

NURSES AND THE NATIONAL INSURANCE BILL.

Within a month's time Parliament reassembles, and the Insurance Bill, which is to be the principal business of the Autumn Session, will come under discussion. In the meantime the representatives of three bodies, two representing the friendly societies and the third the medical profession, have been invited by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to meet him for the purpose of discussing points in the Insurance Bill affecting the friendly societies and the doctors. Two of these bodies are the British Medical Association and the National Conference of Friendly Societies. The third body which has been invited to send representatives is the Friendly Societies' Medical Alliance.

The interests of women generally, and of nurses specially, are apparently to be considered without reasonable conference with them, and in the proposed Government amendments trained nurses are still lumped together with "clerks, domestic servants, seamen, nurses in hospitals, &c., and in some localities agricultural labourers." Could abysmal ignorance of the highly skilled professional work of trained nurses, and the indispensable services rendered by them in conserving and restoring a sound standard of national health, be more blatantly advanced? We doubt it. We have to thank the anti-registration party for our deplorable lack of professional status in the community.

A WHITE PAPER.

A White Paper [Cd. 5885] has been issued with regard to the National Insurance Bill. It contains "further replies to letters addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (in continuation of the series printed in Paper Cd. 5733), with a statement of the principal amendments which it is proposed to embody in the Bill, and an appendix containing a reprint of Clauses 1 to 17 of the Bill as amended in Committee, showing the alterations which have been made in the original text of the Bill." The correspondents are not indicated.

From the study of this White Paper trained nurses will not find much consolation, as they risk loss and have little to gain from the amendments proposed.

The three clauses which affect nurses most closely are—

(1) How they can insure—the Bill compels them to pay.

(2) What power they are to have on the Approved Societies, which will control the expenditure of the subscriptions from themselves and the State.

(3) What representation women are to have on the Insurance Commission, the Advisory Committee and on the Health Committees.

GOVERNMENT AMENDMENTS.

In Part II. of the White Paper the following is stated to be the substance of the principal Government amendments which already appear on the Order Paper of the House of Commons:—

APPROVED SOCIETIES (Clause 18).—(1) Provision that where any society establishes a separate section consisting of insured persons, whether with or without honorary members not being insured persons, such separate section may become an approved society.

(2) The condition that a society in order to become approved must "not be a society carried on for profit" has been made clear by the substitution of those words for the words in Clause 18 (2) (ii.) that a society must be "precluded from distributing any of its funds otherwise than by way of benefits . . . amongst its members."

(3) The words "Its constitution must provide for its control by means of a committee of management or other governing body, the members of which must be elected by the members of the society, or otherwise for its affairs being subject to the absolute control of its members," are proposed to be substituted for the words—

(iii.) Its affairs must be subject to the absolute control of its members;

(iv.) Its constitution must provide for the election of all its committees, representatives, and officers by its members.

REPRESENTATION OF DOCTORS ON ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES.—Medical practitioners to have representatives on the Insurance Commission, the Advisory Committee, and the Local Health Committees.

LOCAL HEALTH COMMITTEES' "REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS" WITH REGARD TO QUESTIONS OF PUBLIC HEALTH.—Amendments have been tabled to Clause 44 making it clear that the new Local Health Committees will not have any administrative functions which conflict at all with the duties of existing Health Committees.

PROMISES IN COMMITTEE.

The following amendments, with others, have been promised in Committee of the House of Commons by the Chancellor of the Exchequer:—

MARRIED WOMEN.—To make some further provision when Clause 34 is reached for widening the benefits at present extended to married women under the Bill. The following suggestions amongst

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