

N.Z. NEEDS MORE NURSES

THE New Zealand Registered Nurses' Association is beginning a campaign to recruit more nurses. There are so many jobs in and out of uniform to-day that the old established ones are liable to suffer. Here is an interview with Mrs. A. Donner, Secretary of the Registered Nurses' Association, who explains why nursing has never been so important as it is to-day, and why the prospects of the nurse herself have never been better.

"DO girls want to become nurses?" we began by asking Mrs. Donner. Her answer was "Yes, emphatically! But we need more and more, and in the next few years we shall need more still."

"Nursing as a profession has a rosy future," she said. "Our work is expanding all the time, and with Social Security the hospitals are growing. More people come to hospital to be treated and all our health services are expanding too. We have many more than we had ten years ago, but we need twice as many new recruits as we needed ten years ago."

"One of the things that we are always up against is the fact that people will talk of nursing as though it were a constant round of unpleasant jobs. This is quite wrong, and discourages not so much the girls from becoming nurses, as the parents from letting them become nurses. If you ask the average trained nurse I am sure you will find that it is not the things that are physically unpleasant that loom large. Everyone has to do unpleasant jobs at times. No, if there is anything that is depressing it is the sad cases that we come across, and there we have the satisfaction of knowing that we can perhaps do something to make their lives a little more pleasant."

Nursing Has Variety

"People tend to think that if you are a nurse you spend the rest of your life in an institution. But many nurses travel in peace-time, and New Zealand trained nurses can get jobs anywhere. Even hospital sisters nowadays may live out and go to work every day like other people. They don't all want to do this, but we encourage it, because we believe the

nurses should be as much in touch with the everyday lives of the community as everyone else. But hospital work is only one branch of nursing. Nurses may take private cases, or specialise in dietetics. They may become Plunket Nurses, and they may take up District Nursing either in country or town districts. Here they work under the Health Department, and much of what they do is not merely curative but preventive. There are about 130 District Health Nurses under the department. In the towns they visit schools, follow up tubercular cases and infectious diseases, visit kindergartens, and work for the improvement of the health of the community generally. In the country they visit sick cases that in towns might go to hospitals, and they frequently have to decide whether a doctor should be called. In emergencies they do midwifery, and where there are no Plunket Nurses they also do the infant welfare work. For the independent type of girl this offers scope and responsibility. It should be remembered, too, that the district nurse is supplied with cottage and car so that she can cover the district. Then those who like teaching can become sister tutors and teach at the various training schools."

Many Qualities Needed

"The perfect nurse," continued Mrs. Donner, "needs a lot of qualities. She must be intelligent and have a background of general knowledge. She must have organising capacity and be able to teach. She must have the right touch and skill with her hands, a practical ability for the care of her patient. She must have sympathy to understand her patient's needs, and she must be able to rise to any emergency. This is asking a lot, and of course we don't get all of it in combination. But we usually get a good deal of it, and some of the rest develops. And though nurses often grumble at all they have to do I think you would find that few of them would change their profession. We get tired, and we get disheartened, but we like it."

The Training Period

"While a nurse is training she certainly has to work hard, but so do students in almost any profession. A nurse is a student and is learning her job both practically and theoretically. The training takes three years and three months if she passes her examinations, but the first three months are probationary. She may feel disinclined to go further, or the matron may feel that she is unsuited to nursing work. During training she will usually have an eight-hour day, including meals, and one day off a week. She can therefore go out in the evening and get some social life. In addition some hospitals give nurses a block period, a month or so off for theoretical work and study rather than study at the same time as the ward



"Nursing . . . is for the future as well as for the present"

work. During all this time the nurse gets a salary, not very big of course, her uniform is provided, she has board and lodging and regular health inspection, and of course full medical care if she should be ill. I don't think that is bad for a student, though of course she is doing a useful service as well.

"There are so many other things for girls to do at present that many are turning to the Army, Navy and Air Force work as more obviously war service. But nursing is also war service, and it is for the future as well as for the present. We must not let the health of the community slip just now when health is so important."

Young Radio Pioneer

THE man behind the BBC's Empire Service is R. A. Rendall, thirty-four years of age, but already one of the pioneers of BBC activities. After leaving Cambridge University Rendall became a BBC announcer, but he always preferred to be in a new job rather than in one of established routine. He passed through "Adult Education," "Group Listening," and "Talks" to Programme Director and Regional Director. He went out to Palestine to advise the Government there on broadcasting.

Returning to England he next became Assistant Director of Television and on the outbreak of war joined Overseas Direction and became eventually Director of the Empire Services. He says that what he has liked best about this position has been the opportunity to meet men from the Dominions and Colonies. He has been instrumental in arranging that the Empire Service of the BBC is very largely run by men of the overseas Empire—such men as Bushnell of the Canadian Broadcasting Service, Bob McCall of Australia, and Grenfell Williams of South Africa.

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