

## THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON NURSING SERVICES.

The Ministry of Health on November 9th announced the personnel of the Inter-Departmental Committee which is to inquire into the recruitment, training, registration, and terms and conditions of service of nurses. The committee which consists of the following persons has now begun its task:—

Lord Athlone (chairman), President of the Queen's Institute of District Nursing.

Dr. Dorothy Brock, Head Mistress of the Mary Datchelor School, London.

Mr. E. W. Cemlyn-Jones, Chairman of the Public Health and Housing Committee of the County Councils' Association.

Miss Gertrude Cowlin, Visitor for the Central Council of District Nursing, London.

Mr. Rhys Davies, M.P. for Westhoughton.

Mr. H. A. de Montmorency, a Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Health.

Sir Francis Fremantle, M.P. for St. Albans.

Sir Arthur J. Hall, formerly Professor of Medicine in the University of Sheffield and Consultant Physician at the Sheffield Royal Hospital.

Mrs. F. A. Keynes, who has been Mayor of Cambridge and is a member of the Public Assistance Committee of the Association of Municipal Corporations.

Miss Megan Lloyd George, M.P. for Anglesey.

Mr. C. W. Maudslay, a Principal Assistant Secretary, Board of Education.

Sir Frederick Menzies, County Medical Officer of Health for London.

Miss E. M. Musson, Chairman of the General Nursing Council.

Mr. R. H. P. Orde, Hon. Secretary, British Hospitals Association.

Dr. Gilbert E. Orme, a Medical Practitioner in private practice, who is actively interested in nursing questions.

Professor R. M. F. Picken, of the Welsh National School of Medicine, formerly Medical Officer of Health and School Medical Officer, Cardiff.

Miss D. M. Smith, Matron of Middlesex Hospital.

Mr. H. S. Souttar, Surgeon on the staff of the London Hospital.

Dr. W. Rees Thomas, a Medical Senior Commissioner, Board of Control.

Miss Frances Wakeford, Staff Nurse at the Kingston and District Hospital of the Surrey County Council.

Mr. H. M. Walton, Director of Education, Middlesex County Council.

### AN OFFICIAL EXPLANATION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE.

Sir Weldon Dalrymple-Champneys, the joint Secretary with Mr. W. A. B. Hamilton, of the Committee, recently explained the constitution of the Committee to a meeting of nurses at Birmingham, members of the Association of Hospital Matrons and members of the College of Nursing.

Sir Weldon said that "the Inter-Departmental Committee was not an arbitration committee, nor a judicial committee, nor an executive committee. Consequently, its constitution had never been intended to be representative of all the different interests concerned with the nursing services which would, of course, have made the Committee hopelessly cumbersome and quite unworkable.

#### A Committee of Investigation.

"It was a committee of investigation, and consequently the members had been selected as being persons possessing knowledge, experience and ability of different kinds which would enable them to collect all the information available,

assess its value and come to conclusions helpful to the Minister of Health and to the President of the Board of Education when determining what steps should be taken to ensure that an adequate domiciliary and institutional nursing service might be maintained."

#### A Tactical Mistake.

The Minister of Health and the President of the Board of Education are responsible for the extraordinarily unrepresentative personnel of the Committee which consists of 21 persons, 17 of whom are lay and medical persons, and a greater tactical mistake has never been made by any Government than to exclude the expert representatives of enlightened and responsible organisations of nurses from a Committee ostensibly appointed to consider the educational and economic conditions of their own profession. Surely such a reactionary attitude of mind belongs to the anti-suffrage era when women were "chattels" in law.

#### Sixty Thousand "Uitlanders."

What makes the exclusion the more significant and deplorable is that the College of Nursing and the Association of Hospital Matrons have been given representation on the Committee of Inquiry, but the Sixty Thousand Registered Nurses who are not members of these groups including the Royal British Nurses' Association, the first Chartered Corporation of Nurses, the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain (associated membership upwards of forty thousand), the British College of Nurses, and all the organisations of special nurses trained to care for mental, infectious diseases, maternity, and the Trades' Union groups, have been determinedly excluded from the Committee. Why? Because they claim self-determination and freedom of conscience, and have opposed coercion. That is the truth in a nutshell. And smarting under this grave injustice another truth becomes apparent to the Sixty Thousand "Uitlanders"—that a so-called National Government is National only in name and not in effect—a truth long suspected.

The situation summed up by a trade union nurse is worthy of consideration. "You see," she remarked "we have the support of our Political Party—and *you have not.*"

#### Not Intended to be Representative.

Miss Thora Silverthorne, General Secretary of the Association of Nurses, Great Ormond Street, states in the *Times*: "My attention has been drawn to your report of a speech by Sir Weldon Dalrymple-Champneys on the Inter-Departmental Committee of the Ministers of Health and Education on the Shortage of Nurses. Sir Weldon is reported as saying that the Committee is not intended to be representative of all the different interests concerned with nursing services, but is just a committee of investigation. It is curious, therefore, that the only four nurses on a large committee should all happen to be members of one organisation, the College of Nursing, and that all other nursing organisations should be excluded, although at least two of them applied to the Minister of Health for representation before the Committee was set up."

#### A Pure Coincidence.

To which Miss Frances G. Goodall, Secretary, College of Nursing, replies in the *Times*:—

"Your correspondent, Miss Thora Silverthorne, makes a statement in her letter which was published in your issue of January 27th, which may create some misunderstanding in the minds of those who are not conversant with the constitution of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services. The latter was set up, I believe, by the Ministry of Health and Board of Education and no Nurses' organisations as such were invited to appoint representatives to serve thereon. The four nurses on this committee, it is understood, were selected for their personal qualifications and professional experience. [By whom?—E.D.]

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