

and professional women workers have direct representation through their trades unions or professional associations, nurses are excluded, although in carrying out the Act in relation to the insured sick their skilled work must be requisitioned not only in connection with district nursing, but in other branches.

To take only one example of the way in which this unfair discrimination against nurses will affect them adversely. In a hospital, charwomen, domestic servants, and wardmaids may have representation of their interests through the National Federation of Women Workers and the Domestic Workers' Union; the clerks through the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen, and Clerks; Secretaries and Governors through the British Hospitals Association and the Central Hospital Council for London; the medical profession through the British Medical Association and the Association of Registered Medical Women. *So that the nurses are the only class excluded from direct representation in connection with this Health Act.* Under these circumstances Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, has communicated with the National Health Insurance Commissioners, and the correspondence, which is of public interest, is published below.

The National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland,
431, Oxford Street, London, W.

May 1st, 1912.

MADAM,—At the small Conference on Nursing, convened by the National Health Insurance Joint Committee last week, you were good enough to say that you were prepared to bring before the Commissioners the desire of trained nurses for representation on the Advisory Committees, under the National Insurance Act, through their self-governing Associations (Unions), I beg therefore briefly to place before you the grounds upon which this desire is founded.

1.—Because, when the Act comes into force, the services of trained nurses will be necessary to the effective carrying out of its provisions, and therefore they, conjointly with members of the medical profession, and midwives, should have power to express their opinion and speak for themselves.

2.—Because every other class of working women, compulsorily insured, has already been accorded representation, viz., industrial and textile workers and women confectioners through the National Federation of Women Workers, the Women's Trade Union League, and the Women's Co-operative Guild, and the Women Confectioners' Society; domestic servants through the Domestic Workers' Union of Great Britain; shop assistants and clerks through the National Amalgamated Union;

medical women through the Association of Registered Medical Women; and midwives through the Incorporated Midwives' Institute; Social Workers who presumably will be employers, and will not be compelled to insure, through the National Union of Women Workers, the Women's National Health Association of Ireland, and individual workers.

I am, of course, aware that two ladies, Superintendents of District Nurses, are included in the Advisory Committee to the Joint Insurance Commissioners, as nominated members; but they are the paid officials of committees, taking their seats as individuals; and their appointment does not affect the principle which I, and many others, desire to see recognized, viz., the right of self-governing societies (Unions) of nurses to direct representation both on the Joint, and on the National, Advisory Committees.

When the National Insurance Bill was before the House of Commons an amendment giving representation to the trained nurses of this country was put down by the Right Hon. R. C. Munro Ferguson, but owing to the closure, was never considered. We were, however, led to hope by those in communication with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he was sympathetic to the proposal, and that we were to have equal consideration with the midwives.

For your information, I beg to enclose a copy of the Constitution, and the List of the Societies composing the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, which is the only National Association of Trained Nurses, including as it does the Irish Nurses' Association. I understand that the Hon. Secretary of the Matrons' Council, the affiliated Society of Matrons, including some 250 Matrons of hospitals and nursing institutions, proposes to place before you evidence of its representative character.

The National Council has an affiliated membership of 6,000 certificated Matrons and Nurses, which far outnumbers that of the Midwives' Institute, or of the Association of Registered Medical Women.

Thanking you for your willingness to give consideration to this question,

I am, Madam,

Yours faithfully,

ETHEL G. FENWICK, *President.*

To Miss Mona Wilson.

National Health Insurance Commission (England).
Buckingham Gate,
London, S.W.,

May 4th, 1912.

MADAM,—I am directed by the National Health Insurance Commission (England) to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the first instant, addressed to Miss Wilson, on the subject of the representation of the National Council of Trained Nurses on the Advisory Committee to the Commission, and to thank you for the information as to the position of trained nurses contained therein.

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