

THE L.C.C. AND THE ATHLONE REPORT.

The General Purposes Committee having reviewed at length the report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services, recommended the Council to inform the Minister of Health that, having regard to the magnitude of the financial burdens which would be imposed on hospital authorities if the report was implemented, a State grant in respect of training only was inadequate; that grants to voluntary hospitals should be made out of central and not out of local funds; that local expenditure was at such a level as to render prohibitive the cost of the suggested grants of local authorities to voluntary hospitals; and that the cost of nurses' salaries if controlled centrally on the "Burnham" model, should be met largely out of central funds.

Dame Barrie Lambert said that enormous improvements in nurses' working conditions had been effected since 1930. She hoped that the salary increases would be to the trained and not to the untrained staff, who were sufficiently paid. It would be a bad move to place on local authorities the duty of contributing to voluntary hospitals. They should fight against block grants.

Dr. Somerville Hastings said the entry of nurses had been much better of late, and he was told that for about 10,000 positions there were now only about 130 vacancies.

The Assistant Nurse Bogey.

Dame Barrie Lambert moved an amendment asking that further consideration should be given with a view to finding an alternative to the term "assistant nurse." The amendment was rejected and the recommendations were agreed to.

As soon as the material benefits projected in the Report are agreed, there is little doubt that all vacancies in hospitals will be filled, and the "assistant nurse" should fade out of the picture so far as legal status is concerned—even if the College of Nursing insists upon the competition of this pet lamb with the Registered Nurse—as soon as fictitious "control" is instituted—the public will insist, as it has a right to do, to employ any unauthorised person in its own house. Parliament never has, and, we hope, never will, prohibit liberty of action in the home. All its rightful functions are fulfilled when it prohibits unprofessional persons posing as skilled, and assuming qualifications they do not possess. This is the policy in relation to the medical profession, and is quite enough safeguard in relation to professional nurses.

To hallmark quacks is unjustifiable.

A.R.P. UNIFORMS.

BLUE DRILL OVERALLS.

Local authorities have been informed that the uniforms contemplated for A.R.P. volunteers will be as follows:—

Men.—A uniform overall (combination suit) in a heavy drill cloth of dark blue colour, with a red badge consisting of the letters "A.R.P." within an oval on the left breast.

Women drivers and attendants of ambulances and drivers of cars for sitting casualties.—A light coat of the same drill with the same badge, and a soft peaked cap.

Women air raid wardens.—An overall of the same bluette drill, with the same badge, and a blue felt hat.

Women members of the staffs of first aid posts.—A nursing overall, similar to that provided for nursing auxiliaries, but bearing the letters "A.R.P."

Women members of control and report centre staffs.—A cotton overall with the letters "A.R.P."

The Lord Privy Seal is making these arrangements in order that there shall be standard types of uniform garments for A.R.P. volunteers in all areas.

"REGISTERED NURSE CONSCIOUS."

Perusal of the July number of *The Pacific Coast Journal of Nursing* aroused a keen sense of satisfaction, after the depreciation of professional status and lack of appreciation of skilled service at home.

The issue of the Journal is dedicated by the nurses "To the Governor of California and members of the Fifty-third Session of the California Legislature on the recent passing of an Act for the Registration of Nurses," upon which momentous event they have the sincere congratulations of their colleagues in Great Britain.

To quote the *Journal*: "The interest and understanding appreciation of the needs of professional nurses in California on the part of those members of the Legislature bear direct evidence that we may count them as staunch friends of the profession. The nurses were sincere and honest in their goal and chief objective, that of providing a safe and adequate nursing service based upon the community needs. . . ."

Mischievous Amendments Defeated.

"On May 25, the Bill was presented for final debate in the Assembly during an evening session. Several amendments were offered to the Bill that if adopted would have nullified the intent of the Bill. . . . One which would have waived the examination provision and granted a licence without examination. This would have been particularly detrimental, because it would have granted licences to many not eligible for R.N. under the present Act. This amendment was defeated.

"Another member presented eight amendments. The first six, considered together, were to delete from the Bill the words, 'trained, graduate, and professional,' and leaving only the term registered. These six amendments were defeated; the other two were to exempt the schools conducted for teaching practical nurses. In presenting the argument, Mr. Lyon made a long impassioned plea for these schools, but the vote was against the adoption, 43 to 12.

"The Senate Committee on Public Health and Quarantine considered the Bill on May 30th. The same amendments were again defeated and the Bill sent to the Senate floor with a unanimous 'Do pass' recommendation.

"On June 6th the Bill came before the members of the Senate and passed without a dissenting vote. After Assembly concurrence in the Senate Amendment, the Bill went to the Governor for signature.

A Conquest or an Inquest?

"The success of the legislative programme has resulted from all combined forces working harmoniously together for improved conditions in nursing. Three years ago when we started the study of nursing needs, we stated that we were pursuing a quest for professional recognition, and time would prove whether or not it would ultimately be a conquest or an inquest.

"Fellow nurses, we have succeeded in making the citizens of California 'Registered Nurse conscious,' and in this consciousness it follows that the citizens of California are going to look to the nurses to help in the solution of many community problems. The task is ours and we can do it. Unity of purpose solves many a problem.

"In conclusion, there is the desire again to add that last word of sincere appreciation to the members of the Legislature. The contact with them has been marked with friendly courtesy and patience at all times."

Would that this intelligent frame of mind in Nursing affairs was apparent in our Mother of Parliaments. Alas! Destruction, not construction, of nursing standards would appear to be its persistent aim. How is it to be made "Registered Nurse Conscious"?

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