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EDITORIAL.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

No section of the community looked forward with greater interest than trained nurses to the meeting at the Kingsway Hall, W.C., on Monday last—when Dr. Addison, President of the Local Government Board, was the principal speaker—in support of the establishment of a Ministry of Health. The extremely representative audience included many members of Parliament, and a number of nurses were also present.

The Chairman, Sir Kingsley Wood, M.P., opened the meeting on an exhilarating note, by stating that, fortified by the Prime Minister's pledge of an immediate and drastic reform of health administration, and the appointment of Dr. Addison as President of the Local Government Board, they were sanguine that early in the new Session they would see the Ministry of Health established. He further announced that the Prime Minister had sent a special message to the meeting, wishing it every success, and expressing his belief in its object.

Dr. Addison said that when he took his present office he did so on the understanding that the Bill to establish a Ministry of Health would be passed through Parliament as soon, and as rapidly, as possible. He claimed the good will and help of the great local authorities, the insurance committees, and the medical, nursing, midwifery, and other organizations. They must, he said, lift their eyes above the nozzle of the parish pump, and try to take big views. If the right thing was going to be done it must be done on comprehensive lines.

Of special interest to our readers was the declaration of the President of the Local

Government Board that a great development of maternity and nursing services was needed, and that the provision of trained and skilled midwives and nurses, properly paid, was an essential part of a health policy. Dr. Addison affirmed that an adequate supply of well-trained, experienced nurses would never be obtained so long as people expected to secure them for the wages paid to a scullery maid.

The great keynote of the Ministry of Health, said Dr. Addison, should be prevention. We are thoroughly in accord with this opinion, and consider that no class of the community is better qualified to assist in such prevention than nurses with the qualification of Queen's Nurses, *i.e.*, a three years' certificate of general hospital training, with six months' additional instruction in hygiene and social service; many Queen's Nurses also hold the certificate of the Central Midwives Board.

Lady Rhondda, in supporting Dr. Addison, said that the new Ministry would need machinery to keep in the closest possible touch with public opinion, and emphasised the importance of establishing an advisory council of women.

A resolution in support of the establishment of a Ministry of Health and of dissociating the non-medical side of the Poor Law, and other non-health functions, from the Health Ministry, was carried amid some protests by members of the audience who desired to speak. The Chairman ruled that discussion at such a meeting was impossible, but Dr. Addison gave evidence of his quality as a statesman by coming forward and offering to answer questions, and in the course of his replies said that it was his intention to act on Lady Rhondda's suggestion and make use of the services of women.

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