

## WHY NOT NOW?

Immediate planning for post-war reconstruction was urged by Lord Horder in an address to members of the Overseas League, by whom he was recently entertained at luncheon.

In explaining the significance of the title of his talks "Why Not Now?" he said that recently a friend had remarked, "After the fighting is finished we must start to build a new world," and he had retorted, "Why not start now?"

We invite Registered Nurses—with whom no physician is more popular than Lord Horder—to respond to his suggestion, and carefully consider their professional responsibilities now. The war caught them napping, as fully demonstrated by the publicity given in the Press to nursing affairs.

It is no good criticising and grumbling. Nurses now have a chance to improve conditions, and, incidentally, to help to effect reforms too long delayed.

Let us hope the Matrons, who should be leaders, will show their capacity for taking the initiative, and thus encourage the rank and file. If they fail to lead they will be left behind, as war conditions have brought into power politicians who are apparently eager to make reforms—if they know how. The Ministry of Health has us in its—we were going to write clutches—we will substitute the word power, and it is our duty to guide its actions by expert advice.

The new Minister of Health (Mr. Ernest Brown) is evidently in earnest in his desire to improve nursing conditions, and has wisely realised that nursing is women's work; he has already agreed that the whole of public health and hospital work of the Nursing Department is to be grouped on its professional side under the general direction of a Chief Nursing Officer, with two deputies, and has asked the Parliamentary Secretary, Miss Horsbrugh, to make the Nursing Division her special concern. This is our opportunity; we must avail ourselves of it. Why not now?

### Miss Horsbrugh in Action.

The most valuable line of action in Ministry of Health policy relates to the organisation of a Register of Student Nurses who will be advised to enter training schools attached to hospitals, where they will receive training which qualifies for a professional career—which, let us hope, will have attained by the end of the war to more satisfactory conditions than pertains at present.

Thus we are pleased to note, as reported in *The Times*, that Miss Horsbrugh has recently paid a visit to the Nursing Recruitment Centre in Cavendish Square, when she inaugurated a national campaign. She laid stress on the need for more and more qualified nurses in all branches of war work, and said the number of girls entering this profession had increased steadily, but the demand had been such that the Ministry of Health must campaign for more recruits. For girls with good education it was doubtful whether any other profession provided more and better openings. Not only was this war work of the highest value, but those who responded to this appeal would have an assured career both during and after the war for as long as they chose to go on with it.

In recent years conditions in the nursing profession had been vastly improved, making it one of the most attractive for a girl. In normal times, once a girl had obtained her certificate as a registered nurse in this country it formed a passport to work in all parts of the world. In addition there had been great extensions in the public health service, all requiring more nurses. Schools, factories, rest centres, and many more now had nurses attached to them.

Large numbers of recruits to the Civil Nursing Reserve had found the profession so worthwhile that they had taken it up freely.

Lord Luke, on behalf of the King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, of which the Nursing Recruitment Centre is part, assured Miss Horsbrugh that the centre would co-operate fully in this campaign. Miss Edwards, organising Secretary of the Centre, reported that the number of applications had recently increased by over 100 per cent.

This is good news, but if any one can make recruitment a success it is Miss Edwards,

Once for a few weeks we had the pleasure of working with her, in our I.C.N. Congress Office, preparatory to its meeting in London in 1937. Then, alas! she was whisked away to Geneva, owing to the illness of the Executive Secretary, resulting in the use of much midnight oil, and the sight of sun rises for those left behind, bereft of her valuable services.

### The New Matron-in-Chief.

We welcome Miss Katherine Watt, C.B.E., R.R.C., R.G.N., as chief Nursing Officer, and hope that as her office is under the English and not the Scottish Ministry of Health, that her name will soon be found inscribed on the Register of Nurses conducted by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales. As reciprocity is easily available, there need be no difficulty about this.

Miss Watt was trained at the renowned Western Infirmary, Glasgow, and her name appears on the Scottish Register of Nurses.

As both the Minister of Health, and his Parliamentary Secretary, Miss Horsbrugh, represent Scottish constituencies, recognition of English claims in this particular can hardly lay them open to an accusation of undue favouritism! *Toujours perdrix* becomes a little monotonous.

### Deputy Nursing Officers.

The Minister of Health has appointed Miss M. E. Flambert and Miss M. G. Lawson to be Deputy Nursing Officers of the Ministry of Health. They will work under the Chief Nursing Officer, Miss K. C. Watt, in the new Nursing Division of the Ministry.

Miss Flambert, State Registered Nurse, took her general training at the Nightingale School, St. Thomas's Hospital; Midwifery at the Radcliffe Maternity Home, Oxford; and Public Health Training at Bedford College for Women, where she held the Scholarship awarded by the Nightingale Fund Council for the International Course in Public Health. She has gained distinction in Preventive Medicine and Hygiene and holds seven certificates for Health and Nursing. Her professional experience includes Charge Nurse and Acting Sister-in-Charge at St. Thomas's Private Nursing Home, Sister-in-Charge of the same hospital's Mothercraft Department, Superintendent of the Dalgarno Welfare Centre, Kensington; and Health Officer of the same borough from 1937 to 1938. For the last three years she has been a Woman Inspector of the Ministry of Health.

Miss Lawson, State Registered Nurse, also took her general training at the Nightingale Training School at St. Thomas's, and in 1934 gained the Gold Medal of the year, Honour Certificate, and Diploma of Nursing (with distinction), University of London. She has been Ward Sister, Departmental Sister, Sister Tutor, Night Superintendent and Second Assistant Matron in the Nightingale Training School; examiner for various hospitals, for the General Nursing Council, and for the Diploma in Nursing, University of London; Supervisor of Training Schools for Nurses, London County Council, 1937, and was appointed Acting Principal Matron, London County Council, 1939.

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