

COMING EVENTS.

MARCH.

March 18th.—The British College of Nurses. Council Meeting, 19, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7. 2.30 p.m.

March 21st.—Public Meeting, Caxton Hall, London, S.W.1. 8 p.m., under the auspices of the Royal British Nurses' Association, to protest against the proposal of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services to extend the functions of the Nurses' Registration Act to include a Roll of women who have failed to attain the minimum standard of qualification, now recognised by the State, for admission to the Register. Tickets of admission obtainable, free of charge, from the Secretary, Royal British Nurses' Association, 194, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7.

March 24th.—General Nursing Council for England and Wales. Monthly Meeting, 23, Portland Place, London, W.1. 2.30 p.m.

March 30th.—The British College of Nurses, 19, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7. Reception to Fellows, Members and friends for inspection of the new Headquarters. 3.30 to 6 p.m. Tea.

APRIL.

April 18th.—National Council of Nurses of Great Britain. Meeting of the Executive Committee, Kent Room, Caxton Hall, Caxton Street, Westminster, S.W.1. 2.30 p.m.

April 19th.—London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, Gower Street, London, W.C. (1) Illustrated lecture by Mrs. E. C. Pillman Williams, M.B.E., M.A. (Cantab.), M.B., B.S. (Lecturer in Bio-Chemistry, Royal Free Hospital), on "Diet in Rheumatism." Brickner-Benner Memorial Lecture.

(2) *April 26th.*—Illustrated lecture by Sir Albert Howard, C.I.E., M.A., formerly Director of the Institute of Plant Industry, Indore, and Agricultural Adviser to States in Central India and Rajputana, on "Health Nutrition and Soil Fertility." Silver collection. 8 p.m.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

PROFESSIONAL DIRECTION FOR PROFESSIONAL WOMEN.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—The Minister of Health, speaking in the House of Commons on Thursday, March 2nd, stated that the whole plan of civil defence rested on the regional organisation, and the Ministry of Health played a considerable part in the regional emergency organisation. He then described the organisation proposed, and gave the names of the group, medical officers for the London area who had accepted nomination, and "he was able to say, therefore, that the London hospital plan was drawn up, and would be operated on lines approved by the leaders of the profession, and that the men who were to be in charge in war were in charge now."

We await the proposals of the Central Emergency Committee for training nursing auxiliaries, which arrangements are to include "a certain amount of practical experience in the hospitals." Is it not time that the Nursing Profession also expressed quite clearly and unmistakably the conditions of service of which it approves? That it will work only under professional direction in regard to professional work first and foremost, that if it is necessary to utilise the services of women with short term training it shall be in subordinate positions, and that State Registered Nurses shall be placed in responsible charge of the sick.

The organisation of the 23 hospitals of the Territorial Army Nursing Service in the Great War shows what can be done when the Nursing Profession is given its proper position and authority. The members of the Territorial Army Nursing Service were selected beforehand for the positions for which they were considered suitable by Matrons who had had experience in hospital administration, and when called up at the outbreak of war stepped into their appointed places at 24 hours' notice, and the magnificent work that they did throughout the War all the world knows. It is not too much to claim that in the first few weeks of the War the nursing of our sick and wounded was saved from a debacle by the previous provision and organisation of the Territorial Hospitals.

But the time for nurses to make their voices heard—and that unmistakably—as to the conditions under which they will accept service is now, not when a crisis is upon us.

I am, Dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

MARGARET BREAY,

Vice-President, British College of Nurses.

THE DENIAL OF PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

General Hospital,

Northampton.

DEAR EDITOR,—I noted in a recent issue of the JOURNAL the list of people assigned to the task of organising Nursing services in case of National Emergency, and fully endorse the remarks that followed as all intelligent Nurses will do.

I should like to compare the Minister of Health to the ostrich burying his head in the sand of political popularity, hoping his denial of our rights with regard to the Nursing Profession will pass by unnoticed! I think he will find out that his present Central Emergency Committee will be about as much help to the cause of National Emergency as his Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing will be in protecting the Nursing Profession. I wonder when these politicians and their Nursing satellites will realise that there are plenty of intelligent people in the Nursing Profession fully able to do all the organisation necessary among Nurses, and do it much quicker as well as more satisfactorily than outsiders. Not until they leave Nursing matters entirely to Nurses will the status of the individual Nurse rise to its proper place in world affairs, and as an independent body (as yet) we are entitled to demand knowledge of the conditions governing such National Services, and what safeguards are to be instituted against the use of the title of "Nurse" by any other worker doing National Emergency work of this type. Incidentally, all emergency workers in this category should be supervised by Registered Nurses. As you say, there are 85,000 of them, represented by half a dozen officially controlled, on this pretentious Committee.

As an example of what even Medical Health Officers know about Nurses—there was an advertisement in the local paper a few weeks ago, announcing that a meeting was being called by the Borough Medical Officer of Health to discuss Air Raid Precautions. Representatives of all public services were to be there, including Nursing Services. I 'phoned to the Department concerned to ask who was representing Nursing Services and could obtain no particulars whatsoever. I asked the M.O.H. personally a few days later, and again a very vague reply was given. This led me to the conviction that the Nursing Services were being represented by lay workers such as V.A.D.s or even a more "lay" organisation than that! My action in the matter may lead to more particular representation in the future, but such action should not be necessary if our Medical Services were a bit more up to date.—Yours sincerely,

C. L. NELSON, *Matron.*

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