

NURSING IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Mr. Ernest Brown, M.P., Minister of Health, and Miss Horsbrugh, Parliamentary Secretary, are kept busy answering the questions of Members on nursing questions in the House of Commons.

The General Nursing Council.

Mr. Rhys Davies asked the Minister recently whether he had now completed his inquiry into the decision of the General Nursing Council to prevent persons from sitting for examinations under the auspices of the Council without giving any reason for refusal; and with what result?

Mr. Brown replied: I regret I have not yet received the observations of the Council on the matter.

Twenty Years After Term of Grace.

Mr. F. Messer asked the Minister of Health if he would consider taking steps to reopen the register of nurses to entitle those nurses who were qualified and had obtained their hospital certificates, but were for various reasons not placed on this register, when it was first opened, to the status of a State-registered nurse.

Mr. E. Brown replied: Legislation would be required to vary the conditions on which nurses can be admitted to the State register. I will bear the suggestion in mind when occasion arises.

Male Nurses and General Register.

Mr. Messer asked the Minister if, in view of the fact that male nurses underwent the same period of training as female nurses and of the increased scope the profession offered to the right type of man, he would consider their inclusion on the general part of the register.

Mr. Brown replied: This is a matter for the General Nursing Council. An amendment of their rules would be required to give effect to the suggestion.

Shortage of Nurses.

Mr. R. de la Bère asked the Minister of Health whether he was now in a position to make a statement regarding the Government's proposals for securing an increased supply of trained nurses; and the Government's proposals for ensuring a better standard of livelihood for those so engaged.—Miss Horsbrugh replied: Proposals for securing a better distribution of certain nurses, after discussion with the Minister of Labour and National Service, have now been put to representatives of the nurses and of their employers. The Rushcliffe Committee is considering the salaries of nurses.—Mr. de la Bère: This has been going on for a very long time, but the nurses' standard of pay has not improved, and nurses are not becoming more numerous. Something ought to be done now: it is no good referring the matter to committees: we want some practical action.—Miss Horsbrugh: The number of nurses has increased very satisfactorily, though I am not entirely satisfied that we could not at this time be training another 2,000 or 3,000 women who wish to become trained nurses in the future. We could also do with another 10,000 nurses throughout the country. There has also been an interim increase in salaries pending the result of this committee of inquiry.

Mr. F. Messer: Is it not a fact that the increase is mainly in student nurses and there are many trained nurses who will not come back into the profession because they are better paid outside?—Miss Horsbrugh: No, there has been an increase in trained nurses as well as in student nurses. I think at present nearly all the trained nurses in the country are working. If there are any who can be released from other jobs I shall be glad to hear of them.—Mr. de la Bère: The pay is quite inadequate.—Dr. Summerskill: In spite of the increase is it not a fact that we have not been able to open certain sanatoria because of

the shortage of nurses?—Miss Horsbrugh: Yes, but we are arranging for a better distribution of nurses. We have to have a ratio of trained nurses and nursing auxiliaries. One of the difficulties has been to get the right distribution.

One thing is quite certain, and the Ministry of Health had better realise it. Should any Act of Parliament promoted by it de-grade the status of the Registered Nurse, the shortage will become even more acute.

THE RUSHCLIFFE COMMITTEE.

Mr. E. Brown, replying to a question, said that the last nominations for the Rushcliffe Committee were received early in November, 1941. Approximately eight meetings of the full committee have been held, 15 meetings of the employers' panel and 12 meetings of the nurses' panel. Many of the meetings have extended over more than one day.

THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

A meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales was held at the offices of the Council, 23, Portland Place, London, W., on December 18th. In the absence of the Chairman, Dame Ellen Musson, the Vice-Chairman, Miss D. M. Smith, presided.

The Chairman announced that the Privy Council had re-appointed the Countess of Limerick and Sir Henry Gooch to serve on the Council for a further term of five years.

The Board of Education has appointed:—

H. M. Walton, Esq., M.A., Secretary to the Middlesex Local Education Authority.

Miss A. Catnach, B.A., Head Mistress of the Putney County Secondary School, Mayfield, Barricane, St. John's, Woking.

The Ministry of Health has appointed:—

W. R. Brain, Esq., D.M., F.R.C.P.; H. M. C. Macaulay, Esq., B.Sc., M.D., D.P.H., Middlesex County Council.

Prof. Ralph M. F. Picken, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Welsh National School of Medicine.

W. Rees Thomas, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P., D.P.M., Board of Control.

Miss K. C. Watt, C.B.E., R.R.C., Ministry of Health, to serve on the Council for a period of five years.

The Chairman thanked the retiring representatives of the Ministry of Health for the help and advice they had given the Council during their term of office.

Finance.

On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, bills and claims submitted for payment were approved, and the sums of £760 for weekly salaries, £10 for petty cash, £350 for postage, £50 for insurance stamps, and £5,000 for examiners' claims were allowed.

It was reported that notice has been received that His Majesty's Treasury will redeem, on January 5th, 1943, the Government of India 3½ per cent. Stock, 1931. The Council's holding of this Stock amounts to £2,919 7s. 6d. It was agreed that the proceeds of the redemption of this Stock be reinvested in 3 per cent. Savings Bonds, 1960 to 1970 (Bank of England issue).

It was agreed that the estimate of Messrs. Butler & Tanner, Ltd., for 200 copies of the Register of Nurses for 1943, at £4,501 16s. 7d., be accepted.

Registration.

Applications for approval for Registration were: General Part of the Register, by examination, 159; by reciprocity,

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