

Now that County and Borough Councils are assuming increasing authority for the care of patients suffering from infectious and special diseases, inducements are being offered to influence nurses to train and serve in special hospitals and to care for infectious and mental patients, and very necessary it is that women should be highly qualified and experienced to serve such patients. London County Council has recently agreed to offer 12 Scholarships annually for mental nurses to qualify as Sister Tutors. These will carry full board and lodging for the year, as well as payment of fees and a grant of £50 for incidental expenses as opposed to a grant of £25 to general trained nurses taking the same course. The Council justifies this difference by the greater need for Sister Tutors in mental hospitals, and the importance of this necessitates loss of salary for one year during training, and some may have to take a part-time course in science to prepare for it.

"Association with the Labour Office has done more to depreciate and discourage the nursing profession than can be estimated," writes a well educated and enthusiastic nurse, and we quite agree with her. The interference and determined exercise of power over a highly skilled profession, of which they know nothing, by Messrs. Ernest Brown, late Minister of Health, and Ernest Bevin, late Minister of Labour, could not have been estimated as possible in former days. But nothing is impossible where the vanity of uneducated men is concerned—especially when dominating women's work.

That Mr. Willink should also have seriously blundered over nursing legislation is a disappointment, but when that really intelligent man, Mr. R. A. Butler, past Minister of Education, when transferred to the Labour Office, did not at once point out the absurdity of the situation, caused us disappointment. But we live in hope. Now that the Ministry is appointed in the new Parliament, our aim must be a conference with the new Minister of Health, so that he may realise that a self-supporting profession of a hundred and twenty thousand skilled women have a right to express, not only their expert opinion, but upon what terms they are prepared conscientiously to serve the community.

Registered nurses are not serfs, and if they are to continue to be treated as such—well! *They just won't be there!* We call upon the new Minister of Health to realise this fact.

It is high time poor helpless children were protected from the murderous violence of people in whose charge public authorities place them, and that when found guilty these fiends were adequately punished. It would appear the "cat" is the only form of punishment they fear. We quote the following from *The Times*—

"Allegations of cruelty to boarded-out children are contained in an indictment brought at the pleading diet at Cupar on Saturday against John Walton and Margaret McDonald Walton, 20, Hill Street, Dysart, Kirkcaldy.

The accused were charged with having on various occasions between January 3 and December 23 last year, in a house occupied by them at 20, Hill Street, being persons with whom the Fife County Council, as the education authority, had entrusted the care and custody of Norman Alexander Wilson, now aged 12, and Harry

Wilson, now aged 10, they wilfully assaulted and ill-treated them in a manner likely to cause them unnecessary suffering and injury to their health, beat and thrashed them with a wooden spurtle, or similar instrument, and with a cane and an electric cable, knocked them to the ground, kicked them, pulled their lips with a pair of pliers, tied Harry Wilson to a chair and thrashed him with an electric cable and cane, placed him on a cross bar and pulley, raised him to the ceiling and caused him to fall from the cross bar to the ground, tied him to the seat of a lavatory, placed him against a wringer and frightened him by turning the roller, and frightened him by placing him in a dark cupboard.

A plea of "Not Guilty" was returned on behalf of both the accused by an agent, who entered pleas on the relevancy of the indictment. Sheriff-substitute More reserved the objections for consideration at the sitting of the High Court in Dundee on July 31. He granted bail of £20 each to the accused."

These unfortunate children escaped with their lives—terribly injured mentally and physically.

The trial of the Waltons took place in the High Court at Dundee on August 3rd. The jury found both prisoners guilty of assault—beating and thrashing both boys. In passing sentence the judge said the charges which had been proved showed a callous and cruel lack of elementary humanitarian feelings.

Mrs. Walton, found guilty of thrashing both boys with a rod and electric cable, was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment—the husband to nine months.

In our opinion a very inadequate sentence.

The lads are now in the children's home at Leven. Let us hope public authorities will be deprived of the power of placing homeless children in the charge of brutal employers whose inhuman treatment of them is apparently uncontrolled.

Here is scope for a reformed system—Labour must look to it.

This is the third case of horrible cruelty to helpless children by foster parents which has recently come into court, and until more severe punishment is inflicted by juries, they will continue.

The Pit Ponies Protection Society has sent us most interesting information concerning its protection of these tireless workers in the coal mining industry, the pit ponies. The Society claims that one shift only should be demanded from these little animals daily, and indeed, let us hope under new mining laws ponies will not be used at all. Surely the time has come when science can produce a system of coal extraction entirely of a mechanical nature.

Those animal lovers of our journal should communicate with the Secretary, Mr. D. Jeffrey Williams, who will, we feel sure, arouse their interest in the question, in our opinion, of cruelty to animals.

QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S ROYAL NAVAL NURSING SERVICE.

It is to be regretted that in our last issue, in reporting the honours awarded by His Majesty the King to the members of Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service, the title of this service was omitted.

We all realise what an invaluable and highly qualified nursing service is at the disposal of the Royal Navy.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)