I should like to emphasise is, the importance of establishing Preliminary Training Schools.

We have our Sister-Tutors, Class-rooms, teaching equipment, &c., but, side by side with these advantages, there seems to be growing up on the part of the Ward Sisters a reluctance to take their share of the responsibility of teaching, and to leave it all to the Tutor Sister. But if we are to hold our own with the general nurses in the State examinations (and I am glad to say that up to the present the Fever Nurses have compared, on the whole, very favourably with the others in these examinations) we cannot afford to depend on any spasmodic teaching, it must be thoroughly systematic, both in theoretical and practical nursing, and no nurse must be able to say that she has not been taught this or that. (I should like to say in passing, for the benefit of any Ward Sisters who are present, from the information I have gathered from the Education and Examination Committee, which deals with this subject, that most of the failures which have taken place among our nurses have been in the practical part, and not in the papers, which plainly shows that we do need your help and co-operation if we are to succeed in training the probationers up to the required standard.) With regard to the Preliminary Training Schools, I think in the case of a Board which controls a large number of Hospitals, one Preliminary School might perhaps serve for them all, and in the case of a Borough, which maintains a Poor Law Hospital and a Fever Hospital, the same School might serve for both; but if this were found to be impracticable, a small Isolation Ward would be large enough to train 6 or 8 probationers, without materially decreasing the accommodation for patients.

(2) Another important point is, the engagement of suitable Tutor Sisters, who should be well-educated, well-paid women, and not expected to do much other work than teaching, but should have time for reading and attending classes, such as some of the Polytechnics are now giving, in order that they may keep abreast with the new developments which are constantly making place in science.

To my mind it would be better for a Tutor Sister to undertake the teaching in one or two hospitals, if they are not too far apart, rather than to encourage the dual appointment of Tutor Sister and Assistant Matron or Home Sister.

(3) A third very important point is the question of affiliation with the general training schools. I hope every Committee will try to affiliate their Fever Hospital with one or two general hospitals, so that the probationers can proceed from their training to take the two years in a general hospital which will qualify them for registering as general and fever-trained nurses.

Unless a nurse is encouraged to proceed fairly soon to her general training, she loses her enthusiasm, and settles down into a Staff Nurse, receiving a better salary, and possibly a few extra privileges, and remains a partially-trained woman, whose value in the future, will be less and less, as I feel sure that most posts which are worth having will go to registered nurses, especially those connected with Municipal Bodies and Public Boards.

For the nurse's own sake, as well as for the sake of the public, we should encourage her to complete her training. Long service pay is undesirable, to my mind, when given to nurses who have not completed their training, although extra salary for those who hold certificates of special training is all to the good.

At present there is a little reluctance on the part of the General Hospitals to take nurses from the special hospitals, but I do not think that this reluctance will persist for very long. Those of us who are Matrons know that the supply of good candidates is not any too plentiful, and I feel sure that our nurses, who have been trained for and passed the Preliminary State Examination, and carefully selected to fill vacancies in the general hospitals, will be welcomed into their ranks, as having got some of their lectures out of the way, they will have all the more time to devote to practical nursing in the wards, although it should slightly increase their economic value, a fact which I sometimes think accounts for some of the reluctance to affiliate on the part of the Committee.

(4) Another change of methods which seems to me to be looming in the future is the increasing desire of nurses for more freedom

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)