

## LEAGUE NEWS.

A General Meeting of the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses will be held in the Clinical Theatre at the hospital on Saturday, July 5th, at 2.30 p.m. At 4 o'clock tea will be served in the Cloisters, and a Tennis Match played between the past and present Bart's nurses.

## NURSING AND NATIONAL INSURANCE.

It is interesting to note that—as we stated a year ago would be the case—Nursing is rapidly becoming the crux of the question under the National Insurance Act, and from the President of the Local Government Board downwards—those persons and societies who have busied themselves with the nursing of the sick poor in their own homes, are now face to face with the question—How are the insured sick to be nursed? Wherever they are treated, in or out of institutions, the Act provides for some attempt at medical attendance, but medical attendance is of very little use unless the treatment prescribed can be skilfully administered. As usual, the class of worker—(ignored by Parliament, and economically controlled and depreciated by lack of status)—is found to be the most important factor in furthering the usefulness of the Act. Hence the numerous conferences and consultations how best to utilise the nurses' services for the insured. And yet, nursing opinion as expressed through their various organisations is ignored. Parliament and the Commissioners began as they meant to go on—by excluding the nursing profession from direct representation on the Advisory Committee, a privilege willingly accorded to every other class of insured women. Thus once more the nursing profession finds itself in the very dangerous position of being utilised by the community, without any power of expression as to how it will be used; and history tells us that human nature has always demanded from women the utmost they can give, for the least possible remuneration. Under these circumstances we hope the Nursing Profession will take a firm stand, and make it impossible, either for the President of the Local Government Board, or any other lay authority, to organize a Nursing Service excepting on a thoroughly efficient system. The standard of nursing should be of the best obtainable without registration, and the remuneration should be just. On no other basis will it be possible to provide efficient nursing for the insured under a National Act.

That there is great danger of deluding the poor as to the standard of nursing provided, there is already ample proof. Take for instance the Suggested Scheme put forward at the recent Conference at Leicester between Conference Committees, Approved Societies, and Nursing Associations, all bodies which stand in relation of employers. In the six clauses as under—there is absolutely no suggestion as to the quality of the nursing to be provided—and as midwifery is excluded from the benefits, there can be no reason whatever for employing other than nurses certificated after a three years' systematic training—and paying them not less than £120 a year.

### THE SUGGESTED SCHEME.

A suggested scheme laid before the meeting contained the following provisions:—

1. Approved societies to be asked to use their powers under Sec. 21 of the National Health Insurance Act, and to contribute towards the funds of district nursing, and thus co-operate with the existing nursing associations in providing general sick nursing for their members who are insured persons.
2. (a) That in the Borough of Leicester a fund should be raised by a capitation payment of not less than 3d. per insured member, and should be given in the form of a grant to the Central Nursing Association, and should be additional to, and not to take the place of, existing payments and contributions in support of nursing. (b) That in the county the approved societies should contribute not less than 3d. per insured person, and in return for this, nursing be supplied at the rate of 40 visits for each £1 received, visits at present being limited to those areas where there are nursing associations already existing.
3. The grant from the approved societies would not cover the attendance of nurses in maternity cases, nor those suffering from infectious diseases, nor in the case of persons suffering from tuberculosis who are being treated by the Insurance Committees under the sanatorium benefit clauses of the Act.
4. Approved societies consenting to the scheme should have representation on the committees of the nursing associations in the area.
5. The services rendered by nursing associations in return for such grants would be:—(1) The general sick nursing of insured members of approved societies where such nursing is now in existence; (2) the starting of nursing as soon as possible where none exists at the present time; and (3) the furnishing of reports to approved societies giving nursing information and records of the nurses' visits to their insured members.
6. The scheme to be provisional, and only to operate until the first valuation (which will be in about two years from the present time)

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