

by this Committee with regard to the opinion of trained Superintendents of Nursing is wholly inexcusable, and that until it has the wisdom and the courtesy to apply officially and directly to the Matrons for information it will never obtain the best nurses possible.

The snobbish and vulgar regulation that candidates must be recommended by persons of social position, which is also, we regret to say, enforced with regard to the Army and Navy Nursing Services, is still retained. What is social position by the way? Most assuredly a thing which may be bought with the utmost ease by the plutocracy, who find even titled dames by no means averse to secure their admission to the charmed circles of the "smart set" for a pecuniary consideration. Presumably the recommendation of the "Society Ladies," who have made themselves so notorious during the present war, would be all sufficient in the estimation of the Army Nursing Reserve Committee. So much for social influence. What is needed is not wire pulling by "persons of social position," but the opinion of the person best calculated to form one—the Superintendent of her training school—that the nurse is suited by education, temperament, character, and professional competency to work as an army nurse. The nurses appointed on to the Reserve during the present war cannot certainly be invariably described as belonging to families of "good standing in Society," as amongst them are to be found women who were drawn from the ranks of domestic service.

Lastly, we must draw attention to the salary offered to the members of the Reserve; this being equal to the wages commanded by an upper-class domestic, and one which a skilled man-servant would decline to accept, namely, £40 per annum, with a further gratuity at the end of a year's service, presumably if the Reserve nurses behave themselves! The position is most invidious. Medical men are not offered gratuities by Government Departments, but are paid at the commercial value of their professional services, and nurses should be paid in the same way. We cannot but regret that a member of the nursing profession, in the position of Miss Wedgwood, the Matron of the Royal Free Hospital, has not dissociated herself from a Committee which has so far failed to realise both the professional position and the financial value of trained nursing.

Annotations.

MUNICIPALIZATION OF HOSPITALS.

THE question of the efficient maintenance of hospitals, supported by voluntary contributions, is a serious one, and on all sides the complaint is heard that greater support is required if these institutions are to be effectively maintained, both at home and abroad; indeed in some instances the question of placing the hospitals on the rates is being considered. This course has been seriously mooted in connection with the Cardiff Infirmary, the Royal Infirmary, Hull, and the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary; while the Sheffield Royal Infirmary is asking for £4,000 before the end of the year to clear it of debt. The Hereford Infirmary also has called a special meeting of its governors to consider the financial position. Here again the suggestion was made that "it would be much better if such institutions were governed by the local authorities such as city and county councils." This opinion was, however, not unanimous, and it would appear that greater efficiency in management should first be tried, as the Chairman of the meeting, Sir James Rankin, M.P., stated, "there are many ways in which economy may certainly be practised." Another provincial hospital, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge, had a deficit at the end of the last financial year of £1,300, and this will continue to increase unless more funds are forthcoming, so that not only is there a difficulty in maintaining the standard already reached, but further progress, entailing increased expenditure, is impossible.

From Australia comes the same story. By a great effort the Melbourne Hospital has by the efforts of the "Help the Hospital Fund" been freed from a debt of £17,500, but, as a contemporary points out, appeals on the large scale of the one just happily finished cannot be repeated with success. If the worst comes to the worst, wards will have to be closed. Again, at Sydney, Mr. Edward Knox, Chairman of the Prince Alfred Hospital Board, is appealing in the press for increased support of that most admirable institution. "It is," he says, "impossible further to reduce the working expenses of the hospital without seriously impairing the efficiency of the work carried on. Nor is it ever sufficient simply to maintain the existing status and conditions of the treatment of the sick.

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