

NURSES AND THE NATIONAL INSURANCE ACT.

We find many nurses have not made up their minds what to do about joining an approved society which is necessary for the majority of them under the National Insurance Act. They are hoping against hope that something will turn up, and that the Act will not come into force in July. We fear they are doomed to disappointment, as the contributions of working women are calculated upon to make the Act financially sound, and the cost of administration is going to be enormous. English, Scottish and Irish nurses are therefore taking steps to join societies which they will control, so as to make the best of a bad job.

Information concerning the English Society can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Miss Mollett, 431, Oxford Street, London, W.; the Scottish Society from the Hon. Secretary, 5, Kelvin Drive, Glasgow, W.; and the Irish Society from the Secretary, Irish Nurses' Association, 34, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin.

AMEND THE ACT LEAGUE.

An organization has been started to agitate for the amendment of the National Insurance Act. It invites people of all parties and all classes to help in securing its object. The office is at St. Stephen's House, Westminster.

THE IRONY OF FATE.

It is the irony of fate that the authorities of the London Hospital, who have always been foremost in opposing the demand of trained nurses for the protection of the public and the honour of their own profession, through the publication of a Register of Trained Nurses under State authority should themselves have been victimized by the fraudulent forging of their certificate.

At the Eye Borough Petty Sessions last Saturday, before the Mayor (Mr. H. C. Rowling) and other magistrates, Evelyn McCoy, stated to be the wife of the attendant on the infirm inmates of the Dudley Workhouse, was charged with offering her services to the Hartismere Board of Guardians on the strength of a forged certificate from the London Hospital. The prisoner pleaded guilty.

Mr. A. J. Whitting, who prosecuted on behalf of the hospital, stated that in reply to advertisements for the post of Charge Nurse under the Hartismere Guardians the prisoner filled in the usual form, and amongst the accompanying papers was the following type-written document:—

"This is to certify that Evelyn McCoy has attended the lectures in elementary physiology and medical nursing; also the lectures in elementary surgical nursing, and passed highly satisfactory

examinations. Evelyn McCoy has completed the third year in the service of this Hospital, in accordance with her engagement. During this time her work has been excellent and her conduct has been exemplary. She has also completed her full time in training in the medical and surgical wards of the Hospital, both day and night.—Eva E. C. Lückes, Matron; Sydney Holland, Chairman; W. J. Hadley, M.D., L.R.C.S., Physician; J. Hutchinson, L.R.C.S., Surgeon; L. E. Hayward, M.R.C.S., Examiner." The prisoner also sent testimonials from other institutions, and was summoned to attend before the Board and appointed conditionally. Reference to the London Hospital showed that no such nurse had ever been trained there.

The prisoner's statement was that the document had been given her to copy, and as she was very anxious to get work, having had none for twelve weeks, and being pressed for money, she used it in an unfortunate moment. She had been a nurse for eight years. Dr. Barnes, on behalf of the Hartismere Guardians, pointed out that the only evidence of *training* was the forged certificate.

Mr. Whitting said that, as representing a charitable institution he did not wish to press unduly the seriousness of the offence, but it could only be regarded as such.

The Mayor said that as there were no previous convictions against the prisoner the Bench were disposed to be lenient with her. They fined her £1 and costs; in default, 14 days' hard labour.

The Bench refused the application of the London Hospital for £13 19s. 3d. costs. The prisoner was removed in custody.

We cannot pretend to regret that the London Hospital did not obtain the costs for which it applied. For the last quarter of a century the authorities of the Hospital have strenuously opposed all efforts of trained nurses for the organization of their profession; and the publication of a State Register, such as nurses demand would be the strongest possible deterrent to such frauds as that now perpetrated on them, because criminals would be aware that their deception could be quickly discovered.

Moreover, the authorities of the London have for many years past made huge sums of money out of the earnings of their private nursing staff, nurses certificated after two years in the wards being sent out to the public, and thus deprived of the third year's experience in the wards considered essential to efficiency by every other hospital of repute in the kingdom.

Again, in fighting the nurses, the London Hospital has authorised the expenditure of charitable funds through the Central Hospital Council for London, for this purpose. Therefore, for any trouble which may be caused to the authorities by the lack of organisation amongst nurses they have only themselves to thank, and it is right that they should bear the penalty. Unfortunately, the innocent suffer as well as the guilty. The London Hospital certificate is not the only one which is forged. The case is typical.

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