

NURSING POLITICS.

The question of the hour, so far as Nursing is concerned, is the protection of the sick from dangerously inefficient nursing made possible through the last provisions of the Nurses Act 1943, and the sooner this danger is realised, the better for all concerned. This Act drafted by laymen totally ignorant of professional nursing affairs, establishes the Minister of Health as an absolute autocrat over a highly trained body of professional women, in so far as their relations with the medical profession and their patients are concerned, and has power to use their fees for the purpose, thus adding insult to injury. The latest injury to nursing efficiency is the legal status granted to "Faith Healers," Christian Science Nurses, by the present Minister of Health, Mr. Henry U. Willink, K.C., M.P., and we are sincerely thankful to know that responsible nursing organisations are moving in the matter and have addressed the Minister of Health officially.

From the Royal British Nurses' Association.

194, QUEEN'S GATE, LONDON, S.W.7,

March 24th, 1945.

THE RIGHT HON. HENRY WILLINK, K.C., M.P.,
MINISTRY OF HEALTH, WHITEHALL, S.W.1.

SIR,—We would add our protest to those of other organisations of nurses against the action which has been taken in permitting the admission of women to the Roll of Assistant Nurses, whose sole claim to such recognition would appear to be based on experience gained in Christian Science Houses. From the earliest suggestion that a Roll of partially qualified nurses should be established, under the Nurses Registration Act, this Association has maintained that a step so retrograde must inevitably lead to the decadence of nursing standards. The elasticity that has been accorded to (or assumed in) the new Act, so that it may become the instrument to give legal recognition to those who have no experience in the science of nursing, as it is recognised at the present time, marks a still further retrogression in standards and qualifications. This cannot but prove inimical to the sick and a source of discouragement to highly qualified Registered Nurses and this at a time when humanity, as never before, is dependent upon the efficiency of the Nursing Services.

There is, in the opinion of this Association, not the smallest pretext for giving the State's assurance to the public that Christian Science Nurses are qualified to care for the sick in the terms of scientific medicine and nursing as practised to-day. Their centres of training are not subject to inspection as Nursing Homes are. In fact, they assumed the title of Christian Science Houses in order to gain exemption from the Act which provides for the inspection of Nursing Homes. There is therefore no evidence to show how far Christian Science Houses may go towards meeting the requirements of the General Nursing Council, or even the views of the general public, as to what constitutes efficiency to nurse the sick.

We would express the hope that, at a time when we owe so much to skilled Registered Nurses, a time in which the country stands in need of the highest efficiency in its Nursing Services, steps should be taken to readjust the position so that the Nurses' Registration Act of 1919, with all its projected safeguards, will cease to be the foundation for giving the State's recognition and protection to those whose general attitude to disease almost approaches a negation.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ISABEL MACDONALD, *Secretary.*

From the British College of Nurses, Ltd.

19, QUEEN'S GATE, S.W.7.

26th March 1945.

TO THE RIGHT HON. HENRY U. WILLINK,
K.C., M.P., MINISTER OF HEALTH.

SIR,—I am directed by the Council of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., to enter a strong protest against the enrolment by you of Christian Science Nurses, under the Nurses Act 1943. These persons are not scientifically trained to care for the sick and as Faith Healers deny the efficacy of scientific medical treatment, and are therefore a serious danger to those persons they profess to nurse.

My Council is of opinion that the Nurses Act 1943, drafted by ignorant laymen, and thrust through Parliament without consultation with the Nursing Profession, is in need of drastic amendment, and requests you to take immediate steps to enable Parliament to amend legislation which places it in a most invidious position in its relation to the electorate.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

ETHEL G. FENWICK, *President.*

From the Royal College of Nursing.

The following paragraph from the Secretary of the Royal College of Nursing appeared in *The Nursing Times*, March 24th, 1945.

TO USE THE TITLE NURSE.

'The Secretary reported that she has received a letter from the Minister of Health in reply to the Council's protest against inclusion of 'Christian Science Nurses' amongst those entitled to use the title 'nurse,' under clause 616 of the Nurses Act 1943 on the grounds that this was misleading to the public. The Minister stated that he was bound by a written promise made by his predecessor, Mr. Ernest Brown, when the Bill was before the House of Commons in 1943. The members of Council after full discussion felt that such a promise though binding on the Minister of Health could not be considered binding on the House of Commons, which did not appear to be aware that it had been made, and decided to proceed to press for an alteration.'

From the General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

In reply to enquiries from the British College of Nurses Ltd., the following statement has been made by the Registrar of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales:—

"Section 6 of the Nurses Act, 1943, provides for restrictions on the use of the title 'Nurse' and 'Assistant Nurse,' as from such date as the Minister may direct, and under subsection (1) (b) of Section 6 the Minister may 'by regulations authorise the use . . . of specified names or titles containing the word nurse . . .'

"It is understood that the Minister intends to permit persons not Registered Nurses or enrolled Assistant Nurses, who are members of the Church of Christian Scientists and who are employed as Christian Science Nurses by members of that body to use the name or title of 'Christian Science Nurse.'

"My Council has protested most strongly against the official recognition by the Minister of persons who have no training whatever as nurses of the sick, and steps are being taken to bring the matter to the attention of Members of Parliament."

THE ASSOCIATION OF HOSPITAL MATRONS AND THE DE-GRADING OF THE NURSING PROFESSION.

We have received the following letter from Miss Helen Dey, O.B.E., R.R.C., S.R.N., President of the Association of Hospital Matrons.

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