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**Editorial.**

**WOMEN AND PUBLIC HEALTH.**

One of the most important committees formed by the National Union of Women Workers is the Sectional Committee on Public Health, which will present its first report at the annual meeting of the National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland at Portsmouth this month. No more valuable work could be undertaken by the National Union, or one which is more entirely in the province of women. The health of the community, whether in relation to the home, the care of the sick in public institutions, in the homes of the poor through district nursing and maternity associations—the standards of which are often woefully low—are all matters with which women are intimately concerned, and in regard to which much education is necessary.

The organisation of district nursing associations is often undertaken by ladies of leisure, with laudable intent; but it is the duty of all who assume this work to acquaint themselves with the standards required of trained nurses, and this a Sectional Committee on Public Health can do much to further.

Other useful ends which it proposes to promote are mainly preventive, and prevention of disease, rather than its cure when contracted, is more and more coming to be recognised as the means whereby the standard of the national physique must be raised. So there will be included in the work of the Committee the education of the people in all matters relating to health, through trained visitors, lectures and pamphlets; the co-operation of health visitors with other agencies for the prevention and cure of disease; the care of mothers before and after confinement; the prevention of infantile mor-

tality and disease; the care of school-children referred for medical treatment; of the aged, of the feeble-minded, and of consumptives. All these are practical questions with which women have special qualifications for dealing, and it is difficult to estimate how far-reaching the work of this Public Health Committee of the N.U.W.W. may be, for it is in touch with many thousands of earnest women workers throughout the country, who will gladly avail themselves of the expert information which, as it accumulates experience, it can furnish.

And the Committee will not only be in touch with women workers interested in health problems in the United Kingdom. Through the International Council of Women it will be able to confer with similar committees throughout the world, many of which have already been working at public health questions. The special reports of the National Councils of Women, presented to the International Council of Women in Canada this year, incorporated in a pamphlet entitled "The Health of the Nations," show how large a ground there is to be covered by the work of such committees, and what interesting and valuable information they are able to furnish.

There is, at the present day, much to sadden those who are taking their share in the work of the world and endeavouring to ease its burdens; and it is well to contemplate the forces for good around us in the movement now gathering force each day for the betterment of the health of the people. The conscience of social workers is aroused to realise that fresh air, healthy homes and pure water are the right of every man, woman and child, and that unceasing war should be waged on conditions which make these unattainable. The National Union of Women Workers has now joined the ranks of those engaged in this holy warfare, and we wish it God speed.

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