

SOME CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS.

Under the heading of "Original Papers," Dr. Ernest C. Hadley presents, in *The Medical Press and Circular*, October 24th, 1945, "Some Constructive Suggestions for Consideration by Those whose duty it is to Provide Adequate and Efficient Nursing in Hospitals," and with his wide association with nursing as a lecturer and examiner, is well qualified to express an opinion on this question of national importance at the present time.

Dr. Hadley alludes to the Memorandum issued by King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, entitled, 'Nursing Staff: Consideration in Standards of Staffing,' and states "the Memorandum makes it perfectly clear that there is something radically wrong in the present system of approach to the subject of nurse staffing, training and employment in hospitals generally, and that any attempt to improve it as it now exists is impracticable, if not well-nigh impossible, and it does suggest that the problem might be solved in some other way by approaching it from an altogether different realisation of the needs.

"Everyone, I think, will agree that nursing in hospitals is one of the most, if not the most, valuable service rendered to patients in hospital, and, therefore, should be carried out by responsible and fully trained registered nurses."

It is claimed that the first thing to do is to "define *nursing duties* in hospitals." Dr. Ernest C. Hadley put forward a detailed list of reforms, with which we must all agree.

Under (3) he suggests: "That the training of student nurses could be better done, without interruption, and a shortened course of three years instead of four become universal, any fourth year being devoted to the speciality in which the nurse elects to engage: ward sister, sister tutor, administration, maternity and gynaecology, midwifery (I have suggested in another place that this should be the function of the G.N.C. in place of the C.M.B.), orthopaedics, paediatrics, theatre work, rehabilitation (limited), industrial nursing, home, tuberculosis, fever and mental nursing, etc."

Dr. Hadley is of opinion "that if conditions of service are established that are reasonable and agreeable, it will soon become known that nursing is really a very desirable and satisfactory profession, one that gives one great personal satisfaction . . . make the work attractive enough and once again it will become a vocational profession."

All this is true, but, may we add, student nurses must be ready to give as well as to receive. The spirit of Nursing must predominate over the flesh.

We are strongly in favour of reverting to the three-years' term of training. The fourth year is an exaction demanded by hospitals, which is quite unnecessary and which deters many eligible candidates from signing such a contract. Young women, examined and registered after three years systematic teaching and ward experience, could then undertake any special branch of nursing for which they have a taste.

The proposal of the Minister of Labour and National Service to exact a four years' term of training before State Registration, and a further year in special hospitals, is not only tyrannical but impossible. Women will not submit to any such serfdom.

LORD HORDER ADVOCATES "EVERY HELP IN THE ESSENTIAL TASK OF TRAINING ASSISTANT NURSES."

Lord Horder, asks in the *Sunday Times*, of October 28th: "What can we do, and do now, about the shortage of nurses?" and proceeds to discuss the question at great length, referring to his Nursing Reconstruction Committee, in connection with the Royal College of Nursing, of which he is chairman, and which advocated the policy of degrading nursing standards by giving legal status to form a grade of Assistant Nurses. Lord Horder still advocates this injustice to highly-qualified Registered Nurses, and states: "In spite of opposition, Hospital Schools training for the State Register should be limited to those which can offer a wide and sound training; though this need not preclude many small and uneconomic schools from playing a part in co-ordinated schemes. Other schools, together with institutions for the chronic sick, where the need for a stable nursing staff is no less urgent, should have every help in the essential task of training Assistant Nurses. Along with these schemes revolutionary changes are called for in the training and *promotion* of orderlies and domestic staff."

We have lived and taken part in the half-century of the evolution of Nursing into a legally organised profession, and just so long as Lord Horder and other *protected* professional persons stand firmly on their legal privilege right up into the House of Lords, just so long we Registered Nurses mean to oppose association with semi-trained and often dangerously-ignorant women—"Assistant Nurses," "Christian Science Nurses," call them by any title which may delude the public.

We stand for justice and sound economic standards for the Registered Nurse, and we intend to fight until we get it. If the Horders and the Health Ministries deny sound basic status to the profession of Nursing, well, the matter is simple, the "profession" of nursing will cease to exist!

HOW ABOUT IT?

Under the title "Voluntary Charity Ends," the following announcement appeared on November 4th in *The Sunday Pictorial*, by Howard Johnson:—

"Britain's 1,000 voluntary hospitals, which treat eight million patients a year, are to be taken over by the State.

"This is the first move of Mr. Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Health, towards the setting up of a complete National Health Scheme, and it has already been approved by the Cabinet.

"It will now be Mr. Bevan's task to work out with the hospitals and the doctors how they can best be welded into a complete State hospital service on a regional basis.

"This big move will mean the end of hospital appeals, of 'Penny-a-Week' collections and of patients being charged for hospital treatment.

"When the final Health Plan is ready, everyone—whatever his income—will have to pay a weekly sum and that will include the cost of free hospital treatment.

"As soon as possible also, it is stated, hospitals will be staffed by full-time doctors and surgeons. This will mean the end of honorary specialists and give greater scope to younger doctors and surgeons. They will be paid on a pensionable basis and have opportunities to specialise."

It would be interesting to know professional opinion on this revolutionary proposal.

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