

women. "We need girls of intelligence. The spirit of service is by no means lacking to-day, but may I venture to suggest that neither the girls, their parents, nor the teachers have been given the chance to judge for themselves either the wide scope for varied talents, or the uniformed amenities which nurses in training enjoy to-day. Those of you who are ambitious will find in nursing scope unlimited."

Miss Hayter, of the London County Council, concluded a most eloquent appeal: "Undoubtedly," she said, "the profession of nursing never held out better prospects for the future than it does to-day, but we must not be blinded by material gain—to give, rather than to get, must be uppermost in one's mind when dealing with suffering humanity, and in asking you to seriously consider the question of taking up nursing as a career, I know I am appealing to the generous spirit of young people whose enthusiasm and help are badly needed in the nursing profession to-day."

Lady Cynthia Colville, vice-chairman of the National Nursing Need Committee, thanked the Lord Mayor and City Corporation for allowing the Guildhall to be used for the meeting, and said they were particularly grateful to the headmistresses who had done so much towards getting the young audience together.

Queen Mary attended the overflow meeting in the Council Chamber for part of the time and listened to student-nurses speaking in support of the great profession to which they have the honour to belong.

Congratulations to Mrs. H. J. Tennant. We feel sure the National Nursing Need Committee will accomplish great things, if it stands firmly for the protection of the Registered Nurses educational and economic standards, so valiantly won and so sincerely valued by them.

POLITICAL NOTES.

NURSES' CONDITIONS OF SERVICE.

As announced in *The Times*, "the Interim Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services was considered on March 8th at a meeting of the Health and Housing Committee of Government supporters in the House of Commons. The discussion was opened by Mr. H. S. Souttar (of the London Hospital) and Professor R. M. F. Picken (of Cardiff), who agreed that the staffing of voluntary and municipal hospitals required a recruitment of at least 20,000 nurses a year. They suggested that if the conditions of service, salaries and pensions for nurses compared more favourably with those in other occupations open to women, the present shortage of entrants to nursing would soon be overcome. Without state aid they believed that it would be impossible for the voluntary hospitals to offer adequate salaries and shorter hours of employment. The Interim Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee will be the subject of a motion by Sir Francis Fremantle when the House of Commons goes into Committee on the Civil Estimates."

It is to be hoped that the Health and Housing Committee of the House of Commons will strongly deprecate the disintegration of the Nursing Profession as by law established, by attempting to institute the Grade II Nurse by Act of Parliament as recommended by the Inter-Departmental Committee

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

DEFINE THE PLACE AND DUTIES OF THE NURSE IN OUR HEALTH SERVICES.

We have pleasure in awarding the Prize this month to Miss J. G. Gilchrist, S.R.N., M.B.C.N., 12, Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh.

PRIZE PAPER.

The Public Health Act of 1875 marked an important year in the history of this country and in the history of Sanitary Science when the legislature began to take a serious interest in the health of the community as a whole.

The year 1870 introduced the State system of elementary education and public instruction became a civic affair, a Government undertaking.

It is worthy of note, at this present time of recall to National Service and sacrifice, to note, that the selection of recruits for the Boer War (1890-1902) led to the quickened sense of public duty and urgent need of systematic schemes for the promotion of health and prevention of disease. The crippling effects of illness in childhood, the appalling amount of disease and defect found on investigation, led to the important administrative Acts which brought the three principal services for public welfare into active operation, in which the place and duties of the Nurse were defined by Parliamentary sanction. Briefly, the Acts which opened the door of opportunity for service and have progressed increasingly for half a century are (1) the Education Acts, 1907-8 when the medical inspection of school children began, with the subsequent Act of 1913, for the Prevention and Treatment of Disease; (2) the Notification of Births Act, 1907, which led to the Extension Act of 1915—the general empowering Act for Welfare Schemes.

The Prevention and Treatment of Diseases Act, 1913, giving authority to County Councils to arrange for treatment of tuberculosis, marked an epoch in the preventive work also. The Prevention of Tuberculosis Regulations, 1925, had a far-reaching effect in the control of bovine-tubercular infection in relation to children.

In the furtherance of the above schemes the place of the Nurse has been and is of the utmost importance. She is the practical idealist, the connecting link between the Authority and the individual, the bridge-builder between the old generation and the new—imbued with the love of humanity associated with the love of craft. For the impairment of the physique of the human body is the impairment of intellectual and moral fibre, and the body is the tabernacle of the spirit of man.

The early pioneer work required a missionary spirit of reform with intelligent sympathy and power of inspiring hope. The visiting in mean streets and sordid impossible homes. The understanding of the apathy of despair, the breaking down of resentment at interference, the neurosis of debility, unemployment, the unwilling acceptance of help and advice in those hardened by circumstance had to be overcome. Though many still fall by the wayside, the whole standard of fitness and living is now enormously raised from its plight of 40 years ago, and there is no doubt that the steady educative influence of the Public Health Nurse has contributed largely to this attainment.

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