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**EDITORIAL.**

**TRAINED NURSES IGNORED.**

On no class of the community does the effective working of the National Insurance Bill, if passed into law, depend more intimately than on the trained nurses of the Kingdom, for, though doctors will direct the medical treatment of the insured persons who come under its provisions, the practical application of the details of that treatment will be carried out by trained nurses. It is of the utmost importance therefore that the nurses, whom the Bill authorizes an Approved Society to subsidize, and to appoint for the purpose of visiting insured persons who are members of the Society, shall have definite and adequate qualifications.

At present, when Parliament is dealing with nursing matters, it is confronted with the difficulty that the words "trained nurse" have no definite meaning. The terms "registered medical practitioner" and "certified midwife" refer to persons whose qualifications have been tested, and approved, by bodies appointed under State authority, and on which the Privy Council has representatives in each case. Trained nurses have no such legal qualification, and the lack of it has been specially emphasised recently. Thus, in the evidence given before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Asylums Officers Bill, more than one witness represented to the Committee that there is no definition in the Bill of the words "attendant or nurse," and drew attention to the desirability that some definition should be given of the persons intended by the expression.

Precisely the same difficulty occurs in connection with the National Insurance Bill. Parliament is asked to sanction the expenditure of money for the payment of per-

sons with no professional status, and whose qualifications are an unknown quantity. Surely, to secure the efficient nursing of insured persons, it is urgent that the Government should take steps to give effect to the unanimous recommendations of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Nursing in 1905, "that it is desirable that a Register of Nurses should be kept by a Central Body appointed by the State," and to pass a Nurses' Registration Bill without delay. Such a Bill is ready to hand in the one in charge of Mr. R. C. Munro Ferguson, which, through the Central Committee for State Registration of Nurses, of which Lord Amptill is Chairman, has the support of over 30,000 registered medical practitioners and trained nurses.

The Special Committee for safeguarding Women's Interests under the National Insurance Bill, appointed by the National Union of Women Workers, had an excellent opportunity of bringing this point before the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but it is to be regretted that while they have done much good work in other directions, in pressing for better terms for women, they have apparently failed to appreciate the vital importance of the work of trained nurses to the success of the scheme, and the necessity for a recognised qualification on the part of these responsible workers. They have, moreover, passed over without criticism an amendment closely affecting nurses in hospitals, suggested, and to be brought forward, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, providing that where employed persons receive, as a condition of service, wages during sickness . . . such persons to be excluded from part of the sickness insurance, and a reduced rate of contributions accepted for the remaining benefits—an amendment of which associations of nurses have expressed strong disapproval. Neither

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)