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EDITORIAL.

ORGANISATION OF HEALTH SERVICES IN LONDON.

The Special Committee on Health Administration in London, appointed by the London County Council in March last, "to consider and report as to what alterations and extensions are desirable in the powers and duties of the different local authorities and other bodies, both official and voluntary, responsible for performing health duties in London," have now presented their report to the Council.

They state that a principal object of the Ministry of Health Act, 1919, is to bring under one Minister of the Crown, and one Government Department, the health functions hitherto exercised or supervised by various Government Departments. That the Act does not effect any rearrangement or redistribution of health functions of local authorities, but it provides that it shall be the duty of the Minister to take such steps as may be desirable to secure the preparation, effective carrying out, and co-ordination of measures conducive to the health of the people, including measures for the prevention and cure of diseases, and the training of persons for health services.

The Committee state that they have framed their proposals on a basis which will permit of a large measure of elasticity in development. Further, that the problem of developing, and where necessary remodelling, the organisation for dealing with the health of the people of London is one of great difficulty and complexity, one difficulty being that the principle which underlay the earlier measures for dealing with the treatment of individuals led to the creation of separate medical services within the Poor Law, the Education Service, and other great branches of administration; whilst more recent policy, which has culminated in the creation of

a Ministry of Health, aims at all Health Services being under unified control. The Committee then trace the development of the Health Services, including environmental and other public health services of a local character, services in respect of infectious diseases, Poor Law Medical Services, School Medical Services, Services in connection with Maternity and Child Welfare, and the Voluntary Health Agencies—including the voluntary hospitals—the League of Red Cross Societies, the British Red Cross and Order of St. John, the Nursing Associations, the National Council for Combating Venereal Diseases, the Central Fund for the Promotion of Tuberculosis Dispensaries, the Invalid Children's Aid Association, etc.

The Committee then discuss what would be the ideal organisation of Health Services in London; what should be the financial basis underlying this provision; and how far the ideal solution is compatible with the existing organisation of London government.

The Committee recommend to the Council that a scheme for the better organisation of Health Services in London should provide that the health functions of London Poor Law authorities should be divided between the Council, the City Corporation, and the Metropolitan Borough Councils; that the Council should have power, by scheme, to appoint a Health Committee, of whom the majority should be members of the Council, and a minority persons of experience in health matters who are not members of the Council, and to refer to such Committee such duties as medical inspection and treatment of school, at present referred by statute to the Education Committee. It also suggests that a Central Council of London Hospitals should be formed.

These are all matters in which nurses engaged in Public Health work in London are intimately concerned and deeply interested.

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