

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES, LTD.

The Council of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., will be summoned to meet on Wednesday, September 27, by which time it is hoped the constant alerts and destruction in the district will have ceased. The physical strain to which many members and staff have been subjected during the past two months must be taken into consideration, and all possible financial help be forthcoming.

Members are invited to communicate with the Secretary, Miss A. Stewart Bryson, should they need help, and it is hoped they will not hesitate to do so. The nervous system has been subjected to a terrible strain, which rest and change of air can alone alleviate.

NURSING EDUCATIONAL TESTS.

An illuminating correspondence in the *Daily Telegraph* on Nursing Educational Tests is appearing as we go to press, which proves our contention that the action of the Royal College of Nursing in promoting the enrolment of unqualified nurses by Act of Parliament cut at the very root of the efficiency of the Nursing Profession—and it is amazing that Miss M. F. Hughes, the newly elected President of the College, who supported de-grading, should in the following letter express sentiments entirely in opposition to the disastrous action of the policy which has professionally enfranchised the semi-trained Assistant Nurse.

The following letter appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on August 29th last.

Need for General Education.

From the President of the Royal College of Nursing.

To the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*.

Sir,—A recent correspondence in your columns on failures in State examinations has aroused considerable interest among nurses.

Poor results following any such examination should naturally cause concern to the matron of the training school involved, but any lowering of the theoretical training to meet the requirements of certain hospitals or the exigencies of the war will inevitably be detrimental to existing standards. To ensure the preservation of the highest professional standards a good general education is essential.

The Nursing Reconstruction Committee of the Royal College of Nursing recommends a definite standard of education for candidates for the nursing profession and a wider use of tests to prevent wastage through failure. Further, this committee has given careful thought to methods of training, and its recommendations are embodied in recently published reports.

A large number of failures in one hospital may possibly be attributable to:

- (a) the selection of unsuitable candidates;
- (b) the employment of sister-tutors who are neither qualified nor experienced, and therefore unable to impart knowledge;
- (c) too exacting examiners.

With regard to (b) and (c), various courses exist for intending sister-tutors, and hospital authorities should encourage suitable members of their nursing staffs to qualify. The General Nursing Council will listen sympathetically to difficulties which may arise at an examination, provided the matron notifies the council immediately.

I am convinced that the best results in the nursing of our patients can be achieved only by the maintenance of a high

standard of training, to ensure which we must have the best material and the whole-hearted support of the medical profession and the public.

Yours faithfully,

Cavendish Square, W.1.

M. F. HUGHES.

We have to thank Miss Gladys M. Hardy, Matron of the Mater Infirmorum Hospital, Belfast, for the following convincing expression of opinion which was published in the *Daily Telegraph* on September 5th last.

Nursing Candidates.

To the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*.

Sir,—Miss M. F. Hughes's letter on "Nursing Tests in War-time" reveals a change of opinion puzzling to those of us who have fought for the safety of nursing standards during the past three years. She gravely attributes the high percentage of failures in one hospital to:—

1. Unsuitable candidates.
2. Unsuitable sister-tutors, or
3. Unsuitable examiners.

She makes no mention of why we should have "unsuitable candidates" now presenting themselves to "too exacting examiners."

Has she forgotten how very recently examination tests have been simplified, for the sole purpose of meeting the intelligence of a less educated type of candidate who now aspires to become a nurse? Under this simple test a girl may now qualify, after two years' training, to become an "enrolled assistant nurse," receiving legal status and State protection, placing her in economic rivalry with her more highly educated and more perfectly trained counterpart, the State registered nurse.

This gravely erroneous and short-sighted procedure was intended to meet an acute war-time shortage, but it is now freely admitted that some other solution could have been found and the original Nurses Registration Act of 1919 should have been left intact.

I share Miss Hughes's conviction that "the best results . . . can only be achieved by the maintenance of a high standard of training of the best material." The nursing profession must take the responsibility of seeing that only the best type of girl is attracted to it.

When well-educated and intelligent young women see for themselves that only one standard of qualifying examination is acceptable, and only one type of registered nurse is recognised to nurse acute or chronic, rich or poor patients, and that after three or four years' hard training and study there is to be no undercutting by "enrolled" nurses, then the right type of candidates will come to us of their own accord.

Yours, &c.,

Belfast.

G. M. HARDY.

It is already quite evident that the Nurses Act, 1943, thrust through Parliament by two Ministers, Mr. Ernest Brown, late Minister of Health, and Mr. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour, both totally ignorant of Professional Nursing requirements, will have to be amended—and that at an early date—or the supply of intelligent, educated women will cease to adopt nursing as their profession.

MEDICAL SUPPLIES FOR RUSSIA.

The thirty-third consignment of medical supplies has been sent to Russia by the Red Cross and St. John War Organisation. It weighed more than 430 tons and was valued at £247,874. The cost of these supplies is met from Mrs. Churchill's Aid to Russia Fund, to which the 14,000,000 members of the Red Cross Penny-a-Week Fund devote one-quarter of their contributions. So far they have subscribed £2,000,000 for this purpose.

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