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**EDITORIAL.**

**A GREAT PUBLIC SERVANT—A LOSS TO  
THE NATION.**

The death, after a few days' illness, from bronchial pneumonia, of Sir Robert Morant, K.C.B., Chief Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health, is a great national loss, for, by years of patient study, in which he brought his brilliant mind to bear upon the many difficult questions with which it would be confronted, he had a wide insight into the problems of National Health; he had the vision which realised what organization was necessary for the fulfilment of his ideals, and the high sense of duty, the force, and the indomitable will that would have carried them through.

Like other men of genius, he held that "no detail is ever insignificant," and that, no doubt, had much to do with his success. Thoroughness, understanding born of knowledge, devotion and faithfulness to principles and to his duty as a public servant, characterised his work, and he has left behind him a noble tradition of public policy and conduct which may well be an inspiration to those who follow him.

The public loss is also, in a very special sense, the loss of the nursing profession. Last year, during the passage of the Nurses' Registration Bills through Parliament, three men of outstanding ability filled the horizon: Major Barnett, who had charge of the Central Committee's Bill; the Right Honble. Christopher Addison, M.P., Minister of Health, who undertook to introduce a Government measure for the State Registration of Nurses, and carried it through with such conspicuous ability; and Sir Robert Morant, his Chief Permanent Secretary, never far away when the Bills were under discussion, who took infinitesimal pains, and gave unwearied service, in endeavouring to find the best solution to points which arose during

their passage through the House of Commons, and his dealings with those concerned, in Conferences and elsewhere, were characterised by the greatest courtesy and kindness.

It will be remembered that Dr. Addison, in his speech at the General Meeting of Members of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses on January 8th, replying to a vote of thanks, said:—"Although it is exceptional to mention Civil Servants . . . the major part of the departmental work I saddled on the broad shoulders of Sir Robert Morant." We offer to the Minister of Health our sincere sympathy at the loss of so able and loyal a colleague.

The strength and the wisdom of Sir Robert Morant lay in the fact that he studied the questions which concerned his work at first hand. He realised that trained nursing would be one of the important factors in the work of the coming Ministry of Health, and it was quite usual for him to appear at meetings of nurses, keenly interested, quietly making his own deductions, long before he became so intimately concerned with nursing legislation, and this was his considered policy in all that concerned his work.

As a public servant he studiously avoided taking any partizan attitude, and held aloof even from any suspicion of it. He was approachable by those of diverse views who were concerned with any matter under discussion. Thereby he acquired his knowledge of all sides of a question, and when he acted, or advised others to act, his opinion had been formed after close study of its various bearings, so that his advice was of value.

The *Times* truly says of him:—"He was a great Civil Servant, and his whole life was inspired by devotion to the public service. . . ." "Night after night, of recent years, he worked till the small hours of the morning, organizing

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