

## WHY NOT SUPPORT YOUR PROFESSION? \*

By BYRON ENGLAND.

*The advantages of belonging to your own professional organisation are discussed by an educator.*

Every profession is confronted with problems peculiar to the type of services rendered. On the other hand some problems occur generally in all professions and because of their prevalence should command the serious thought of every professional man and woman regardless of the occupation followed.

In the first place, preparation for one profession in terms of time and expense will yield incomparably larger financial returns than a corresponding amount of preparation in time and expense will yield in another profession. Generally speaking, there is no capital investment in the professions except during the period of preparation. The investment of one's life and services is common to members of all professions. It therefore seems to follow that a close correlation should exist between preparation for and return from any of the multitude of professions.

A second problem common to the professions is the individual's contribution in service. Some are never willing to meet more than the minimum demands for time, effort, and self-improvement, while others are eager to share their experiences, to lengthen their hours, to increase their efforts for the benefit of the entire profession.

Another consideration is the establishment of ethical standards to govern one's relationship to a profession. Closely allied to this last thought is the question of advancing the cause and ideals of a particular profession. A high degree of intelligence and training is required to place any profession on a favourable footing with the public it must serve.

What better way is there to approach and solve these and many other problems than by banding together for the mutual exchange of ideas through all-inclusive organisations for professional growth and advancement? How is the least informed in a group to learn about the common purposes and the interpretation of the ethical ideals of his profession unless he becomes an integral part of the group? Those who by gift and studious preparation have much to offer for the general good of a profession must find some means of sharing their experiences with their own group. Membership in professional organisations is the only satisfactory answer yet devised to these and other important questions.

Students of education have long known that professional organisation has been responsible for the major advances made by several of the leading groups during the past few decades. The medical profession has almost completely assumed control of the number of new doctors graduated into its ranks each year. Medical and premedical schools have by no means voluntarily raised the requirements of professional training. It may be true, of course, that these same schools have not been the sole arbiters in establishing the difficulty of courses, once set up.

Closely following the example of the medical profession have been the lawyers. The trend toward requiring a degree from a recognised law school in addition to

passing state bar examinations is an evidence that the professional standards of that profession are being raised. The lawyers have a distinct advantage in raising their standards, since most law-making bodies in our various states are composed principally of lawyers.

Also, the teachers of the nation, through professional organisation, are beginning to be heard in matters determining what the teacher shall know before being allowed to practice on the youth of the land. Incidentally, a distinctly wholesome trend toward more adequately supported schools has resulted from the efforts of the teachers.

The great advances in our American civilisation have been instituted by organised minorities. It, therefore, is fallacious to contend that professional organisation, however small, is a waste of effort and funds. *It is not the size of the organisation that accounts for its strength: the better reason is its unity.*

There is no good reason why professional men and women should not belong to their own professional organisations. On the other hand, those who refuse to become thus identified hardly merit the benefits accruing to the efforts of those who have been more zealous. If one's talents and interests guide him to cast his lot in a certain profession, his pride and ambition should compel him to use his influence and good will for the furtherance of the ideals of service through his professional organisation.

The British College of Nurses, 19 Queen's Gate, London S.W.7, is based on these principles. Write to the Secretary for information.

### PERSONAL WORRIES AND WAR STRAIN.

The relation of mental illness to war strain is discussed by Dr. Arthur Pool, the Medical Superintendent of The Retreat, York, in his annual report, which deals also with the unsettling effects of personal worries which may follow demobilisation.

Dr. Pool says there is no noticeable increase in the number of admissions, and in only two cases could the war be said to be a direct cause of mental breakdown.

Dr. Pool anticipates there will be no notable increase in nervous illness during the war, because, in the majority of such cases, the illness is due to personal problems, and the effect of this war is to encourage us to put our personal worries on one side, realising the difficulties which face the country as a whole.

If peace brings with it another slump, with consequent unemployment and a sense of personal economic insecurity, then we shall certainly see a sharp rise in the number of cases of acute and psychotic illness.

Dr. Pool says that in preparation for such a contingency he would like to see (1) slower and more graded demobilisation; (2) the provision of paid utility work for those who cannot be absorbed into industry; (3) a wider recognition of the help psychology can afford in industry; and (4) an extension into the provinces of the help afforded by such clinics as the Tavistock Clinic in London.

### POLISH RELIEF FUND.

Dr. Tancred Borenius will give a lecture on "Canalotto's Warsaw" at the Dorchester on Thursday, February 26, at 6 p.m., in aid of the Polish Relief Fund. The lecture will be illustrated by lantern slides of eighteenth century Warsaw. Tickets may be obtained from the Polish Relief Fund, 33, Belgrave Square, or at the door.

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