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EDITORIAL.

IS ALL WELL WITH THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ?

At the recent International Congress of Nurses held in Atlantic City, U.S.A., the President of each National Association was called upon to give a report of the progress of the Nursing Profession in her own country. It is well to emphasise that a National President holds a position of great eminence and honour, and is elected to her high office by the delegates of the numerous associations which are affiliated to the national organisation of her country.

It naturally follows, therefore, that the chief spokesman of any one country must be strictly unbiased and neutral in attitude to any one organisation *whilst exercising her plenary powers and privileges as President of all associations grouped under one national organisation.*

It is, therefore, with great regret that we call the attention of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to its report, read by our President, Miss Daisy Bridges, S.R.N., and for whom we have the highest esteem and admiration, to the I.C.N. in May.

This report, purporting to be a *National* report, was in the main, a eulogy of the achievements of the Royal College of Nursing, which is only one organisation, amongst upwards of 50, affiliated to the National Council.

To pick out one organisation in this manner and accredit to it much of the honour and glory for the achievements and progress in the British Nursing profession, is grossly unjust and slighting to all the other organisations affiliated to the National Council. Many—if not all—of them have worked nobly and with sustained endeavour to forward the interests and uphold the honour of their profession. They have paid their dues when called upon to do so and have, in every way, assisted the National Council to carry out its programme.

Why, then, should not their work have been duly and publicly acknowledged by their gracious President in America, just as was that of the Royal College of which organisation our President is a member ?

We wonder also how such an unrepresentative Report came to be written, and who was responsible for editing it, if, indeed, it ever was edited !

Whilst fully realising that the International Congress came closely on the heels of the re-formation of our National Council, and that much planning and swift organisation was placed upon the shoulders of the Honorary Officers of the Council, we still maintain that such a biased report, coming from such highly placed persons, who held the confidence and loyalty of nurses throughout the land, was a grave slight to the great majority of them, and has gravely shaken their confidence.

We feel that we are entitled to an assurance from our

National Council that, in future, all official statements issued in their name will be carefully edited, so that its reports will be purely National in character, strictly unbiased and neutral towards the associations affiliated to it and who pay their dues.

We realise that the minds of many British Nurses at the moment are turned towards the advisability of supporting one organisation only—which would thus become a monopoly organisation or a closed shop—or trades union with all its limitations and restrictions.

We do not share this view. A monopoly quickly deteriorates into a Dictatorship, it stifles organised and constructive criticism and it makes slaves of its adherents. On the other hand, smaller organisations provide the tonic "thorn in the flesh." They stimulate competition, they ensure a necessary opposition, and they provide the platform for new ideals and for the presentation of rising genius.

We have recently had a classical demonstration of the evils of monopoly and the suppression of minorities, during the late World War. Hitler's unfortunate people became slaves, no criticism of his evil rule was permitted, concentration camps flourished, and freedom fled in terror from such appalling conditions.

Whilst we do not envisage such horrors developing in our own fair profession of Nursing, the underlying principle is the same. If minority organisations were swept away, freedom within the profession would make a rapid exit, and we should be governed by a privileged few who may, or may not, use their privileges justly.

The National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a free Federation of Nurses' organisations. The little ones are loved and cherished by their members, just as are the larger and richer ones. There is room for each one in the all-embracing Mother organisation, and all, in their own way, contribute to its success, progress and greater honour.

The British College of Nurses, Ltd., holds for the National Council special affection and loyalty, one reason being that they have the honour in sharing the same illustrious Founder, the late Ethel Gordon Fenwick. We wish to see the National Council placed on a firm and secure financial basis, fully representative of all professional organisations and of all shades of opinion throughout the country. It must never become a "Party Machine," reflecting the opinions of the organisation from which its Presidents are drawn, but it must always remain above intrigue and be absolutely unbiased and ready to serve the interests of our Profession in a truly national spirit.

"Live and let live" is our motto, and let us have fair play for all.

Let us agree to recognise the good done by each and all of us, and be grateful for it.

G.M.H.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)