

NURSING ECHOES.

We have had many women of outstanding character and ability as Matron-in-Chief of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, but none to exceed Dame Katharine H. Jones, R.R.C., whose work for sick and wounded defenders of our Empire has been of outstanding value. Now that her term of office has expired, we feel sure the readers of this Journal will wish us to express their admiration and thanks for her services, and this we do with sincere pleasure.

Dame Katharine Jones's address for the future will be c/o Barclays Bank, Ltd., Beccles, Suffolk.

Thirty thousand mental nurses are to be warmly congratulated upon their newly revised salary list.

National salary scales, involving increases costing £1,000,000 a year when in full operation, are to be adopted for 30,000 mental nurses.

Mr. Willink, Minister of Health, announced in the House of Commons recently that he has written to local authorities and hospital authorities asking them to adopt the scheme. It is outlined in a report of the Mental Nurses' Sub-Committee of Lord Rushcliffe's Nurses' Salaries Committee.

The Exchequer will meet half the cost of the increases and the new scales will take effect on October 1. Lump sums will be paid to represent a retrospective payment to last April.

Previous reports of the Nurses' Salaries Committee resulted in increases totalling between £1,500,000 and £2,000,000 a year for women in hospitals other than mental hospitals.

There were also increases of over £500,000 for public health nurses, district nurses and district nurse-midwives, State-registered nurses in day and residential nurseries, and male nurses in hospitals other than mental hospitals.

The Committee is now considering steps to acquire uniformity of superannuation and pension rights.

The Queen's Nurses' Benevolent Fund Special Appeal has been issued by the General Committee and is, we are glad to hear, meeting with considerable success. The Fund invites all Queen's Nurses to help in raising a capital sum, by which it is hoped it will be possible to increase the maximum annuity to £52. This suggestion of £1 a week has come from the members themselves, and the letters received show how welcome is the idea. Many individual nurses have doubled, and in some cases more than quadrupled their subscriptions, adding that they are glad of this opportunity of making a thank-offering for the increase in their salaries.

Self-help always results in self-respect. We, however, look forward to the day when District Nursing will be estimated at its true value as a National asset, and salaries and pensions will be forthcoming for these invaluable workers on a scale which will be a just compensation for the skill and service rendered.

We note from a report of a meeting in the Press that certain intelligent Sister Tutors are naturally perturbed concerning the drafted advanced curriculum of training for Assistant Nurses proposed by their Committee, and agreed to by the General Nursing Council for England

and Wales. At this meeting Miss Smith of Middlesex Hospital and Chairman of the G.N.C., warmly supported the proposed curriculum.

This is a very difficult question, as the attitude adopted by certain persons at the Meeting was that so mistakenly advocated by some matrons in high places, who assume they can control the intelligence of Assistant Nurses and prohibit its advancement. They can do no such thing; and rules presuming to slam the door in the faces of those girls with a thirst for knowledge is beyond their autocratic power. The very stupid demands of the Horder Committee of the Royal College of Nursing has created disorganisation throughout the Nursing Profession, and we fear it will be years before it is again organised on a just and intelligent basis. What is apparent is that Assistant Nurses, as a class, have no wish to be controlled—go as you please has been their policy hitherto, and to judge from the limited number who have applied for enrolment during the past three months, that will be the policy of the majority in the future. They will work under some other title, as even the autocratic Nurses Act of 1943, creating the Minister of Health an absolute autocrat where the title of Nurse is concerned, cannot prevent the public employing Home Helps.

It will be noted in the Report of the recent meeting of the G.N.C. that only 211 Assistant Nurses have been accepted for insertion on the Roll since it was opened three months ago. Thus the thousands of pounds expended in their organisation, and all current expenses, have been without their consent paid by Registered Nurses.

We feel sure the present Minister of Health, who is a K.C., cannot fail to realise its grave injustice, which would not be tolerated for a moment by members of the legal profession.

Mr. Henry Willink, Minister of Health, has addressed a message of thanks for valuable work done by medical, nursing and other staffs of hospitals in connection with the treatment of battle casualties from Western Europe, and of civilian casualties resulting from the flying bombs, which he considers reflects the utmost credit on all concerned, and expresses the opinion that the country owes a deep debt of gratitude to all members of hospital staffs for contributing so much in this and other ways to the success of the Emergency Hospital Scheme during this important phase of the war.

This appreciation of national service is the least the Government can express.

We hope that as soon as time permits, the Minister of Health will reward the invaluable skill of Registered Nurses by laying Rule 19 of the de-grading Nurses' Act, 1943, on the table of the House of Commons and, by amendment, relieving them of the unjust exactions they are compelled to pay for the organisation of unqualified Assistant Nurses.

There never has been a more outrageous and demoralising piece of legislation agreed to by Parliament instigated by Mr. Ernest Brown, late Minister of Health, and his Parliamentary Secretary, and until it is amended there can be no hope of peace in the nursing ranks.

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