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Editorial.

TRAINED NURSE INSPECTORS AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD OFFICE.

It is with great pleasure that we record in another column the appointment, by the President of the Local Government Board, of three experienced nurses to act as inspectors under Miss Ina Stansfeld, who at present holds the office of Assistant-General Inspector in the Metropolitan district, and will now act as Chief Woman Inspector.

The duties of the new officers will be the inspection of the maternity wards, nurseries, infirmaries and nursing arrangements in Poor Law institutions, and Mr. John Burns is greatly to be congratulated that he has realised the necessity for the inspection of nursing work and arrangements under the Poor Law by trained nurses holding high professional qualifications, and eminently qualified for this important and highly technical work.

The Local Government Board controls the nursing in Poor Law infirmaries and work-house wards throughout the United Kingdom—Scotland and Ireland having their own special Boards. While in some of these it is well organised and highly efficient; in others very much is left to be desired, and inspection and report by trained inspectors, possessing the knowledge that comes from experience both in practical work and supervision, cannot fail to have a most beneficial effect in co-ordinating standards, in bringing to light deficiencies, and in informing the Department of the weak points in the nursing organisation of the institutions under its control.

The creation of a Nursing Department at the War Office under the supervision of a Matron-in-Chief, has resulted in the immeasurably increased efficiency of military nursing, and is a useful object-lesson to other Government Departments dealing with

nursing. As no Government office could maintain its efficiency for a day without its responsible official head, so the highly technical branch of nursing, now included in the manifold activities of many such offices, also demands its own executive officer if efficiency is to be maintained and progress made. We hope that the new appointments at the Local Government Board are the first step towards the creation of such a department. It is at least most hopeful that the President has shown that he realizes the value of the assistance of experienced nurses in the supervision of the nursing arrangements in Poor Law institutions.

Another duty which will devolve upon the newly appointed inspectors is the supervision of the work of the new boarding-out committees and the children under their care, now being created under the Local Government Board Order recently issued with regard to the pauper children boarded out within the limits of the union to which they are chargeable. So far, although children boarded out by committees beyond the limits of the union have been subject to inspection by women inspectors appointed by the Board, it has been optional with Guardians whether they should enter into arrangements with a boarding-out committee for the purpose of finding and superintending homes for such children within the limits of the union. Under the new Order the Guardians are required to enter into such arrangements. The Local Government Board will keep in touch with this work through its women inspectors, both the boarding-out inspectors at present at work and the nurse-inspectors just appointed.

It seems as if the Local Government Board is on the eve of developments which will add greatly to the efficiency, and therefore the prestige, of Poor Law nursing.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)