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EDITORIAL.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY. ROCKS AHEAD.

The summer of 1935 has been one of much enjoyment and instruction to trained nurses in this country owing to the presence in London of so many Nurse-educationists from our Dominions and other countries, who foregathered for the meeting of the Grand Council of the Florence Nightingale International Foundation before proceeding to Geneva for the meeting of the Board of Directors of the International Council of Nurses. Notable amongst these visitors was Dean Goodrich, from the United States of America, who, during her visit, has been able to come into touch with so many elements in our Nursing world, and who has impressed many of those with whom she came in contact with the desire to know more of the methods of nursing education in which she so sincerely believes and which she so forcefully advocates. Needless to say the provision of increasing opportunities for nurses, the development of nursing education on university lines, and self government in their professional associations, are articles of Dean Goodrich's "Credo" of which she is "Fidei Defensor."

The first object for which the International Council of Nurses stands, as defined in its Constitution, is "self government of nurses in their associations, with the aim of raising ever higher the standards of education, professional ethics, and public usefulness of their members."

One of our international visitors, criticising quite kindly its organisation as it appears to her, said that the International Council of Nurses aims to secure the self government of nurses, but in many parts of the world this primary object has, so far, not been accomplished. Special care must be taken, therefore, in the future to develop, and sacredly maintain, the spirit of self reliance and self government in the Nursing Profession throughout the Associations affiliated in the International Council of Nurses.

There is need for alertness in these respects in our own country, for although many privileges have, in the last quarter of a century, been won for trained nurses, including the fundamental one of Registration under State Authority, by a Governing Body on which the majority of the members are Registered Nurses elected by themselves, and presided over by a Chairman who is a member of the Nursing Profession, yet there are rocks ahead, the danger of which must not be minimised.

We enumerate a few of the proposals which, if carried into effect, would disrupt the standard of nursing education.

(1) The proposal of the *Lancet* Commission for making the Nursing Service more attractive to young women by "combined scholarship and maintenance schemes throughout the country for girls of 16 and upwards with possible extension to girls of 14."

(2) That encouragement should be given to girls who have left school, and are occupied in shops and offices during the day, to study anatomy, physiology and hygiene in evening classes in polytechnics, technical schools and evening institutes, to take Part I of the Preliminary State Examination.

These proposals have twice been turned down by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, yet the danger is not yet averted, as the unprofessional protagonists of this scheme are still determined to actively promote it.

(3) There is the proposal of Dr. Janet Campbell to sweep away the distinctive professional status of the Registered Nurse, to substitute a hybrid type of nurse-midwife, and to merge the duties and powers of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and the Central Midwives Board under one professional Council.

(4) The creation by the London County Council at its meeting on July 30th of a class of workers to be called "women orderlies," who they state "cannot be classified either as nursing or domestic staff," who will be, in fact, hybrid workers who, in a short time, will enter into competition with Registered Nurses and still further undermine their professional and economic status.

We report the proceedings of the meeting at which this disastrous policy was adopted on pages 209 and 210 of this issue. It was strongly opposed by Dr. Barrie Lambert, who pointed out that the Council had practically eliminated unskilled nursing labour from their acute hospitals, and now the untrained would come back in large numbers.

These, then, are some of the proposals affecting Registered Nurses, both professionally and economically. It should be noted that none of them have come from Registered Nurses, but from their employers. What is the Nursing Profession doing to make its influence felt in regard to them? The Profession includes some 75,000 members who, if united, can prevent the adoption of such disastrous measures. It is their duty to do so.

Also the Domiciliary Nursing Services Bill introduced into the House of Commons by Sir Gerald Hurst, K.C., needs to be carefully watched if and when it is proceeded with, for it did not, as introduced, restrict membership of these Services to State Registered Nurses, and this should be a *sine qua non* in all Nursing Services paid for, or subsidised, out of public funds.

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