

Some 48 associations of nurses are now grouped to form the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, affiliated to the International Council of Nurses. The audited accounts for 1943, which have regrettably been delayed by the serious illness of the auditor, the Treasurer hopes to circulate at an early date. We learn there is a surplus of funds as usual, so with the investments amounting to £1,448 5s. 6d. the future work of the Council is financially secure if conducted with due economy as in the past.

King Edward's Hospital Fund for London has had another record year, and particulars are published of the distribution of grants totalling £280,000 to a large number of hospitals.

It is announced that the King has sent a donation of £1,000.

Nursing recruitment is still actively prosecuted by Miss M. M. Edwards.

We have great faith in the practice of domestic economy, and a new regulation now being enforced by the Labour Minister, Mr. Ernest Bevin, is calculated to seriously injure the practical efficiency of Registered Nurses desirous of adding training in Housekeeping to their qualifications for matronship. By this obnoxious and ill-considered rule, Registered Nurses cannot take a Housekeeping Course in hospital if under the age of 41! Thus young women who realise the great advantage of adding such a course to their nursing qualifications, are prohibited by Mr. Ernest Bevin from doing so until middle age, when it would be comparatively useless as additional knowledge and the very greatest service in the wards, the Home and Hospital. It is high time these unpractical Ministers were prevented from interfering in matters of which they are totally ignorant. One just longs for the day of free government to dawn, when let us hope "the Ernies" will revert to their own sphere of activity and leave nurses to manage their own affairs.

Sir Ernest Graham Little, M.P., has been elected Chairman of the Council for External Students of the University of London for 1943-1944, a very fortunate appointment for them. With so much agitation for the reorganisation of the Nursing Profession—and the disastrous results which are inevitable from recent ill-considered legislation, through the Nurses Acts, 1943—it would appear Registered Nurses need a well instructed and intelligent voice in Parliament, and as women M.P.s have proved themselves indifferent to and ignorant of Nursing politics, and antagonistic to our interests, it is probable that the intelligentsia of Registered Nurses will have this matter under consideration at an early date.

Two important points arise out of a recent medical discussion: (1) that the expression of opinion that "It is not in the public interest that the State should convert the medical profession into a salaried branch of central or local government services, and, (2) that "The loyalty and obligation of a doctor rendering personal health service to an individual patient should be to that patient and to none other."

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING.

REPORT OF THE RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE, SECTIONS II AND III.

It is now 15 months since the Royal College of Nursing issued a "Summary of Recommendations of the Nursing Reconstruction Committee, Section I.—The Assistant Nurse," strongly advocating that a second grade of semi-trained nurses should be recognised by Parliament and given legal status through the compilation of a Roll. Together with the late Minister of Health Mr. Ernest Brown, M.P., a Bill for de-grading nursing standards was hastily thrust through Parliament in April last and is now in process of organisation by the Reconstruction Committee. The Sections II. and III. are now issued with a Foreword by the Chairman, Lord Horder, which appeals to the public "to set aside time to study the Report, and, having studied it, to share the responsibility of placing nurse education and nurse training in its rightful plane."

Quite so; but Lord Horder is apparently oblivious of the fact that his Nurses Act, 1943, incorporates legislation of the most reactionary construction so far as standards of nursing education are concerned. The Act de-grades nursing educational standards attained with the utmost difficulty during the past half century! The appeal in Sections II. and III. of the Reconstruction Committee should have preceded reactionary legislation, which must now be repealed before efficient educational standards of nursing can be organised and enforced. The present situation is absolutely illogical. We do not therefore intend to criticise the recommendations at any length, with many of which we agree, and recommend our readers to obtain a copy of Sections II. and III and study it for themselves.

Section II.—Education and Training claims recognition for the status of the Student Nurse. Her work should be regulated as such. . . . Those responsible for the nurses' education must first plan the syllabus and practical work in her interests as a student (not apparently as an attendant on the patient).

The chief entrance qualification for the Nursing Profession should be the School Certificate, or qualification in Part I. of the Preliminary State Examination. Those who do not possess either of the foregoing qualifications should pass the General Nursing Council's Test Educational Examination, which should be re-introduced and modified on the lines suggested in the Report.

The Committee recommends that hospital examinations be retained—a recommendation from which Miss C. H. Alexander, Matron of the London Hospital, dissents.

The Committee supports the principle of payment by the Student Nurse for her training. . . . The expenses of such candidates as lack means should be met by liberal maintenance grants and scholarships from national and other funds.

The special parts of the Register are dealt with, and the Committee considers that those other than the General Parts should eventually be converted into post-certificate qualifications registerable with the General Nursing Councils.

There should be only one examining and registering body for Mental Nurses—the General Nursing Council. This, in our opinion, is long overdue. The General Nursing Council should be greatly enlarged by the addition of unprofessional people.

Recommendation 50 recommends that the General Nursing Councils should be widened and reconstituted. The personnel of each Council should consist of three groups—(a) Nurses elected on a functional basis by the general body of Registered Nurses; (b) Nurse educationists

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)