

If a nurse left hospital and was unemployed, she would have to pay the employer's contribution as well as her own. And if she contributed to the Scheme for 20 years and then married she would lose all right to compensation.

Another point was that no provision was made to include women amongst the Insurance Commissioners who were to administer the Act, on the Advisory Committee to be appointed by them, and on the Local Health Committees which would administer the Act locally. Mr. Lloyd George had now conceded representation to women on the Advisory Committee, but it was most important that they should also have seats on the Insurance Commission and on the Local Health Committees. On these Committees the work of trained nurses would be specially valuable.

#### APPROVED SOCIETIES.

One of the good points in the Bill was that Approved Friendly Societies, of a certain membership, through which the benefits would be administered, were to be absolutely self-governing. A Government Amendment now proposed to substitute for the absolute control of the members, control by a Committee of Management, or other governing body which would be given very wide powers. They could not object too strongly to the Bill being so amended as to render the self-government of an Approved Society a mythical privilege to the members, by virtually placing it in the hands of a Committee which could be made permanent, and identical with the directorate on an industrial assurance company.

Mrs. Fenwick strongly advocated that nurses who, for the first time, had the opportunity of managing their own business, with assistance from the State, should govern an Approved Society of their own, more especially as no Friendly Society was anxious to insure them on good terms, because it was considered that they ran greater risks than ordinary members of the community. Women always managed their affairs economically, and she believed nurses could administer their own funds much more economically than men.

She therefore put three points before the members, of the Council:—

- 1.—Did they support the formation of an Approved Society by and for nurses?
- 2.—Were they in favour of the representation of women on the Insurance Commission, the Advisory Board, and the Local Health Committees?
- 3.—Were they in favour of the amendments which deprived them of half of the state subsidy to which other workers were entitled?

Miss H. L. Pearse warmly supported the formation of a self-governing Approved Society for Nurses.

Miss E. M. Musson regarded the reduced contributions proposed in the case of those nurses who received payment during sickness as a condition of service, in the light of a retaining fee. She thought a hospital would lose on the money paid into the Scheme on behalf of its employees. On the other hand, the employee would be

deprived of full pay while on sick leave. She regretted that the present delightful relations between nurses and doctors would inevitably be altered when the question of payment came in. In the case of girls insured before entering hospitals they would probably continue to insure in the same society, and not with a special one for nurses.

Miss Waind thought that most girls who entered the nursing profession in the future would not have been previously employed.

Miss Mollett said that this meeting had to consider not merely the present but the future, and there was little doubt but that the effects of this Bill, and of other measures of a similar nature, would be far-reaching. They were, practically, the beginning of the end of the voluntary system of hospitals, State-aid, and—as a necessary sequence—State control were inevitable. Under a State controlled hospital there was little doubt but that everyone would be required to pay according to his or her means, and the position of nurses, and the amount of aid, medical or otherwise, to which they were entitled in sickness would be fixed on the lines of other Government Services. It was more than doubtful whether it would be on the liberal and kindly scale supplied under the voluntary system. It was therefore important that nurses in hospital work should not contract out under the Bill, but should continue to have a definite claim on their employers and Government for sickness and disablement.

Four points raised by the Chairman were then put to the meeting as resolutions, seconded, and passed.

#### RESOLUTIONS.

1.—“This meeting approves of the suggestion that, should the National Insurance Bill be passed, an Approved Society of Nurses be formed, such society to be self-governing.”

2.—“This meeting supports the demand for the representation of women on the Insurance Commission, the Advisory Board, and the Local Health Committees, and considers it specially desirable that trained nurses should be represented on the Health Committees.”

3.—“This meeting is in favour of deleting or opposing the Amendment to the National Insurance Bill providing for a reduced rate of contributions, and a corresponding reduction of benefits, for nurses in hospitals.”

4.—“This meeting strongly disapproves of the Amendment 3 to Clause 18 which proposes to deprive Approved Societies of the absolute power of self-government, contained in the National Insurance Bill as it stands.”

The meeting then terminated.

M. MOLLETT,  
Hon. Secretary.

Miss Mollett will address a meeting of the Hendon Branch of the Central London Sick Asylum Nurses' League, on the subject of the National Insurance Bill, at an early date.

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