

A TRAINED NURSES' TRADE UNION.

A Mass Meeting will be held at the Mortimer Hall, 93, Mortimer Street, Great Portland Street, London, W., on Saturday, November 8th, 1919, at 3 p.m., to consider the advisability of forming a Professional Union (registered under the Trades Union Act) for the mutual help and protection of the Trained Nurse.

Miss MacCallum, who has been chiefly instrumental in promoting the movement, will be in the Chair.

The poster advises nurses to "Wake up, and not to wait and see." It cordially invites all nurses to attend as "The Matter is Urgent."

We hear a large gathering is expected, and that the speakers intend to be very frank in expressing their opinions on modern nursing conditions. Questions and expressions of opinion from the audience will be welcomed. The "Hush" policy to which nurses are so accustomed at meetings concerning their affairs will be quite out of place at this meeting; and it is hoped they will eagerly avail themselves of the opportunity to speak out.

THE POOR LAW WORKERS' TRADE UNION.

We quote from the *Poor Law Officers' Journal*:—

Reporting to the Warwick Guardians on the question of the hours for the nursing staff, the Hospital Committee stated as follows:—"We have considered the question of working hours for the nursing staff, and have had before us a report drawn up by the Master and Superintendent Nurse showing how the work could be carried out on the basis of a 48 hours' working week, also on a basis for increasing the off-duty time without bringing the working hours so low as 48 per week, and we recommend that the Day Nurses should have an average working week of 53½ hours and the Night Nurses an average working week of 56 hours. This will entail the appointment of one extra Charge Nurse and two extra Probationer Nurses, at an estimated yearly cost of £234 5s. 4d. inclusive of a war bonus on the present scale. We recommend that the nursing staff be so increased, subject to the approval of the Ministry of Health."

Mr. S. Holloway, Chairman of the Committee, said he was in the unenviable position of having to propose the adoption of a recommendation with which he did not agree. He said the Nurses—to be fair to them—were not responsible for the framing of the recommendation, but it had been made as the result of a letter received from a new organisation, which called itself the Poor-Law Workers' Trade Union, which demanded shorter hours for Poor-Law officers. On the grounds that if shorter hours were granted to the officers, the Nurses were also entitled to them, the recommendation now before the Board had been made. The shortening of the nurses' working hours would necessitate the employment of three new nurses, and also the provision of sleeping accommodation,

of which there was not sufficient at present. He thought it was time a stop was put to such continual increases of expenditure. He was quite in sympathy with the nurses having more time off, but it was of no use for a local administrative authority to talk of economy while all its actions spoke of extravagance. That was the way in which economical madness lay.

The Master (Mr. A. H. Measures) said the nurses now averaged from 62 to 63 hours per week, and worked very hard. Theirs was one of the most arduous posts in the institution. Their work was laborious, both mentally and physically, their hours were long, and their work of a highly technical nature.

Upon being put the report was adopted.

AN UNJUSTIFIABLE SUGGESTION.

Speaking at the Tuberculosis Conference in London last week, Sir Arthur Stanley, Chairman of the Joint War Committee, expressed the hope that the Red Cross might be able to form a definite organisation under which they would secure for every one just that amount of skill and attention that was necessary in the early stages of any accident or disease, and so work on to a further stage where more skilled and trained assistance could be given in the great hospitals. He proposed to place Red Cross motor ambulances in convenient centres, and would like to see associated with the stations bodies of efficiently trained V.A.D.s who would attend to all the minor accidents that happened, and who in turn would be connected with the nursing centres which should be in every town and village. He believed the scheme would enable the Red Cross to do useful work in combatting tuberculosis.

Such organisation would be to make the fundamental mistake of the Red Cross in regard to organisation for war service, *i.e.*, to put the inexperienced workers in the Clearing Hospitals and on the lines of communication, and to keep the trained nurses at the base—a mistake to which this journal promptly drew attention, with the result that trained nurses were later employed and rendered invaluable service in the Casualty Clearing Stations close to the fighting line.

In a discussion dealing with tuberculosis schemes, in relation to Red Cross and other voluntary activities, Lady Aberdeen suggested that preliminary courses of instruction in tuberculosis work should be initiated at once by the Red Cross Society, so as to retain the services of the V.A.D.s. We hope that trained nurses, and not "book" nurses, will be entrusted with this work.

THE COVENANT.

The Covenant is the new organ of the League of Nations Union, price 3s. 6d. quarterly. Lord Robert Cecil introduces the review with a short article on "The Covenant," in which he sketches the task that lies before the Covenanter.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)