

NURSES' ORGANISATIONS.

THE NATIONAL ASYLUM WORKERS' UNION.

The *National Asylum Workers Union Magazine* for August publishes a full account of the proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Conference of the National Asylum Workers' Union at Plymouth under the presidency of Mr. C. Bartlett, which transacted a large amount of important business.

Of special interest to Registered Nurses are (1) the Resolution carried by the Conference in relation to the question now before the General Nursing Council, of the claim for the registration of Mental Nurses, holding the certificate of the Medico-Psychological Association, which was proposed by Mr. Flanigan (Winwick) and seconded by Mr. Gooding (Ryhope), and (2) a letter from Miss Wiese, formerly a member of the G.N.C., concerning it.

Resolution.

"That this Conference instructs its members on the General Nursing Council to continue to use all their efforts to obtain State Registration for all holders of the R.M.P.A. certificate."

The view was expressed by Mr. Pritchard (Caterham) that it would not be a wise policy for the delegates to enter into a discussion on this question as negotiations were being conducted between the General Nursing Council, and the R.M.P.A. He thought the Resolution should be withdrawn till they saw what developed.

Mr. Edwin R. Blackman, a former President of the National Asylum Workers' Union, and a Direct Representative of Mental Nurses on the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, spoke as follows:

"I think, since the resolution is carried, that I ought to make my position clear. My personal views are absolutely against the resolution which you have carried here this afternoon. I do not agree that any outside body, apart from the General Nursing Council, should carry on examinations for mental nurses. That body has been appointed by the State to carry out examinations for nurses of all descriptions, and the many associations which have been conducting examinations in the past have given up doing so; only the M.P.A. have stood out, and I do not agree that they ought to stand out, but my position is this, that all my work on the General Nursing Council has, in this one particular, been against the R.M.P.A., therefore I am sorry that while I have to abide by your decision, it complicates my own position on the Council."

The General Secretary of the N.A.W.U., Mr. George Gibson, followed with an attack on the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, to which we can only briefly refer in this issue. Suffice it to say that it is regrettable that it contains two mis-statements that "the majority of the members . . . are appointed by the Minister of Health, in common with a number of people who *must* be Matrons."

The sole qualification for the 16 direct representatives of the Nurses on this Council of 25 persons is that they should be Registered Nurses.

Miss Wiese's Views.

In regard to the Resolution, Miss Maud Wiese, R.M.N., herself at one time a Direct Representative of the Mental Nurses on the General Nursing Council, wrote to the Annual Conference as follows:—

"I am hoping that Conference will reject this resolution, and not bind our representatives on the G.N.C. in any way. The Council is a statutory body appointed by the State to keep a register of nurses and hold preliminary and final examinations in the subjects mentioned in the syllabus. At least 16 out of 25 members are elected by the nurses themselves, and these members arrange and control the examinations. The Preliminary Examination

(which all nurses must take) is essentially a nursing examination, whilst the R.M.P.A. Examination is admittedly one of theory. The Final Examination of the G.N.C. is practically controlled by the Mental Nursing Committee. . . . Only within the last year or two has the R.M.P.A. had a nurse on its examining body, and certainly we have no representative on it. Again, a candidate who fails is not informed on which subject he or she has failed in, and must again take the whole examination. I admit the G.N.C. fees are high, but we all know that little is gained professionally without sacrifice. There is another point: A general trained nurse who wishes to specialise in mental nursing must do two years' training in the wards if she takes the G.N.C. Final, but the R.M.P.A. allows her to sit for its final without any such guarantee. . . . The ideal solution would be to recommend mental nurses to take the R.M.P.A. Examination first and then the State, so as to acquire the study and the examination habit. I believe most general hospitals still hold their own examinations, and nurses take the State afterwards. I find this most helpful. I am not a good candidate for examinations, but I find each one I pass gives me more assurance. This point of view will possibly make me unpopular, but I honestly believe this is the best course to take, and I am optimistic enough to believe many delegates will support me. With regard to the difficulty experienced in some mental hospitals in giving bedside nursing, I believe it can be done. Claybury has done it, and I am sure there are other hospitals whose medical superintendent and matron believe in progress."

Very unfortunately Miss Wiese's letter did not arrive in time to be read to the Annual Conference, but is printed in the *National Asylum Workers' Union Magazine*.

May we point out that the Mental Nurses on the General Nursing Council for England and Wales are the directly elected representatives of all Registered Mental Nurses, and not of one organisation only. It is a fact that is often lost sight of.

A LEAGUE OF NIGHTINGALE NURSES.

A League of Nurses, to be known as the "Nightingale Fellowship," has been formed in connection with the Nightingale Training School at St. Thomas's Hospital, London, S.E., with the approval of the Committee of the Training School and the hospital authorities. Its objects are: (a) to form a Fellowship of past and present Nightingale Nurses; (b) to form a Benevolent Fund.

The following nurses are stated to be eligible: (a) those holding the three single certificate papers (1860-1904); (b) those holding the single certificate from 1904; (c) those who by virtue of a nursing appointment held in the Hospital are elected by the Executive Committee of the Nightingale Fellowship.

The Hon. Officers are: (1) a President holding office for three years and eligible for re-election; (2) Vice-Presidents (both the President and Vice-Presidents are to be nominated and elected by the members of the Executive Committee); (3) an Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Secretary, who will hold office for three years and be eligible for re-election; (4) an Executive Committee consisting of five Hon. Officers and 18 members (of whom six are to retire annually) chosen from the members of the Fellowship.

The League will meet twice a year, and the annual subscription will be 5s. to include the *Journal or News Sheet*, which is to be published twice a year.

Provision is made that the Executive Committee of the Nightingale Fellowship shall have power to remove from the Register or Roll of the Fellowship any nurse whose conduct, professional or otherwise, is considered by the Executive Committee of the Nightingale Fellowship to have been derogatory to the honour of the aforesaid Fellowship.

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