

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not in ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.*

## A CERTIFICATE OF EXISTENCE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—In your issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING (July 27th), I saw a letter, complaining of hardship imposed on the annuitants of R.N.P.F.N. It sounded so unlike that valuable fund that I cut it out and asked what it meant. I enclose Mr. Dick's reply and should be so glad if you would make it public in your valuable paper. What a pity nurse did not find out facts before rushing into print.

I wish some of the letters about the "Merry Mummies" could be copied into the daily papers, so that the public could see what nurses think of those who are dragging down an honourable profession as an excuse to show off and gambol, and this while the greater number of the profession are living and sometimes dying for the men who are bleeding for their country. Is there no way in which we can stop this "War Charity"?

Believe me, Yours sincerely,

S. SULLIVAN,

Harrow.

Member R.B.N.A.

LETTER TO MISS SULLIVAN FROM THE SECRETARY  
R.N.P.F.N.

DEAR MADAM,—The cutting which you enclose contains a misrepresentation of the facts. It is quite untrue that we require our annuitants each month to send a doctor's certificate and a clergyman's certificate. The facts are these:—

About six months ago we requested our annuitants, for the first time in the history of the Fund, to obtain a Certificate of Existence, signed by a professional or other responsible man to the effect that she was alive at the date of signing the certificate. This formality was for the satisfaction of our actuaries, and was a measure framed in the interests of the policy-holders of the Fund. It may not be necessary to trouble the annuitants again, at any rate not for some considerable time.

In the ordinary course, all we require the Nurse to do is to sign a receipt for the quarterly instalment of her pension in the presence of a witness.

Yours faithfully,

LOUIS H. M. DICK,  
Secretary.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I have been much interested in the two letters published in your Journal as to the new condition to be complied with before annuitants of the R.N.P.F. for Nurses receive their annuity.

I was requested last March to get a signature from magistrate or doctor, &c., to say that I was alive. I did nothing that time. In June no cheque was sent, but another request for a certifi-

cate of existence. I wrote and declined, and gave as one reason for my refusal that I did not wish to add to the conditions under which I joined, especially as this would be so burdensome. I received another letter, arguing the point and saying the condition was covered by Article 5, which, however, simply says that in the first instance the applicant must satisfy the Council that she has given correct dates, and so on, at first, before any payment can be made, and (here your second correspondent has not taken in what will be asked of her) that they will not ask again for another certificate till September—just three months later.

I wrote again, saying it was not worth my while for £10 a year to undergo the worry and inconvenience entailed, but that if they were doubtful as to my existence they could pay the amount due into my bank, and it was paid.

The absurdity of it is that the annuity had never been paid without the signature of a witness, and either my partner or our secretary witnessed my signature. One can only suppose that, though women really have a vote now, that the Pension Fund Council still do not consider a woman's signature to be a trustworthy voucher, and the hardship of it is that nurses living in places where everyone's business is known will be obliged to ask outside people for signatures, thereby admitting them to a knowledge of their private affairs.

Yours faithfully,

CHRISTINA FORREST,  
Matron Victoria and Bournemouth  
Nurses' Institute.

## A CHANGE NEEDED.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—In the early days of the war a large number of Nurses were sent to the Mediterranean, Egypt, and later to India.

Last week I was speaking to a medical man home from there, and he informed me that their lot is a very hard one.

Three years in a climate to which they were unaccustomed coupled with constant strain of hard and anxious work, unhealthy surroundings, has reduced them to a pitiable state, which calls for immediate attention.

They beg for a change to Europe, or even to Egypt, but no notice is taken of their request.

I am sure it is only necessary to call the attention of the higher authorities at home to this in order to bring about amelioration of the condition of those devoted women. Perhaps some Member would raise the matter by question in the House of Commons?

Faithfully yours,  
London, W. 1.

M. C. W.

## OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

## QUESTIONS.

August 31st.—Mention some of the principal disorders of the nervous system, and the duties of the nurse in regard to them.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)