

Dr. Somerville Hastings, for many years the guiding power in the Hospitals and Medical Services Committee of the London County Council, has been elected Chairman of the London County Council. This is sad news for the Nursing Staff of the Council, as his reactionary attitude to Nursing has retarded their status materially. No Registered Nurse has been appointed on the Committee responsible for their organisation, so that this staff of thousands of professional women is entirely suppressed.

Thus after war was declared in 1939, a lady of foreign extraction, a German Swiss quite recently naturalised in this country, was appointed their Chief in Command as Chief Matron at Headquarters. Again unqualified Assistant Nurses were recognised as qualified to become associated with the School Nurses' Department, a highly responsible section of the Council's work, through which the health of the schoolchildren of the Metropolis have been progressively cared for—work requiring the services of women of character, coming into touch as they do, not only with the children, but with their parents, a service of a very special character of great social value.

Organisation at the end of the telephone for women holding the responsible position of Matron, has also proved disastrous to discipline in many L.C.C. Nursing Schools.

Under the Chairmanship of Dr. Somerville Hastings we fear there is little hope of a more liberal policy.

Tempus fugit. We must just live in hope of a more generous policy in the future. But it will not evolve until a spirit of courageous self-sacrifice inspires our L.C.C. Matrons and Nurses. At present they are "*sair hodden doon.*"

The Ministry of Health has issued a very useful circular to various authorities, instructing them in their duty to Staff for Tuberculosis Institutions; and we are glad to note that every care is to be taken to investigate the physical condition of nurses and domestics before they are allocated to duty. There has not hitherto been sufficient care in this connection. Attention is called to the general supervision of nurses' health.

Three clearly defined causes had contributed to the evolution of the modern highly trained nurse, said the Very Rev. Dr. John White, speaking in Glasgow at the annual meeting of the Scottish Nurses' Club. The first cause was religion, which had undoubtedly been the primary inspiration in nursing and hospital work. The second was war, which had given invaluable opportunities for the gathering of knowledge, skill, and experience. The third was science. The great modern advances in medicine insisted that the profession of nursing should go forward with it. Mrs. E. Mackay, secretary, submitted the annual report, which recorded an outstanding year in the history of the club. Accommodation for board residence and restaurant facilities had been taxed to capacity. The number of weekly residents for the year was 1,247, and the number of nightly residents totalled 1,253. The financial statement, presented by Mr. R. J. Hardie, showed that revenue under the headings of restaurant and board residence had increased by £358.

NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE EXHIBITION.

An Exhibition, presented by the Ministry of Information for the Ministry of Health, illustrating the Government's White Paper with models, diagrams and photographs, was opened by the Rt. Hon. Henry U. Willink, M.C., K.C., M.P., Minister of Health, on March 28th, 1944, at Charing Cross Underground Station.

In explaining the White Paper, the Minister of Health said:—

"The Government have carefully planned the new service with the object of making it not only complete and available to all, but also a human and personal service, based on the family doctor. I believe that on this foundation we could eventually build up a new attitude to health. There would be no reason to delay getting proper advice and treatment. We could aim at creating and keeping good health, instead of just trying to mend bad health. Improvements in the organisation of our hospitals and the building up of a consultant service will be of immense benefit to all.

"Don't let us think of this as a 'free' service—suggesting something in the way of charity. The people are going to pay for their own service, in the ordinary way of taxes and rates and through whatever social insurance scheme is introduced. You are paying for it, and that is why you should look on it as your own and take an interest now, at this early stage, in designing it and getting it right.

"Parliament has had full debates on the White Paper, and I am glad to say that there has been general acceptance of its main principles. Some important criticisms and suggestions were made, and these are now being considered.

"The next step in the programme will be detailed discussions with the representatives of the medical profession, the local authorities, the voluntary hospitals, the nurses, the midwives, the pharmacists, and others who will be directly concerned in the working of the service. These discussions must take some time, but the Government are anxious to make progress as quickly as possible so that final proposals may be put before Parliament."

The proposals contained in the White Paper are not decisions, but matters for Parliament and the public to discuss.

The present health services do not provide a complete service of specialists and consultants; to find out what is wrong, the doctor may need specialist opinion, laboratory tests, X-ray service, and hospital observation.

The suggestion that one health centre be provided in a town, where expensive equipment, nursing and clerical staff and knowledge can be pooled, is an excellent idea.

It is suggested that voluntary hospitals will continue to govern themselves, but will work in partnership with other hospitals in one comprehensive health service, which will include hospitals for mental cases, for infectious cases, for tuberculosis cases, for the chronic sick; maternity hospitals, rehabilitation centres, and fracture clinics.

The suggestions contained in the White Paper aim to promote health throughout the seven ages of man.

It has been found that under present arrangements some areas may be under-staffed with doctors, while others are over-supplied. The White Paper therefore proposes means of avoiding the setting up of new practices or the taking over of old ones in the area already well served, while other areas are still in need.

Should the new Health Service be put into effect, the total cost will be £132 millions annually.

The Exhibition is to be open from 9.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. until April 23rd. A smaller exhibition, in picture form, is to be shown later in factories, shops, public libraries and British Restaurants in the provinces.—M. A.

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