

lines by appointing women nurses who will combine the duties of school attendance officers and health visitors, and thus make more effective the work of medical inspection in the schools. Nurses, in fact, have been appointed for the mining districts of Castleford and Featherstone, and have entered upon their work. Other districts will be provided with this new social agency in due course at salaries of £80 a year, with an allowance of £5 for uniforms. Amongst other things they will be present at medical inspections in the schools and take notes for home cases, distribute leaflets and literature as desired, visit homes where there are defective or sick children and give instructions where children are insufficiently clothed or nourished, impressing upon parents also the value of a proper amount of sleep for the children, and also bathing. They will work in co-operation with alleviating agencies in the localities where they exist; there are a hundred such scattered up and down the administrative area. Altogether about sixty-six new health visitors will be appointed at a cost of £6,600, part of which will be found by the Government.

Although the salary is small, it is to be hoped that only thoroughly trained and competent nurses will be entrusted with such responsible duties.

#### PRIVATE NURSING.

We are pleased to learn that the very undesirable suggestion to run a private nursing department in connection with the West Cornwall Miners' and Women's Hospital, at Redruth, has been deferred for a year. The Committee had actually suggested that the men's convalescent ward could be used as sleeping quarters for the nurses, and the sitting and dining-rooms could be shared with the present staff. We gather the aim was profit on the nurses' work, as Mr. James Wickett objected to a philanthropic institution being run on business lines. We also object to it when the "nurse pays." No committee of a hospital should have the right to house its nurses as it chooses, and herding them without privacy in a ward reminds one of prehistoric times. The nursing staff in a public institution have as much right to suitable and decent accommodation as the medical staff, and we hope until the Committee of the Redruth Hospital provides a comfortable Nurses' Home, it will make no attempt to organize a private nursing department.

Some ignorant person has been making the ridiculous statement in the Press that "nurses who nurse in private houses get two hours off

an eight-hour day." To which a late London Hospital nurse very truly replies:—"An eight-hour day in private nursing is a thing unheard of. I did private nursing myself from the largest London hospital, and such a demand was never thought of by us, and, indeed, could not have been met. In hospital a twelve-hour day, with two hours off, is general, but in private houses a nurse is usually on duty all day, and in most cases is getting up two or three times a night. A nurse who is anxious for the welfare of the patient depending on her would not wish to insist on any special times off duty, and I venture to think that a nurse who arrived at a private house demanding an eight-hour day with two hours off would be a most unwelcome visitor. When a patient has two nurses, each is on duty uninterruptedly for twelve hours."

We once heard a Superintendent of a Private Nurses' Society remark, "My idea of Heaven is a place where there are no fees," and we should imagine the officers of the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association would be in sympathy with her, as to fees—that is the raising of the private nurse's fee in New South Wales. The question was discussed in Sydney last year, and ended in an addition of 2s. 6d. being charged for laundry, but this has not satisfied the section of the nurses who can only charge £2 2s. a week for private cases, and who have to meet the increased cost of living in every direction. They want £3 3s., and voted at a legally constituted Special General Meeting of their Association to have it. Now 25 members have petitioned the Council asking that the resolution carried at the aforesaid meeting should be referred to the vote of all the members, and upon the proposition of a medical man, seconded by a medical woman, it was agreed to take a referendum. This certainly appears very unbusinesslike, and we are not surprised that Miss Newill, Lady Superintendent of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, the proposer of the original resolution, protests in the official organ of the Association against its editorial tone in advocating a referendum after the vote had been taken.

The truth is that a £2 2s. fee in Australia is quite inadequate, considering the arduous manual work often required in private houses owing to a scarcity of domestic service. It is only in Europe, where women's work is notoriously ill paid, that trained private nurses are considered amply remunerated by £2 2s. for an unlimited (or eighty-four hours') working week!

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