

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,258

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 1912.

Vol. XLVIII.

## EDITORIAL.

### DOCTORS, NURSES, AND THE INSURANCE ACT.

The medical profession has gone on strike. We are not surprised, for had the provisions of the National Insurance Act, in relation to the medical benefit, been carried out, medicine would have been wiped out as a learned profession. The stand made, therefore, by medical practitioners will ultimately be found of the greatest benefit to the sick poor, for there is little doubt that the last action of the doctors will have the effect of adjusting the arrangements made under the Act to their just demands, and no profession can be exploited and undersold without its work deteriorating. The State Sickness Insurance Committee of the British Medical Association has now issued a supplementary pledge to those already taken by thousands of its members, binding them not to work the Insurance Act unless the demands of the medical profession are granted. The new pledge is designed to meet the situation in the event of the suspension of the medical benefit under the Act. The medical profession and the Chancellor of the Exchequer are thus face to face as antagonists, and the winning cards are undoubtedly in the hands of the former.

We now come to the position of the nursing profession, which, with the medical profession and midwives, will carry out the provisions of this National Health Act in relation to the insured sick, and contrast the positions. That of the profession of medicine is practically impregnable, for it consists of a strong, enfranchised, united body, which, if it chose to use its personal and political influence, could wipe out any party in power. The nursing profession, on the contrary, is composed of women who

are denied political power, and who, as a profession, are without political status.

From the moment the Bill was before the House trained nurses have urged their right to representation with doctors and midwives upon the Advisory Committees. Yet, when the Advisory Committee to the Joint Insurance Commissioners was formed, while all classes of women workers compulsorily insured, from charwomen (through industrial unions) to women doctors, were accorded representation through their organizations, and the Central Hospital Council for London, formed of some 50 employers of nurses was also represented, the 50,000 trained nurses of the country—upon whom the adequate nursing of the sick will depend—were excluded, and two officials of a charitable society appointed as nominated members. On representations being made to the National Health Insurance Commission, by the President of the National Council of Trained Nurses, of the injustice of such exclusion, Sir Robert Morant replied that it was decided "to include Miss Amy Hughes, of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses in the English Advisory Committee, and the Commission regret that they cannot see their way to include any further representatives of the nursing profession." While Miss Hughes is well known to and respected by nurses, she cannot, as the official of a charitable institution, express views contrary to those of her committee, and therefore cannot represent the interests of the profession at large, which she, as a woman of business, will be the first to admit.

We must therefore realise that nurses' organisations have been deliberately excluded from representation, and it is the duty of the nursing profession to know the reason why.

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