

Section 15, Sub-section 3, of the Insurance Act:—

(3). The regulations made by the Insurance Commissioners shall authorise the Insurance Committee by which medical benefit is administered to require any persons whose income exceeds a limit to be fixed by the Committee, and ALLOW ANY OTHER PERSONS, in lieu of receiving medical benefit under such arrangements as aforesaid, TO MAKE THEIR OWN ARRANGEMENTS FOR RECEIVING MEDICAL ATTENDANCE and treatment (including medicines and appliances); and in such case the Committee shall, subject to the regulations, contribute from the funds out of which medical benefit is payable towards the cost of medical attendance and treatment (including medicines and appliances), for such persons, sums not exceeding in the aggregate the amounts which the Committee would otherwise have expended in providing medical benefit for them.

If a nurse desires to retain the services of her own doctor who is not on the panel, she should at once write to her local Insurance Committee to say that she wishes to contract out; a special form can be obtained from her own doctor for the purpose.

ELLEN SHUTER.

We feel sure many nurses will wish to be treated by the doctor who has attended them in the past, who knows their constitutions, and in whom they have confidence, and they will be wise to follow Mrs. Shuter's advice.

The situation in hospitals and infirmaries would be rendered impossible if only doctors on the panel could attend the intern nursing staff and administer medical benefit. We presume some arrangement will be made by Committees and Boards of Guardians whereby their own medical staff appointed to attend sick nurses will be recognised by the Insurance Committees for the district.

The sickness benefit of 7s. 6d. weekly due to insured nurses off duty ill will be claimed by some hospital committees, and not by others.

At a recent meeting of the Lambeth Board of Guardians the question of the administration of the Insurance Act in connection with probationary nurses was discussed. The incongruity of their consulting "panel doctors" outside the infirmary was pointed out, and the Chairman said it would be "simply ludicrous" whilst there were medical men in the institution in which they were employed. He recommended that some of the medical men in the Board's institutions should go on the medical panel, but that is a thorny question.

The same difficulty is being found by other hospitals. We learn that at St. Bartholomew's Hospital the nurses will pay the 7s. 6d. they receive as sickness benefit to the institution so long as they are being maintained and treated at the hospital's expense, which seems quite an equitable arrangement. The nurses at University College Hospital are receiving very generous treatment, as they are being treated at the hospital as heretofore, and no requisition is made on their sickness benefit. But it is becoming more and more evident that, so far as the majority of trained nurses are concerned, the Act is not constructed to provide them with medical benefit, though it makes provision for medical treatment.

STATE REGISTRATION.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick will open a Debate on the State Registration of Nurses at the Lyceum Club on February 26th.

EDINBURGH NURSES LEAVE FOR SOFIA.

Two Edinburgh nurses left last week to undertake hospital duty at Sofia. The appeal to Scotland for nursing assistance came from Mrs. Hugh Miller, a Bulgarian lady who resides in Aberdeen, and who shortly before Christmas went out to Sofia to assist in hospital work. Mrs. Miller took with her one trained nurse. On her arrival she found a clamant need for experienced nurses. The mobilisation in Austria had withdrawn about 100 Austrian nurses who were doing duty in the Bulgarian hospitals, and Mrs. Miller found herself in charge of a hospital with 180 beds and only one skilled nurse and a number of young, inexperienced Bulgarian girls for the work. She sent an appeal for one or more nurses to Mrs. Whyte, the wife of Principal Whyte. Mrs. Whyte in turn made a public appeal, and raised the necessary funds to pay the expenses of two nurses to Bulgaria. An application was thereafter made to Miss Gill, the Lady Superintendent of the Royal Infirmary, and through her two nurses of wide experience—Miss Cumming and Miss Smaill—were found ready to volunteer for the work. Miss Cumming is one of the assistant superintendents of the infirmary, and acts as night superintendent there. She was on the staff of the Edinburgh and East of Scotland Hospital which went to the front in the South African War. Miss Smaill was formerly on the infirmary staff, and was for some time assistant night superintendent. The ladies got a hearty send-off from a number of friends when they left the Waverley Station.

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