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EDITORIAL.

A NURSES' TRADE UNION.

The inevitable has happened, and, in a paragraph communicated to the Press we learn that steps have been taken, and are being actively pursued, for the formation of a Trade Union for Trained Nurses, the immediate objects of which will be to bring about a State Registration of all Nurses, the payment of a minimum wage, and a proper regulation of working hours. Upon enquiry we learn that it is not desired to give further detailed information until the organisation of the Union is more matured. What appears certain is that the movement is initiated by working nurses who so far have not taken an active part in nursing politics.

The aim of a Trade Union is associated in the minds of most people with organisation in regard to strikes, but this is not necessarily the principal, or even a minor part of Trade Union policy. This may imply the union of workers in a society, co-operating with the State for the national good, while, at the same time, protecting the interests of the special branch of national service to which they belong. But the effect of nurses uniting in a Trade Union will be to place them in touch and sympathy with other sections of trade unionists, and to secure for them the support of workers in other departments of national industry.

No one who has watched the depreciation of professional nursing of recent years, and more especially during the war, could doubt that sooner or later trained nurses would find it necessary to protect the interests of the profession as a whole. We mention a few of the points to which they take exception.

1. The enforcement by the Army Nursing Board, on which a number of Matrons have seats, of the insulting "Serf Clause," to which

nurses in the Military Nursing Services were required to subscribe, and agree to be summarily dismissed, without any power of appeal (in whatever part of the world they might be working) if in the judgment of the Secretary of State for War, or his representative, they had in any way misconducted themselves.

2. The indignity to which trained nurses were subjected by being placed in Auxiliary Hospitals under the control of untrained Commandants, who not only acted as Administrators, but, in many instances, assumed the title of Matron, and supervised professional work which they were incompetent to control.

3. The employment of many members of Voluntary Aid Detachments in positions of responsibility in regard to nursing duties, at the front and elsewhere.

4. The attack on their professional prestige by a group of actresses associated in the Nation's Fund for Nurses, of which a millionairess is Hon. Treasurer. Day after day advertisements derogatory to the status of nurses as self-supporting workers were issued in daily and other papers; the Press was consequently gagged, and the nurses' opinions and objections were rigorously excluded.

5. We have now the attempt of the Central Midwives Board to deprive highly qualified nurses, with a midwifery certificate, of representation on that Board, by the elimination of the representative of the Royal British Nurses' Association, and to give representation upon it to three other bodies of employers.

6. On the Consultative Councils, recently appointed by the Ministry of Health representation of the great profession of nursing is entirely excluded. This is specially marked in connection with the Consultative Council for England on Medical and Allied Services. Is nursing an ancillary service to medicine or not? The appointment of a sub-Committee which shall advise this Council when nursing

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