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EDITORIAL.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY.

The most important events for the welfare of the Nursing Profession in Great Britain are the forthcoming Elections of the General Nursing Councils for England and Wales, and for Scotland.

In reference to the former body nominations of candidates must be received by the Returning Officer, 20, Portland Place, London, W.1, by November 3rd, and must be sent in, on a prescribed form to be obtained from him, before noon on that date, so that there is no time to be lost by those Registered Nurses who wish to nominate their colleagues for office.

On the 23rd December, 1927, it will be eight years since the Royal Assent was given to the Nurses' Registration Act and Nursing thus constituted a Profession, a period long enough for its influence to be felt both by nurses trained and in training, and in public life.

Slowly but surely the influence of the Nurses' Registration Act in this country is raising the standard of Nursing Education; during the term of office of the present Council a Registered Nurse has been elected to the position of Chairman of the Council, and the Registered Nurses have been accorded by Parliament the right to elect their eleven representatives on the General Part of the Register without restriction.

It was owing to the representations of the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council that the Right Hon. John Wheatley, when Minister of Health, promised to recommend to Parliament the appointment of a Select Committee "to consider the Rules of the General Nursing Council with regard to the prescribed training for Nurses, and the reservation of seats on the Council for Matrons," and although he went out of office before effect was given to this pledge his successor, the Right Hon. Neville Chamberlain, recognised it as binding, and the Select Committee was appointed.

The Committee, on grounds of expediency, did not recommend that the Syllabus of Training should be made compulsory "in its present form," but, in regard to the open election, it reported:—

"Your Committee cannot fail to recognise the advantages that accrue from a free election. It secures for the elected body a measure of confidence and support which it might not otherwise be able to obtain. It puts the profession on its honour to elect representatives that will be a credit to the profession. Such advantages cannot lightly be set aside."

THE NURSING PROFESSION ON ITS HONOUR.

Privileges carry with them corresponding responsibilities, and the right bestowed upon the electorate

to elect sixteen out of twenty-five members of the General Nursing Council, in a free and open election, puts the Profession, as the Select Committee of the House of Commons pointed out, "on its honour" to elect representatives who will do it credit.

The constitution of their Governing Body for the next Quinquennial term of office is therefore a responsibility which should engage the serious attention of the electors in the immediate future.

So far no official announcement has been made by the Council of those members who propose to stand again for election, but we learn that a good many of them are doing so.

Amongst this number we are glad to know that Miss A. M. Bushby, Matron of the Queen's Hospital for Children, Hackney Road, London, E., is standing again in the interests of the Sick Children's Part of the Register, and owing to her record as a member of the General Nursing Council for the last five years we have no doubt that she will be a most acceptable candidate to Sick Children's Nurses who have a vote, and that even if there is a contest, that she will come out at the head of the poll.

Owing to the circumscribed methods of discussion in the General Nursing Council the gladiatorial feats take place mainly in the Standing Committees, and the Profession at large is not well acquainted with the work done, neither is it acquainted with the lack of moral courage shown at times by the majority, on occasions when strong action was necessary, notably in retaining on the Register the name of a Registered Nurse proved guilty of theft in a Court of Law—a question on which Miss Bushby stood firm in the Council, in the interest both of the Registered Nurses and of the public.

As we go to press we learn that Miss Susan A. Villiers, who has been on the Council since its inception, will stand in the interests of Fever Nurses, Miss E. L. Macaulay, O.B.E., R.R.C., will for the first time seek the suffrages of Mental Nurses, and Miss C. C. du Sautoy will stand as a Nurse on the General part of the Register. All these ladies are held in great respect by the Nursing Profession as a whole, and should stand a good chance of election.

The right of the open election has been won by the Registered Nurses during the tenure of office of the present Council. The right of pupils in Nursing Schools to be taught on a Syllabus of Training which it is compulsory on the Nursing Schools to maintain is still to win; and candidates for election to the General Nursing Council might well be invited to declare their policy on this question by the electors before promising them their support.

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