

## NURSES AND THE NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT.

In reply to the question sent by several readers, "What are the disadvantages of Nurses forming an Approved Society including men?" we would draw their attention to the fact that, under Clause 40 of the National Insurance Act, even if a society is formed with separate branches for men and women, *a third of any surplus shown by one branch will be used to make good any deficiency in the other.*

Thus, as men get more insurance money and larger benefits for their subscription than women, and many will require maternity benefits for their wives, there is no doubt that an Approved Society composed of men and women nurses, the majority of whom would be single women, would be most disadvantageous to the women.

It is probable that if Trained Nurses form their own Approved Society they would select benefits other than those required by working men. Our advice is for nurses to combine, and at all costs to administer their own funds.

### THE MORLEY HALL MEETING.

Nurses should make every effort to attend the meeting to be held specially for them at the Morley Hall, 26, George Street, Hanover Square, W., on the evening of Thursday, January 18th, at 8 p.m. Miss Mollett and others will address the meeting and explain the position of women nurses under the Insurance Act as simply as possible. There appears to be a widespread feeling amongst nurses that it will be to their advantage to manage their own affairs. This is certainly our opinion.

### THE INFIRMARY MATRONS' ASSOCIATION.

The Infirmary Matrons' Association have carefully watched the interests of Poor Law Nurses in connection with the Insurance Act, and in reply to a letter from Miss Barton (the Hon. Secretary), Mr. Worthington Evans, M.P., has sent the following letter:—

DEAR MISS BARTON,—In reply to your letter, I certainly think the Nurses ought to form an Approved Society. Whether the Poor Law Nurses should do it alone or in conjunction with other Hospital Nurses must of course depend upon themselves. There may be some conditions of their work which necessitate separation, but if there are no such conditions then they should amalgamate, as the bigger the Society the better management it can afford and the more likely it is to be successful. You ask with regard to numbers. The ideal is to have over 5,000, for if you have over 5,000 the Society is entitled to retain

*its own surpluses.* This is extremely important in the case of nurses, as I will shew you.

It is, however, possible to form a society with even a few hundreds, but then it must either be affiliated to one of the big Orders or, perhaps, to societies formed by kindred interests. The special reasons why Nurses should have their own Society are:—

(1) Nurses have special facilities for medical treatment under the terms of their employment. Therefore most of the 1½d. a week, which is the assumed cost of medical treatment, can be saved, and the surplus arising used for other benefits.

(2) They already receive pay during sickness, and, therefore, they do not require immediately sick pay. It can either be postponed for six weeks after illness arises or perhaps abandoned altogether. The surplus arising can be used for other benefits.

(3) The invalidity allowance provided by the Bill is merely a bed-ridden benefit not obtainable unless the insured is absolutely incapable of doing any work. This benefit should be strengthened. The surplus arising in other directions should be employed to give a form of invalidity benefit which is payable during partial incapacity and not confined to complete incapacity.

A new clause was put into the Bill almost at the last moment, which permits of this being done with the consent of the Insurance Commissioners. If a special Society is formed for Nurses, representation should be made to the Insurance Commissioners stating the special needs and endeavouring to get consent to special forms of benefit. It might even be that the Nurses prefer the contributions should go to old age pensions, and this might be arranged.

Yours very truly,

L. WORTHINGTON EVANS.

7, Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.

## THE LEAGUE OF SCHOOL NURSES.

"Physical measurements and the recording of statistics," was the very dry-sounding subject of the lecture given by Dr. Shrubbsall to the L.C.C. School Nurses at a recent meeting.

The lecture, however, proved anything but dry, judging by the appreciation shown.

The value of statistics obtained from the medical inspection of school children in its bearing on health was pointed out by Dr. Shrubbsall. He mentioned the average height of children in different schools, from the best type of school to the town elementary, showing clearly that the environment of the child attending the last-named was largely responsible for its lack of development. Children taken away from undesirable parents grow taller than those left behind. Statistics showed that the vigorous growth of body was accompanied by the same vigorous mental growth.

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