

INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE IN SCOTLAND.

Mr. Walter Elliot, Secretary of State for Scotland, has arranged for an inquiry into the recruitment of nurses in Scotland. For this purpose he has asked the members of the committee which reported in 1935 on the training and registration of nurses in Scotland to extend the scope of their former investigation.

The new remit to the committee is "to inquire into the arrangements at present in operation in Scotland for the recruitment of nurses for the sick, and to report whether any changes in these arrangements or other measures are expedient for the purpose of maintaining an adequate supply of such nurses, both for institutional and domiciliary nursing."

All the members of the committee which reported in 1935, with the exception of Sir Archibald Black, who is now Sheriff of Lanarkshire, and Sir Henry Mehan, are able to serve on the reconstituted committee. Lord Alness has accepted an invitation to be chairman. The committee as reconstituted is as follows:—

Lord Alness (chairman), Dr. W. L. Burgess, Lady Susan Gilmour, Dr. Mary R. Knight, Mr. T. B. M. Lamb, Dr. John Reid, Miss E. D. Smaill (Lady Superintendent, the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh), Miss Christina Whyte, and Dr. John Young.

It will be remembered that this committee reported in favour of preparation for the Preliminary Examination being taken before the entrance of probationers to hospital.

QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S IMPERIAL MILITARY NURSING SERVICE RESERVE.

We are informed that the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve has vacancies for fully trained nurses who are enrolled on the General Part of the State Register and who are not over 45 years of age.

Members will be required to supplement Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service in times of emergency, but, it is pointed out, membership does not entail the relinquishment of present appointment.

Arrangements will be made to enable members to undergo a period of eight days' training in a Military Hospital if they wish.

The Matron-in-Chief, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, The War Office (A.M.D.4), Whitehall, London, S.W.1, will be pleased to supply full particulars.

PRINCESS MARY'S ROYAL AIR FORCE NURSING SERVICE.

The Air Ministry announces the following appointment:—

Matron Miss E. M. Blair to be Matron-in-Chief, Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service, with effect from January 16th, 1938, in place of Miss K. C. Watt, C.B.E., R.R.C., on the latter being placed on the retired list.

Matron Miss E. M. Blair received her general training at the Western Infirmary, Glasgow, served with Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service Reserve during the War, and was appointed to the Royal Air Force Nursing Service in 1918. She was promoted to the rank of senior sister in 1925, and to Matron in 1927. Miss Blair has held appointments as Matron of Royal Air Force hospitals at home and in Palestine and Iraq;

she is at present Matron at the Royal Air Force Hospital, Cranwell.

Miss Blair has been a Registered Nurse since 1923.

NURSES AND TRADES UNIONISM.

During the past month there has been continued activity in the propaganda of a Trades Union Association for Nurses, and a sub-committee of the Trades Union Council is in communication with Miss Thora Silverthorne, S.R.N., Secretary of the recently formed Guild of Nurses, with a view to reaching agreement on the question of a Union for Nurses. The Guild is preparing a case for a 48-hour week and for other "reforms." Mrs. Iris Brook, S.R.N., is also actively engaged in organising nurses on trades union lines.

Both ladies have been nominated for election on to the General Nursing Council for England and Wales at the forthcoming election in December next.

It is rumoured that the College of Nursing has requested to have representation on the Advisory Committee. We wonder why!

The Daily Mirror, *John Bull* and other doughty publications are well on the war-path, notably *The Guy's Hospital Gazette*, which has in its September and in its October issues, editorials in sympathy with the trade union idea. In consequence the Editor received letters from members of the College of Nursing contesting the necessity for any other form of organisation for Nurses than that of the College. But there are other groups who prefer self-government, and the Editor of the *Gazette*, after taking tea at the College and being initiated into its various activities, ends a kindly and moderate criticism with the following expression of opinion:

"It seems to us that the constitution of the nursing profession is, even in this democratic age, one of benevolent autocracy. We will not deny the merits of the arrangement. But we do feel that unless some adequate outlet be provided for the discussion of real difficulties of the rank and file by the formation of a truly democratic representation . . . fears of the problem assuming a political character may well be fulfilled. It is for the very avoidance of this that we feel that a movement awakening interest in such matters demands approval."

The College of Nursing has always ignored the successful work of colleagues outside its control who have in reality created and organized all the progressive movements for the uplift of nursing for the past half century. State Registration—the International Council of Nurses, etc., which the College failed to support until the creators had made them of powerful and successful significance.

This policy has earned for the College group of organisers the reputation of "benevolent autocracy" and their latest policy of absorption—to gather under their absolute control the Private Nurses' Co-operations and Associations, whilst having no economic responsibility concerning them, is evidence of lack of sympathy for the sanctity of freedom of professional conscience and action.

Twenty years ago the late Miss Maud MacCallum attempted to organise nurses on trades union lines under the title of "The Professional Union of Trained Nurses," the inner history of the opposition to, and defeat of, the movement broke her heart. In this connection we may place on record the fact that owing to her intelligent advocacy the Labour Party gave whole-hearted support to the passing of the Nurses' Registration Acts in 1919. It was the members of the Conservative Party, to their discredit, who "talked out" our Bill after a thirty years' struggle with reaction. Thus, why fear any political group? Nurses have votes. We advise them to stand on their own feet and organise as seems good to them. Very rapidly the "Old order changeth."

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