

SCHEME OF PENSIONS FOR HOSPITAL OFFICERS AND NURSES.

We have received from the Chairman of the Management Committee of King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, the Earl of Donoughmore, the Annual Report of the Fund, which includes the Report of the Committee on the question of Pensions for Hospital Officers and Nurses, presented by Lord Donoughmore.

This Report states that it is the result of discussions with the various parties concerned. There have been conferences between the King's Fund, and the associations representing the hospitals, the officers, and the nurses; and circulars have been issued inviting the comments of the individual hospitals.

Lord Donoughmore writes that "the Report states the problem, and proposes a solution on the lines of the scheme that is already in force at the Universities of this country. The problem is constantly coming up in an acute form, involving not only the interests of the individuals concerned but also the efficiency of the hospitals. Senior officers often have to be kept on when they are really too old. Efficiency suffers. Capable subordinates find that promotion inside the hospital is blocked. Efficiency suffers. They cannot go to higher posts in other hospitals because they would take with them pension liabilities for all their past service but no pension rights. Efficiency suffers. Then take the nurses, Not only the efficiency but the very work of the hospitals depends on their being able to continue to get the right type of woman to enter the Nursing Profession. But the Nurse's working life is short: and though the young nurse may be ready to consider the work first, and the pay afterwards, we are told by the College of Nursing that her friends and guardians bring up the objection that she will not be able to make any adequate provision for old age. And they say that this makes it difficult to get enough recruits of the kind the hospitals most need."

Lord Donoughmore states that if the Scheme succeeds in its objects it will remove a real hardship to individuals engaged in hospital work, especially nurses.

We are of opinion that the hospital officers will benefit more than the nurses from the proposed scheme, and by the subsidy (a maximum of £20,000 a year for seven years), as their salaries are, for the most part, considerably higher than those of the nurses.

For new entrants to Hospitals the scheme is to be compulsory where salary and emoluments are £160.

However the scheme may affect nurses in hospitals, which is naturally the point of view with which the King's Fund is most concerned, it would inevitably act prejudicially to nurses in private practice. At the present time in connection with only a few Co-operations of Nurses in the Metropolis their work is so organised that these Associations are obtaining for them fees amounting to at least £70,000 per annum, and each nurse's liability for the necessary central organisation is covered by a ten per cent. charge on her earnings. If she is to come under the proposed Pension Scheme she would have to pay the Association with which she is connected at least 25 per cent. of her earnings, of which the effect without doubt, would be the break up of the Co-operations of private nurses now doing excellent work.

We shall refer again to this question.

OUTSIDE THE GATES.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN.

The preliminary programme of the Annual Meeting and Conference of the National Council of Women of Great Britain announces that they will be held in the Church House, Westminster from October 19th to 22nd. It is long since the Conference was held in London, and a great gathering is anticipated. Tickets can be obtained from the General Secretary, N.C.W. Office, Parliament Mansions, Victoria Street, S.W.1. Return tickets to London are available at the price of a single one and a third on production of voucher from N.C.W. office.

Some very interesting matters are down for discussion, amongst them the burning question of "The Causes and Prevention of Maternal Mortality" by Dr. T. Watts Eden of Charing Cross Hospital. "The Slum Tragedy—and a Solution," by the Rev. J. B. Q. Jellicoe, Magdalen College, Oxford. "Women and Internationalism," Mrs. Forbes-Robertson Hale, will interest our National Council of Nurses—let us hope she will not omit to mention the active work in internationalism done by Nursing pioneers—we have attended meetings purporting to cover women's international interests, when this important section has received no mention!

Resolutions.

Twelve resolutions appear for discussion on the Agenda Paper, the majority on health questions, and all specially interesting to Registered Nurses

Mental Defectives, Royal Commission on Lunacy, Sexual Offences, Housing, Slum Clearance, Open Spaces, Treatment of Venereal Diseases, Animals for Sale in Shops (we rejoice that these martyrs are to find advocates). The Bristol Branch proposes:—"That the National Council of Women considers that there is urgent need for reform of the conditions under which live animals, such as monkeys, dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, &c., are kept and offered for sale in shops. The Council therefore demands that such shops be open for better inspection, both by the police and by accredited inspectors of animals' protection societies, and would further urge the adoption of a regular system of Government inspection of all premises where animals are kept for sale."

Nominees for Election to the Executive Committee.

There are plenty of good nominations for the vacancies on the Executive Committee both from the Branches and the Affiliated Societies. We hope the Nurses' Organisations will see that Miss S. A. Villiers, S.R.N., Member General Nursing Council for England and Wales, retains her seat. With the exception of Mrs. L. G. Kilby "trained at St. Thomas's Hospital," who presumably is a State Registered Nurse no other nurse is nominated. Here again we could wish women would not forget to recognise the legal status of the Nursing Profession by Act of Parliament. No mention is set out in the nomination notice of Mrs. Kilby of the S.R.N., but we are informed she "took the C.M.B. Certificate." The ignorance and indifference of the average woman to all things appertaining to professional nursing, is a great deterrent to well-educated girls adopting Nursing as a profession. So many women engaged in public, as apart from professional, work still appear to "dabble" with this all-important profession, without which none of the health questions they are out to discuss with burning ardour at the Church House in October, can make the most satisfactory and successful progress.

WORD FOR THE MONTH.

"If we want this civilisation to march forward towards higher economical standards, to moral and spiritual ideals, it will march only on the feet of healthy children."

DR. ARNOLD GESSELL.

Yale University.

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