

The more trained nurses know of their position under the National Insurance Act, the more unjustly they realise they have been treated, and we are not surprised to learn that the fact of the Commissioners having decided that young medical officers receiving small salaries in hospitals are exempt from compulsory insurance, whilst the sisters and nurses are compelled to pay, is considered proof positive of the manner in which they have been penalised. They want to know what "contract of service" consists of, if receiving a small salary from the Governors and being under the control of the committee as to their daily hours of duty and general discipline does not constitute it. A Sister of a London hospital writes: "Why have I to pay, if my house surgeon is not compelled to do so? My salary is £5 a year more than he receives, and we are both engaged by the committee and have our agreement with it. Is this another case of one law for the man and another for the woman? Anyway, I am so disgusted with the way nurses are treated in this country that I am off with a friend to British Columbia in two months' time. No more compulsion for me for the sake of taxing my poor little earnings."

In this connection there is no doubt that of all classes of women workers the trained nurse has been most discriminated against under the Insurance Act. She has been purposely excluded from representation by the Act and the Commissioners; she is taxed for an infinitesimal return, when in the past she has been specially favoured in sickness by free and most generous treatment by the medical profession. Moreover, the bulk of her work is to be handed over by Insurance Committees to County Nursing Associations, who employ semi-trained women at wretched salaries, and who are making arrangements to profit by this indefensible system. No wonder we hear daily of well-trained nurses hurrying off to the Colonies. Within the past month we have said good-bye to two going to South Africa, one to British Columbia, one to Vancouver, three to Australia. As these practical women are a valuable asset to any community, the Colonies will benefit in no small degree by the lack of consideration shown to them at home.

We have not advised trained nurses to agitate for exclusion from the Insurance Act because, after our experience of the tactics of the Government towards them as a class—and of the Insurance Commissioners in particular—we felt such an agitation would prove useless, as it has done. Women's money is absolutely

necessary in this scheme of taxation to meet the huge official expenditure, and women's money the Commissioners are determined to have. The only question of importance to the profession is: How long are women to be compelled to pay taxes and contribute to the support of men, without political representation? To the idle kept woman these economic questions do not appeal, but to the hard-working professional woman they are of vital importance. The truth is, any man can take your hard-earned money without your consent so long as you are voteless. If you complain of this as robbery, which it is, you are described as a fanatical fool. Never mind that, but do mind your slavery; resent it, and fight for personal responsibility and citizenship, and power over your own purse.

We are sorry to note that the Dundee School Board have decided to shelve till June the application of their school nurses for an increase of salary, so that they may be raised to the same terms of employment as their colleagues in Edinburgh. They are meantime paid £70 per annum, with £5 for uniform. It was reported that in Edinburgh the nurses are remunerated with £80, a uniform, and £5 for laundry. Not at all too much when one thinks of the wear and tear of their duties.

At the usual monthly meeting of the Catholic Nurses' Association, Ireland, held at the club rooms, 51, Mountjoy Square, Dublin, seven new members were elected. It was decided that all members should be notified that the payment of half-yearly subscriptions to the Association is due on January 1st, 1913.

The Victorian Order of Nurses in Canada is constantly increasing in usefulness, and has now 250 nurses at work, but considering the enormous distances in the Dominion, many more are required to meet the needs of new settlers, who cannot afford to pay for the whole time of a trained nurse. The Duchess of Connaught is greatly interested in the service, and is doing her utmost to further the collecting of £100,000 to finance the Order and extend its activities. Headquarters are at Ottawa, where the Lady Superintendent, Miss Mary Ard Mackenzie, R.N., is resident. She is this year President of the Canadian National Association of Trained Nurses, and a woman of fine attainments as an educationalist. Like so many Canadians, she owes to the United States her liberal professional training—at the Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, and the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)