

## NURSING POLITICS.

### IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

#### SHORTAGE OF NURSES IN INDIA.

On Wednesday, April 18th, there was a very interesting debate on Army conditions in India and Burma, and incidentally nursing came under discussion in so far as the troops are concerned. In a very instructive statement, the Earl of Munster said: "I should not like your Lordships to think for one moment that the question of welfare for the troops in the Far East is being neglected. Much has been done, but there is still much to do. . . . I think it is well that this House should have an opportunity of expressing its admiration for their valour and their fortitude, and that they on their side should know that members of this House are interested in and concerned about the welfare arrangements which are provided for them."

Lord Denman: "My Lords, I rise to ask only one question. I do not think that the noble Earl has dealt with the point raised by the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, with regard to nurses and doctors. I believe that a good many nurses are willing to volunteer to go from this country, but that other Government departments are not willing for them to do so. I do not know whether the noble Earl can give us any information on that point, but it is rather important."

The Earl of Munster: "My Lords, I agree that it is very important, but the noble Lord will know, as many other of your Lordships know, that there is a world shortage of both doctors and nurses.

"It is desirable that we should obtain the services of as many nurses as possible for the Far East. . . . Full details and figures of the numbers lacking I have not with me this afternoon, but anything which can be done to increase the numbers sent out for service in the East will undoubtedly be done, and recruits are very urgently required."

Registered Nurses will appreciate the significance and value of Lord Denman's reference to the necessity for more nurses in India. The shortage is acute, and he is quite correct in surmising that many trained nurses would volunteer for service in India and Burma and the Far East if they were not governed by the Minister of Labour. We hope Lord Denman will keep a vigilant eye on this question—as the need of trained nurses will become a burning question in the conquest of Japan.

### IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSES.

On April 26th there was an interesting debate in the House of Commons on "Christian Science Nurses," who are untrained Faith Healers who do not recognise direction by the medical profession—quacks, as far as the nursing of the sick are concerned—and we are pleased to note that Dr. Edith Summerskill, M.P., made this plain in her remarks.

#### DEBATE. CHRISTIAN SCIENCE NURSES.

Dr. Edith Summerskill asked the Minister of Health why certain individuals attached to the Christian Science movement have been permitted to call themselves nurses, in view of the recent Act which limits the description "nurse" to those suitably qualified.

Mr. Willink: "My hon. Friend is under a misapprehension. I have not yet brought into operation the provisions of Sub-section (1) of Section 6 of the Nurses Act, 1943, which will restrict the use of the title 'nurse,' or made regulations under proviso (b) to that Sub-section. When I do so, it is my intention to require Christian Science nurses to describe themselves as 'Christian Science nurses.'"

Dr. Summerskill: "Is the right hon. and learned Gentle-

man aware that the whole purpose of that Act was to protect State registered nurses and protect the public from impostors, and is he aware that in this specially privileged group, the Christian Science group, the women have no nursing qualifications whatsoever?"

Mr. Willink: "As I told the House on an earlier occasion, an assurance on this matter was given by my predecessor, and I think it was very largely based on the fact that the House, when the Public Health Act, 1936, became law, gave statutory recognition to Christian Science nursing homes. I think the object of the Act will be sufficient and properly met by a provision that Christian Science nurses should be required so to describe themselves."

Earl Winterton: "Is my right hon. and learned Friend aware that those who, like myself, are interested in the lay administration of hospitals are very anxious to see this provision brought into operation as soon as possible, so that the points which my right hon. Friend has made may be clear to the public?"

Mr. Willink: "There were difficulties about bringing the regulations into operation, particularly in relation to an omission in the drafting of the Act; but it is my hope to make the regulation at an early date."

Mr. W. J. Brown: Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that Christian Science nurses do no harm to anybody, which is more than can be said of quite a lot of doctors."

Mr. Gallacher: "Is the right hon. and learned Gentleman aware that these people are not nurses, not scientists, and not Christians?"

#### THE SICK PUBLIC DELUDED.

It is almost incredible that after the Profession of Nursing has existed in England for a quarter of a century, that totally ignorant Ministers of the Crown should be permitted to smash up, not only the status of an honourable profession, but deprive the public of necessary safeguards to health and life. Who is primarily responsible for this dangerous provision?

It is known that Lady Astor, M.P., was primarily instrumental in 1936 in obtaining statutory recognition for Christian Science Houses, Nursing Homes, and then, as now, the recognition of quacks as nurses of the sick aroused indignation.

We call upon the Nursing Profession to insist that the Minister of Health shall be prohibited by Parliament from endangering the lives of the public by guaranteeing untrained Faith Healers and other unqualified persons as safe attendants of the sick.

Let every Registered Nurse invite the help of her Member of Parliament in this righteous cause.

#### INFECTIOUS HOSPITALS' MATRONS' ASSOCIATION.

The annual meeting of the Infectious Hospitals' Matrons' Association was held on Saturday, April 28th, 1945, at the Royal British Nurses' Association, 194, Queen's Gate, at 2.30 p.m.

The President (Miss H. McLoughlin, S.R.N.) was in the Chair and there was a good attendance. Among those present was the ex-President of the Association (Miss Mabel Wright, S.R.N.) who was warmly welcomed back to civilian life from her arduous war work since the outbreak of war.

In a very full agenda dealt with, discussion took place concerning the Revised Syllabus of Subjects of Examination for the Supplementary Part of the Register for Fever Nurses maintained by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

#### State Recognition of Christian Science Nurses.

The concession given by the Minister of Health, that Christian Science Nurses be placed on the Assistant Nurses'

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