

But the report stops here, and draws a decent veil over these six, presumably modern, annuities, which far be it from us to attempt to raise.

Let us however consider for one moment what these figures imply. In the first place, evidently, that the granting of deferred annuities is considered—by those best qualified to judge—as a business which is so risky or so little popular that they do not seek or compete for it; and in the next, that the shrewdness and common-sense of Englishmen and women shows them that such a plan is the most uncertain and most expensive way of providing for the future. For it must be remembered that should anyone begin at the age of thirty and pay the ordinary rates for an annuity to commence at the age of fifty, every penny they had already subscribed would be lost at once should they die at forty-nine, or be unable from any reason to continue their payments during the next, and their last, twelve months. Consequently, everyone outside of a lunatic asylum would pay the considerable additional sum yearly in order to obtain a return of their contributions in either of those events.

But supposing they were certain at the commencement that the payments could be regularly made till the determined age was reached, there is then a further risk under this system to be faced—that at fifty the health might be broken and the life almost ended. Because if the annuitant has received one single quarter's allowance and then dies, the annuity of course dies too—the Insurance office will have received, say, £400, and the investor £7 10s.

Of course, we were aware of these and many other weightier reasons which could be urged against deferred annuities, and which multiplied our amazement that the National Pension Fund for nurses should have taken such form and shape.

From our own knowledge we could furnish facts which prove most conclusively that a Deferred Annuity Company must inevitably and completely fail. But as we are acting in no factious spirit we refrain from saying more upon this point than asking nurses generally, and the council of the Fund especially, one question founded upon these figures, drawn from the pamphlet they have issued.

If only twenty-five British Insurance offices consider it safe or profitable to “include deferred annuities among their contracts”; if these, established for forty, sixty, eighty, one hundred, years or longer, with enormous reserve funds, can only persuade 351 people out of 37,000,000 to take out annuities; is it in the slightest degree probable that 1,000 members of a small class like hospital officials will be induced to do so by a new Company which begins work by providing for its decease at the end of two years, and only has a conditional gift of £25,000 to support it?

We frankly confess that we have never yet recovered from the extreme astonishment the scheme

caused us when it first appeared. As we said at the first moment, so we repeat now: “There must be some deep mystery, or else some extraordinary ignorance of finance behind all this.” We feel convinced that the Council must have been misled most completely by some person or some means, and once more venture to ask them to consider the whole matter afresh.

But let us continue, only remembering the crucial fact which the pamphlet itself proves, that no company confining itself to deferred annuity business could possibly succeed, even if it had the whole population of the Empire for its *clientèle*.

Everyone who has the slightest knowledge of nurses could foretell that not one of them would, of her own accord, begin to subscribe for an annuity till she was, say, forty years of age, and had given up all intention of marrying, and all hope of being provided for in her old age by friends, relations, or employers.

Under the tables issued only two months ago, such an one would have to pay upon the lowest scale £6 15s. 8d. per annum for an annuity of £15 at sixty. The report says, page 6, “I cannot recommend that the rates you have adopted should be reduced. Such a step would in my opinion be very unwise. *Even under the rates adopted great economy of management will be necessary if the National Pension Fund is to be successful.*” Yet what do we find most freely advertised everywhere? (Is this advertising part of the “great economy of management”?) “It does not appear to be generally understood that all nurses under fifty years of age, who wish to participate in the benefits of the Pension Fund, are invited to join the Fund by paying into it one-eighth of their present earnings per annum.”

Now, what does this mean? Few nurses at forty in a position to need an annuity receive more than £30 a year. One-eighth of that (£3 15s.) is nearly half the amount which she would have to pay on the ordinary scale. Moreover, everyone knows that a nurse's salary does not increase according to her age, but the amount of her premiums of course should do so. Consequently, the older the nurse is who applies for an annuity under this rule, the greater will be the disproportion between what she pays and what according to the tables she ought to pay, and which the actuary strongly considers is the least that should be paid, for the safety of the fund.

There are many other reasons which we might adduce, but we think we have said enough to prove our contention that this fund must fail. There are, however, two questions which we should be glad to see authoritatively answered. In the event of the fund being wound up, will all the monies received from nurses be returned to them in full, or will they be employed in paying expenses? If the premiums are repaid—as certainly they should be—who will pay the large amount evidently now being disbursed?

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