

But although the Government, and the country generally, have recognised the value of the services of nurses, and the necessity for their employment in the war, one point which presents itself most prominently for consideration, is the lack of expert assistance in the selection of the nurses sent out. It will be universally admitted that the work to be performed is of a most onerous nature, demanding the most careful selection of candidates; yet, although now, besides the nurses sent out directly for government hospitals, there are various committees for organizing hospitals, we do not hear of the compliment being paid to the profession of nursing of inviting any leading Matron to take a seat on any one of these committees to advise the laymen and women composing them upon nursing matters.

At the committee meetings of the *Maine*, the American hospital ship, Miss Hibbard, the Superintendent of Nursing, was, after her arrival in England, in almost daily attendance, rendering most valuable aid by her professional knowledge; but in every other instance, although the profession of medicine has been recognised, and medical men have had seats on the various committees, nursing, from a professional standpoint, has been accorded no place, and the lack of representation of trained nurses on all the committees formed to organize hospitals for our troops in South Africa, is an omission which not only ignores the rightful position of nursing as a profession, and the right of nurses to be selected for duty by the leaders of that profession, but it must also impair the proficiency of the arrangements made, for one of the most important departments in hospital organization is that of nursing, and this cannot be quite efficiently organized without the advice of those who have learned by long experience the best methods of organization, and the many qualifications, beyond mere technical skill, required in the nurses selected for the front.

This lack of recognition of nursing as a profession is no doubt due, in part, to the fact that so far in none of the Government Departments dealing with nursing is there a Superintendent of Nursing officially appointed. Neither in the departmental offices of the Army, the Navy, the Indian Army Nursing Services, or in the offices of the Local Government Board, where the whole question of poor law nursing is dealt with, has a Superintendent of the Nursing Department, so far,

been appointed. Nursing is a new profession, and Government departments are slow to assimilate new ideas, but, in the interests of the sick, and in recognition of the value of the national services rendered by trained nurses this reform should not be delayed. Let us hope that one of the lessons learnt from the present war will be that the organization of hospitals without the advice of experienced nurses on nursing matters is an impossible incongruity.

Annotations.

INFLUENZA.

THE scourge of influenza is still with us, and appears to be increasing in severity. The private nursing institutions are overwhelmed with applications for nurses which they are unable to supply, and the problem as to how the sick are to be nursed is becoming a serious one. It is by no means unusual for one institution to be obliged to refuse from fifteen to thirty cases a day, and these not only of influenza, but of pneumonia and other grave diseases. From time to time there are complaints that the nursing profession is over-stocked, but, at the present moment, every available nurse is at work and many hundreds more are needed. It is a difficult question to solve how the public are to be supplied with a sufficient number of nurses in time of epidemics, and at the same time how institutions for private nurses are to supply their members with work all the year round when no special demand exists.

Another phase of the present epidemic appears to be that the nurses themselves are contracting influenza; many of those on hospital staffs and no doubt private nurses also being incapacitated by the disease. On all sides, we hear the same story of numbers of nurses incapacitated for duty by the score; and at King's College Hospital it has even been found necessary to close a ward because the nursing staff was so depleted that there were no nurses available to staff it. The number of nurses at work therefore at the present time is actually less than usual. Again, the war has taken some nurses out of the country, although probably the number of those who have gone from London is not sufficient to make much appreciable difference. One thing is certain, namely that at the present time everyone with any knowledge of nursing whether certificated or otherwise can be employed. Now the value of a Register of

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