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EDITORIAL.

THE CALL TO NATIONAL SERVICE.

THERE can be no doubt as to the result of the appeal to be made at the Mass Meeting at the Royal Albert Hall, on March 17th, with the object of securing recruits for the Women's Section of National Service in war. The gathering will be unique in importance, and if any evidence of this be needed it is to be found in the fact that Her Majesty the Queen has, contrary to her usual practice, consented to be present, thus emphasising her appreciation, both of the work women have already done during the war, and of the necessity for further effort. There is every prospect that every one of the 9,000 seats in the Hall will be filled.

The Speakers on this historic occasion will include Lord Derby, Secretary of State for War, Mr. Prothero, President of the Board of Agriculture, Mr. John Hodge, Minister of Labour, Mrs. H. J. Tennant and Miss Violet Markham, Directors of the Women's Section of National Service. The last two speakers will relate what women have already done in the nation's service since the outbreak of war, and what they are ready to undertake further.

In regard to trained nurses, who have rendered heroic service since the war began, the demands upon them for their own special work are so great that very few are unemployed at the present time. It is certain that there is no class whose services are more essential, and without them the loss of life, disablement and sufferings of our gallant sailors and soldiers would have been immeasurably increased.

So quietly and unobtrusively however is the work of trained nurses performed, so much is it a part of the national life in time of peace, that it is hardly realized to what an extent it has affected the issues of war.

If the uniform of the trained nurse is not conspicuous at Saturday's meeting it will not be for any want of sympathy with its objects, but because it is in its rightful place at the bedside of the sick and wounded, in naval, military and civil hospitals.

Amongst others whose uniforms will testify to the extent to which women are participating in war work, are those of the munition workers, the transport workers, the women police, the post-women, the omnibus and tram conductors, and the V.A.D. workers; and, though they wear no uniform, the mothers of heroes who are fighting, and who have died, for the Empire, and the mothers of her sons to be, will meet on that historic ground in proof that of all the services man or woman can render to their country the bearing and rearing of a race of heroes, such as British sailors and soldiers have proved themselves to be, is the greatest and most far reaching in its effects. But even this has not been the limit of the patriotism of the "mothers of men." Eagerly they have offered their services whenever and wherever possible, to strengthen the hands of those in the fighting line, and, were the demand made, the majority would willingly undergo military training, so that they might go forth even into the fighting line, undaunted and unafraid. The way in which women have subjected themselves to the greatest risks, have exposed themselves to fire, and have remained cool and collected in circumstances of the gravest danger, ashore and afloat, is proof enough of this statement. But their services at home are too valuable for any such task, for as housewives it is not too much to say that the key of the present situation is in their hands.

Whatever demands are made on Saturday on the courage, endurance and fortitude of women, it is, all honour to them, a foregone conclusion that the response is sure.

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