

probationer to the wards of any hospital below the age of 17.

(8) Unreasonable rules and restrictions affecting the nurse, both when on and off duty, are by no means uncommon. Hospitals should examine their rules, in consultation with the staff, in order to revise them in the light of modern conditions.

(9) Nurses' Councils, on the lines of Whitley Councils, should be set up in all hospitals to promote the removal of grievances and to give the staff some voice in the administration of the hospital.

(10) In a number of hospitals, improvements are desirable in the accommodation provided for nurses, the catering for the nursing staff, the arrangements for "off-duty" times and annual leave, and the routine medical inspection of nurses. Probationers should be relieved of unnecessary domestic work. Permission to "live out" should be granted more freely to the trained staff.

(11) Courses should be provided by Local Education Authorities in order to enable Secondary School and ex-Elementary School girls to prepare to take the First Part of the Preliminary State Examination before entry to hospital.

(12) These courses should help to bridge the "gap" between the time of leaving school and entering hospital.

(13) The Test Examination should be retained as a temporary expedient only and the papers set should be modified. Girls who take the First Part of the Preliminary State Examination should be exempted from the Test Examination.

(14) The "assistant nurse," *i.e.*, the nurse who at present practises nursing without holding a recognised qualification, should be placed on a Roll under the control of the General Nursing Council. In the future these nurses would have to undergo a period of two years' practical training before admission to the Roll; existing assistant nurses would be admitted to the Roll on easier conditions.

(15) It should be made an offence for nurses' co-operations and agencies to supply for gain, for the purpose of nursing the sick, any person not on the State Register or Roll. The qualifications of the nurse supplied should be revealed to the applicant for the nurse's services. Local authorities should be empowered to license, register and inspect all such agencies and co-operations.

(16) The majority of the Committee recommend the retention and protection by law of the title "Assistant Nurse." Some members suggest, however, that these persons should be known as "Registered Invalid Attendants."

With many of these recommendations the Registered Nurses will be in warm sympathy. Higher Salaries. Standard hours of work to 96 per fortnight. Pensions. The abolition of unnecessary Rules and Restrictions, the organisation of Nurses' Councils. Better accommodation where required and longer annual leave.

It is high time that these reforms were made by employers of nurses. But the protection of their statutory title of "Registered Nurse," and in consequence their economic security, is of paramount importance, and they are naturally strongly opposed to the competition of the semi-trained Assistant Nurse,

who it is proposed shall be admitted to a Statutory Roll without examination.

THE ASSISTANT NURSE.

As the recommendation of the Select Committee to give semi-trained "Assistant Nurses" legal status and protection under the Nurses' Registration Act appears to us so grossly unjust, we are publishing below the reasons advanced which have influenced this lay Committee in making this disastrous proposal, in the hope that Registered Nurses will carefully study them and realise the menace to their future status and economic security; hoping also that they will rise and take action before the proposal is thrust through Parliament, which is evidently the intention of the Select Committee and the General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

That the four Registered Nurses on the Committee, members of the College of Nursing, should have agreed to this proposal and signed the Report, cannot be too severely condemned by their colleagues, who have qualified themselves by years of practical work and theoretical study and examination for the honourable status they at present enjoy.

REASONS ADVANCED BY SELECT COMMITTEE FOR PROPOSAL TO GIVE LEGAL STATUS TO SEMI-TRAINED NURSES.

THE ASSISTANT NURSE

The evidence placed before us shows that a large body of women, varying greatly in age, skill and experience, who are not trained nurses or training for admission to the Register, are engaged in nursing the sick, and, in so far as they are employed in hospitals or institutions, are usually known as "Assistant Nurses." In many instances these women render very useful services and it appears certain that however rapidly recruitment to the Nursing Profession may improve in the near future, as the result of the reforms now being carried out or those suggested by this Committee, it will not be possible for at least some years to come, or perhaps ever, to carry on the nursing services of the country without the aid of assistant nurses. We are satisfied that if these assistant nurses always worked in hospitals and other institutions under trained supervision their employment would be of great help to the community, but we are equally convinced that their uncontrolled employment constitutes a definite danger to the patients under their care and tends to lower the status of the whole Nursing Profession.

At the present time many of these women are doing excellent work in hospitals and institutions, especially in caring for the chronic sick. Others, however, leave the hospitals or institutions where they have been employed in this work, or the training schools in which they have started but failed to complete their training for the State Examinations of the General Nursing Council, or other hospitals for the acute sick which are not recognised as training schools, and either find employment in private nursing homes or join nurses' co-operations from which they are sent to nurse patients in their homes or are supplied to hospitals for temporary work during a shortage of nurses. We have been told of many cases where a probationer who has not completed her training or who has failed to pass her

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)