

## NURSING POLITICS.

To do justice to politics this month the whole of the space available in this JOURNAL would be required.

We can merely refer to a few matters of interest to the Nursing Profession in the general upheaval of Government.

### Congratulations.

Firstly, warmest congratulations to Sir Waldron Smithers, J.P., who as a Conservative candidate was returned for Orpington, the member of the late Parliament who associated himself with a demand for justice for Registered Nurses, and left the late Minister of Health, Mr. Willink, K.C., in no doubt of the injustice of the provisions in The Nurses Act 1943, which he was enforcing, thus de-grading the profession of Nursing and reducing the status of Registered Nurses to that of serfs. We are indeed to be congratulated that our champion was returned to Parliament with a handsome majority. Warm congratulations also to Sir Ernest Graham-Little, M.P., F.R.C.P., re-elected member for London University; he also advocated justice for Registered Nurses in the late Parliament, his advocacy being ignored by Mr. Willink, Minister of Health. Registered Nurses were also interested in the elections of Sir William Davison, now raised to the Peerage, returned for South Kensington with a majority of 22,166, and of Mr. A. Howard, Member for St. George's, Westminster, with a majority of 13,086. Let us hope they will all help to restore a just status under new legislation to Registered Nurses.

### We Congratulate Ourselves.

Mr. A. E. Brown, late member for Leith, and the Minister of Health who drafted and enforced the Nurses Act, 1943, was justly defeated in the late election, lost 8,000 votes; our Scottish colleagues are to be warmly congratulated, as we learnt some of them took an active interest in the removal of Mr. Brown.

### Dundee.

Miss Florence Horsbrugh, a member for Dundee, and Parliamentary Secretary to Ministers of Health, who took such an active, determined, and ruthless part in support of her chief, Mr. A. E. Brown, in thrusting forward the passage through the House of Commons of the Nurses Act, 1943, has also lost her seat, her opponent securing election by a majority of 16,084. Again congratulations to our colleagues in Dundee, and indeed to all Registered Nurses on both sides of the Border.

### Croydon (North).

Another constituency in which we Registered Nurses took an interest was Croydon, for which Mr. H. U. Willink, late Minister of Health, was representative in the late Government with a majority of 14,800. In the present election this majority was reduced to 607. A narrow squeak.

Mr. Willink was absolute autocrat where Nurses were concerned, had decreed that untrained "Christian Science Nurses" who refuse to work under the direction of the medical profession should be recognised as "Nurses" for the sick. Other women with superficial nursing experience were also permitted to use the term "Nurse" graciously bestowed upon them by Mr. Willink. Let us hope this folly will now cease, if not, woe betide the sick poor. One thing is apparent, unless Registered Nurses realise their duty to the sick, and secure skilled and efficient care for them, Nursing as a profession is doomed, so let us be up and doing without fear or favour.

The late Minister of Health, Mr. H. U. Willink, K.C., recently fixed the date restricting the use of the title "Nurse" which provides that it is to come into

operation on October 15th next. From that date persons other than Registered Nurses and enrolled Assistant Nurses and (subject to conditions) children's nurses, who use the title "Nurse" will be guilty of an offence, unless they come within one or other of the classes of persons prescribed in the regulations now made by Mr. Willink, who are allowed to use the title "Nurse" in conjunction with other words.

The powers conferred on the Minister of Health in the autocratic Nurses Act, 1943, are so absurd that unless the Act is amended, we advise the various "Gamps" who are legally permitted to pose as skilled attendants of the sick to be very careful in assuming responsibility for the lives of persons they attend.

### A NEW MINISTER OF HEALTH.

As the Willink autocracy has now terminated, it will be well for us to take counsel if possible with the new Minister of Health, Mr. Aneurin Bevan.

When after the recent election the new Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, issued the list of senior appointments in the new Government, Registered Nurses eagerly scanned the list in search of the name of the new Minister of Health, and when ascertained realised that a fresh atmosphere would pertain in that Department. Let us hope the dictatorial contempt with which Ministers have repeatedly treated the invaluable highly skilled profession of nursing, composed of upwards of 100,000 women and an increasing number of men, who finance entirely their national services conducted by the General Nursing Councils since the Nurses' Registration Act of 1919 came into force.

It will be the duty of self-respecting Registered Nurses to place before the new Minister of Health the fact that skilled nursing is the right of every sick person—but as prevention is better than cure, the Public Health Service is of the highest importance as a section of his Department. Anyway, skilled workers have a right to participate in making the rules and laws they will obey, and a Labour Minister of Health will, we hope, enforce this basic claim of the Labour Party.

### VISCOUNT ADDISON A MINISTER.

In the new Government, our old and valued friend, Viscount Addison, has been appointed Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

It will be remembered that as Minister of Health (then Dr. Christopher Addison) he introduced and had passed, the Nurses' Registration Act of 1919, the nurses agreeing to finance their own legal status.

This they have done for a quarter of a century, by the expenditure of upwards of a million pounds. On page 92 of this issue will be found the Revenue Account, just issued, for the year ended March 31, 1944, which amounts to £72,207 11s. 4d.

This Revenue Account makes no mention of expenditure, if any, in the organisation of Assistant Nurses, who are permitted to use the Registered Nurses' office, to which they have no right whatever.

### THE ATOMIC BOMB.

The discovery of the atomic bomb has revolutionised life—humanity is no longer free, and war as we know it will cease practice. The atomic bomb has rendered all other weapons of modern war obsolete. It is difficult to realise that all the past claim of national sovereignty and its right of ultimate individual decision in issues of peace and war is out of date.

Science has come to the rescue and humanity must for the future obey its laws or cease to exist. The sooner we all love Peace, and ensue it, the better.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)