

engaged from time to time were all certificated, the Master replied that they all said they were, and that they seemed to resent the suggestion that they should produce certificates.—Mr. Joslin said that if the Master asked for certificates, it looked like questioning their honour.—The Chairman said that it was no more questioning the honour of nurses to ask for certificates than it was questioning the honour of applicants for other appointments to ask the applicants to produce original testimonials.—The Master said that he had no doubt that the majority of temporary nurses engaged were fully qualified.—Miss Hawkins said that the Master might be deceived.—The Master said that he did not remember a nurse who had been engaged who had not been satisfactory.—A motion that in future the Master should require temporary nurses to produce a three years' certificate was lost. There voted:—For, 9; against, 10.

The Barnet Board of Guardians would employ trained women nurses if they could get them. In spite of the Master's courtesy, it is sadly true that many private nurses sent out by institutions neither possess certificates of training, nor deserve them.

At the annual meeting of the Blackburn District Nursing Association, last week, the Vicar, the Rev. T. R. Sale, suggested that more use might be made of the firsthand evidence of nurses in the work of social betterment. If they wanted facts about the housing of the people, district nurses could supply facts which would be of the greatest value.

STATE HELP FOR NURSING.

Miss Margaret Llewellyn-Davies, in an admirable letter to the *Times* on the subject of Health Services and Public Authorities, points out that in his Budget speech Mr. Lloyd George has recognized the need for State help for nursing and maternity. The question is, she says, still undecided whether the nursing grant should be made to the public health authorities or to insurance committees, and claims that the arguments are overwhelmingly in favour of the public health authority.

She then proceeds to argue that nursing is needed by the whole working class population, and should not be confined to a particular section. To restrict nursing to insured persons is to put a premium on women going out to work. Also all facilities for scientific diagnosis of disease should be controlled by public health authorities in the interests of all.

We have depended too long on philanthropy for both nursing and hospitals, with the result that there are large gaps in the provision of both, and that the training and payment of nurses is inadequate. Another drawback is the charitable character that has been imprinted on these health services. If the grant were given to insurance committees, it is very probable this characteristic would be continued, by handing the money over to district nursing associations. She quotes a woman member of an insurance committee who writes to her:—"There is a big danger, I think, of its being administered as a charity. I believe these nursing associations are doing valuable work, but they ought to be public concerns, and not run by a voluntary committee of benevolent or patronizingly-disposed persons as many are at present." The same writer says that approved societies' representatives seem to think that there are no people in the world except insured ones, and others want to be kind to the poor, and cannot realize that the workers can think and do things for themselves.

Miss Llewellyn-Davies contends that public pressure can more easily be brought to bear on public health authorities which are democratically elected, than on insurance committees, in whose appointment people of the locality have no voice. Also, that until existing nursing associations are gradually absorbed in a national health service, it might well be a condition that where State money is used, there should be a three years' training and a minimum wage sufficiently high to allow of provision for old age, and for the disablement not uncommon in so hard a profession.

She is of opinion that the only argument which has any weight in favour of the insurance committees administering the nursing grant is that women are on these committees. But the necessity of securing the grant for all outweighs this argument. The way to meet it is to remove at once the barriers which prevent women sitting on town and county councils.

She concludes by claiming that public health authorities should also be the bodies for controlling all developments in connection with maternity. Their work in this direction has already begun, and in addition to the promised grants towards public health officers' salaries, a definite grant for the establishment and work of maternity centres is of urgent necessity on the grounds of humanity and national health.

We warmly endorse Miss Llewellyn-Davies' claim that if State funds are used in financing a Nursing Service the quality of the nursing should be standardized.

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