

beset their feet whilst making their way through their professional careers.

We wholeheartedly support the efforts and the courage of the Willesden Municipal nurses in making such a firm stand for their liberties, and we feel sure it will meet with all the success it deserves. Many powerful friends have already rallied to their aid, and it may well be that this courageous action of "the few" will serve to prevent the enslavement of "many" at some not too distant date.

Good luck to the Willesden and Walthamstow nurses, and may our profession remain always free and unfettered, and our patients ever receive of the best our nurses can give them! A very Happy Christmas and a brighter New Year to all!

G. M. H.

PROFESSIONAL SLAVERY?

We have pleasure in quoting the following excellent article from *The Evening Standard*:—

"At a time when the Minister of Health is appealing to the young women of the country to join the great and noble profession of nursing, the Socialist Willesden Council indulges in a deliberate act of sabotage. The nurses of the Willesden Municipal Hospital have been bluntly told that either they join a trade union or they get the sack.

"To this act of folly and despotic bumbledom the threatened nurses have replied in a spirit worthy of their traditions. They will not join a union, but neither will they abandon their patients. They will stay at their posts until they are made to go.

"This attempt by local councils to tyrannise the professions they control is the most vicious application of the 'closed shop' that has yet come to light. 'What,' ask the nurses, 'do these old men know of our profession?' The answer is simple. They care nothing about their profession. They are simply using their powers of dismissal to force all and sundry to contribute to the funds of the Socialist Party.

"Here, no question of hours and wages, the prime aim and concern of trade unionism, is involved. These are laid down by the Minister of Health, who is using every endeavour to make them as attractive as possible in view of the desperate shortage of nurses and the hospitals' plight.

"The evil is not confined to Willesden or the nursing profession. In Gateshead, 500 teachers were circularised by the Socialist-dominated local education committee. The questionnaire contained the following alternatives: 'I am a member of the following union'; 'I am not a member of any trade union,' together with the command, 'Delete whichever does not apply.'

"The Gateshead branches of the National Union of Teachers, the National Association of Schoolmasters, and Association of Assistant Mistresses very properly instructed their members not to complete, and to return the form. Hereon the Education Committee decided to refer the matter to the Town Council.

"That the aim of the questionnaire is another attempt at the imposition of the 'closed shop' is clear from the committee's proceedings. Said the Mayor of

Gateshead: 'We are entitled to impose conditions of employment on our employees, whether they are teachers or dustmen.' In other words, the teachers of Gateshead must join a union or, like the nurses of Willesden, get the sack.

"This tampering with the traditions of cultural and humanitarian professions, and their compulsory classification with the rest of industry, is a wide and grave departure from the aims and origins of trade unionism. Here the men and women concerned cannot be claimed to be at the mercy of capricious employers. They are the servants of the community; not the slaves of the TUC and their representatives on the local councils."

NURSING STAFF: MEMBERSHIP OF A TRADE UNION.

Regarding the action of certain local authorities who have required their nursing staff to join a trade union or other recognised organisation, and have indicated that their employment will be terminated if they fail to do so, the Minister of Health wishes to make it clear to all local authorities that he considers that their primary duty as health authorities is to maintain the efficiency and smooth-running of their health services and to ensure the welfare of the patients for whom they are responsible. All other considerations must, in his view, be regarded as secondary; and he trusts that local authorities will follow this principle in their administration. While the Minister is anxious that doctors, nurses and members of similar professions should join a trade union or appropriate professional association, he considers that this matter should not be determined by the unilateral action of local authorities.

THE LEAGUE OF FEVER NURSES.

In connection with the question of nurses becoming members of their professional organisations, a General Meeting will be called at the end of January, 1947, the date to be fixed later.

PRESENTATION TO MRS. M. B. CARMICHAEL, S.R.N., F.B.C.N.

The colleagues of Mrs. M. B. Carmichael, S.R.N., F.B.C.N., will wish to congratulate her when they learn that she has been presented with a Gold Medal by Mr. Theodore Luling, the Chairman of the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital (Moorfields), for administration and work in the Hospital in connection with the opening up of the new Preliminary Training School, and the continued high standard of successful results both in the Hospital and the State examinations.

Mrs. Carmichael, who received her training at Charing Cross Hospital, London, has been Assistant Matron and Sister Tutor at the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, and in July last was appointed Acting Matron there.

Mrs. Carmichael has served on the Council of the British College of Nurses, Ltd.

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