

NURSING ECHOES.

We have no doubt that those nurses, very few, who have time to keep in touch with the publicity given by the Press to medical and lay opinion on the burning question of a National Health Service, realise that so important a matter cannot be organised without very serious consideration, involving, as it does, the interests of the whole community.

We note that the medical profession realises that it must possess wide powers not only of education but of administration, if its beneficent evolution, so marked of late years, is to continue, and that the voluntary hospital system must be maintained for this purpose, free from pressure from institutions governed by the expenditure of rates by bodies of lay persons, interested in local affairs. This has been proved by omissions of county and borough councils, in so far as nursing is concerned, which have of late supported the de-grading of nursing standards, promoted by the Royal College of Nursing, especially vicious has been the degradation of the disciplinary power of the office of matron, many of whom dangle on a central office telephone. Members of councils and boards who have commercial interests in the neighbourhood should certainly not be empowered to control highly scientific professions, such as Medicine and Nursing.

We note that the Treasurer of St. Bartholomew's Hospital and other chairmen of voluntary hospitals, are fully alive to the value of independent control by the general public. Of one thing we may be certain, the public will not be highly taxed to support State hospitals, and also find the necessary contributions and gifts to maintain a voluntary service.

The Canadian Nurse for May announces a change of Editor, and those of her colleagues who have watched for many years the wonderful progress the Journal has made during the brilliant control of Miss Ethel Johns, R.N., will naturally learn of her retirement with sincere regret, and wish her the happiest of futures. Only those who devote their lives to promoting our great profession from the editorial chair can realise the strain and responsibility. Happily the Canadian nursing world is fully alive to the value of professional control of its official organ, and would not tolerate for a moment the invidious position of trade control.

Miss Marion Lindeburgh, President of the Canadian Nurses' Association, presents the new Editor of the Journal. "Miss Margaret Kerr," she writes in *The Canadian Nurse*, "is well known to many nurses in Canada," and she enumerates her qualifications for the responsible position to which she has been appointed.

"Miss Kerr is of Scottish and Irish parentage, and her personality reflects the outstanding characteristics of her sturdy heritage: good health and physical vigour, a keen mind, friendliness, sincerity, enthusiasm, a sense of humour and determination in all that she undertakes. She possesses high academic and professional qualifications and holds the degree of Bachelor of Applied Science (Nursing) from the University of British Columbia and that of Master of Arts from Columbia University."

Much as we regret bidding goodbye to our brilliant

colleague, Miss Ethel Johns, she would, we know, wish us to welcome her successor, for whom we learn a warm welcome awaits in Montreal.

The Director of Health for the European Region of U.N.R.R.A., Dr. Andrew Topping, has invited members of the nursing profession to assist him in the consideration of problems arising from the demand for nurses for relief work in the liberated territories of Europe. A Consultative Committee has been set up. The Committee will deal with questions of terms and conditions of service as well as with applications for employment as nurses with U.N.R.R.A. No doubt such work will be very popular amongst nurses, once it is possible to attempt organisation.

The most important work to be undertaken at the moment is the organisation of the training of Sister-Tutors, and we note that this duty is being realised by many bodies, beginning with the G.N.C.

As many scholarships as possible should be available, and we note that the Middlesex Public Health Committee has drawn up a scheme for the granting of scholarships to Sisters in the county hospital service desiring to qualify as Sister Tutors. This will be the most effective method of stamping out the semi-qualified nurse, and save suffering to the poor.

Amongst the subjects recently discussed at Manchester by N.A.A.L.G.E., was the place of Lay Hospital Administrators under the plan for a National Health Service outlined in the Government's White Paper and the promotion of an educational scheme for administrative staffs. A small sub-committee was appointed to study the subject in all its aspects, so far as they related to the status, duties and future of the lay hospital administration. A very wise decision.

We were not surprised to learn that the newly formed Association of Assistant Nurses had applied for affiliation with the Royal College of Nursing, presumably composed of Registered Nurses; it was natural they should do so, as practically the Royal College called them into existence, and, supported by every means in its power, their demand for legal status through the Nurses Act, 1943; and as Assistant Nurses were warmly welcomed at Royal College Headquarters, it is rather late in the day to refuse their request for affiliation.

It has been announced, however, that at a recent meeting of the London Branch of the College affiliation was decided against until the General Nursing Council had clarified the position regarding Assistant Nurses, and we are not surprised to learn that some of these unqualified women are of opinion that they have been deluded by the active managers of the Royal College.

In our opinion it is high time the Registered rank and file of the Royal College of Nursing took a more active part in their own professional affairs and ceased to be dominated and governed by an official clique whose interests cannot be materially injured by their de-grading policy—their rank and pensions are secure.

It is very significant that this action upon the part of the London Branch of the College has failed to appear in the publication used as the official organ of the Royal College.

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