

A NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF WOMEN.

No doubt the political event of the month has been the Conference held in the Royal Albert Hall, London, on Tuesday, September 28th, to bring women into contact with politicians, so that they might be told something of National affairs. The arrangements were entirely of a novel character. The cost of attendance being guaranteed by the Government from England and Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man, expenditure, we are informed, amounting to a sum of £30,000!

The Labour Party were the prime movers of this experiment, and Mr. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour, presided at the opening ceremony. The Prime Minister, we were pleased to note, had an upstanding welcome, and, of course, his statement that the occasion marked a definite recognition of the part which women were playing in our struggle for right and freedom was appreciated. "The success could not have been achieved," he said, "if women had not marched forward in their millions and undertaken all kinds of tasks and work, for which a former generation would have considered them unfitted. War was a hard, stern, efficient teacher. It had taught us to make vast strides forward towards a far more complete equalisation of the parts to be played by men and women in Society."

The meeting has had an unusually good Press—in spite of the fact that it was confidential!

Personally, we attended for observation purposes—one of 6,000 women from all classes of society, but apparently one solid mass of observers.

At the afternoon session, written questions sent up had been tabulated, and a succession of Ministers made guileless and suitable replies. This part of the programme was alive, as one Minister after another stepped forward, and we had an opportunity of realising the fact that in every nook and corner of our lives a guardian angel presided over our destinies in a watertight department, from which we foresee serious restrictions of freedom, rights and privileges, if the war continues. Already these autocracies have seen fit to restrict the rights and privileges of the Nursing Profession to which we belong, and the longer the war continues the worse for efficient nursing and the sick.

We wished that the mass of women present would rise and demand that the eight years of political control, uncensored by public opinion, should cease without delay; but, of course, amenities had to be maintained, and to tell these smart and smiling hosts that we should approve a change would have been ungracious indeed! So we listened in silence and realised no doubt that if fate had elected that we should have attained ministerial power and pelf, we also should stick tight and encourage beasts of burden to climb yet another height!

We gladly sent a message of thanks to our gracious Queen for the encouragement she has, throughout the war, extended to her fellow women.

We also sang "Jerusalem" with gusto before departing in peace.

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! Oh clouds unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!

THE INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISTS PROTESTS.

The executive committee of the council of the Institute of Journalists passed a resolution on September 30th, expressing apprehension and concern at the precedent established by the Government in excluding the Press from the Albert Hall meeting for representatives of women's organizations, "since the Government action appears to set up a form of censorship superseding that agreed upon between the Government and the Press."

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT NURSES.

The Royal College of Nursing has taken another step in the depreciation of the status of the Registered Nurse, in approving and helping to organise a National Association of Assistant Nurses. We quote the following information from the *Public Assistance Journal* :—

"The National Association of Assistant Nurses was formed in Essex in March, 1943, at the request of the Society of Registered Male Nurses through the Council of the Royal College of Nursing. A Provisional Committee was set up to function until the Association extended and a National Committee could be formed.

The aims of the National Association of Assistant Nurses are set out below :—

- (a) To promote and represent the interests of assistant nurses.
- (b) To promote and foster a spirit of professional relationship, understanding and helpfulness between assistant nurses and other members of the nursing profession.
- (c) To provide educational opportunity and social and professional intercourse for assistant nurses.
- (d) To help assistant nurses who by reason of adversity, ill-health or otherwise are in need of assistance of any kind.
- (e) To do all such other things as may from time to time be conducive to the attainment and furtherance of the above objects.

Qualifications for Membership.

Assistant nurses in Essex showed much enthusiasm for the Association, and a fund of £80 was collected in a short time. A meeting was held at the Royal College of Nursing, London, on April 19 last, at which the Association was launched and assistant nurses from all parts of the country were present. It was decided that the Provisional Committee should be augmented by two members from each of the counties training assistant nurses. Application forms were distributed at this meeting and membership is growing. It is hoped that assistant nurses throughout the country will join the Association, and that at a later date the Association may be affiliated to the Royal College of Nursing.

Membership is open to all assistant nurses who have had the necessary training or experience which will qualify them for admission to the Roll to be set up by the General Nursing Council, and also assistant nurses in training will qualify as associate members of the Association. The fee for membership is the same for associate members and full members—viz., 12s. per year, payable either annually or monthly.

Application forms for membership of the N.A.A.N. may be obtained from the Chairman, Miss L. Snowden, Public Assistance Offices, Waterloo Lane, Chelmsford."

We do not wonder Student Nurses are taking counsel together how to protect nursing as a profession.

APPOINTMENTS.

MATRONS.

Harrogate and District General Hospital.—Miss Phyllis M. Thompson, S.R.N., S.C.M., D.N. (Leeds), has been appointed Matron. She was trained at the General Infirmary at Leeds, where she has held the post of Sister-in-Charge, Brotherton Wing. Miss Thompson has also been Home Sister, Sister Tutor, at the Victoria Hospital for Children, Tite Street, London, S.W.

Mount Pleasant Emergency Hospital, Northallerton.—Miss Ruth Cockran, R.G.N., has been appointed Matron. She was trained at the Royal Infirmary, Dundee, and at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, and has been Matron of the York Maternity Hospital.

WARD SISTER.

Cameron Hospital, West Hartlepool.—Miss O. M. Watkinson, S.R.N., S.C.M., has been appointed Women's Ward Sister. She was trained at the Ingham Infirmary, South Shields, and at the Simpson Maternity Pavilion, Edinburgh. Miss Watkinson has been Sister at the Ingham Infirmary.

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