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## EDITORIAL.

### PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING.

Nurses will doubtless have read with interest the first public report of the deliberations of the General Nursing Council, which we published in a recent issue. It cannot be too frequently emphasised, that the new Registration Acts imply higher educational standards. To those nurses wholly lacking in lawful ambition (if there are any!) this may be a sinister portent! but to those imbued with the spirit of nursing *progress*, it will bring hope and aspiration. Public Health Nursing is likely to become wholly the province of the Ministry of Health, which already contributes a grant towards the salaries of Health Visitors, &c. We hear nurses complain sometimes that the salaries they receive as Health Visitors are insufficient, while the salaries paid to Health Visitors who are without hospital training are considerably higher. The complaint seems justifiable at first sight, and we are in sympathy with them; but there is another side to the question which they appear to overlook.

In the first place, nurses must remember, that trained nursing before December, 1919, has had no status; the memorable statement of Mr. Lloyd George, that there was no such thing *in law* as a trained nurse, was correct. There was no standard, no guarantee of fitness to fill a well-paid post under a Public Body. We have lately made enquiries concerning the qualifications and salaries of Health Visitors and Sanitary Inspectors appointed and paid (in part) by a certain Metropolitan Borough Council, and the information gained is very enlightening. We give below three examples of the qualifications possessed by ladies engaged in Public Health work:

- (a) Miss B., Sanitary Inspector; B.A. (London); Sanitary Inspectors' Examination Board; Training Course for Sanitary Inspector; National Health Society's Diploma; South Kensington Certificate of Hygiene.
- (b) Miss S., Sanitary Inspector and Health Visitor; Certificate of Sanitary Inspectors' Examination Board; National Health Society's Diploma in Hygiene and Physiology, Nursing and First Aid.
- (c) Miss A., Health Visitor; Certificate of Royal Sanitary Institute (for Health Visitors and School Nurses); Sanitary Inspectors' Examination Board; Royal Sanitary Institute for Inspection of Nuisances; practical experience in nursing; First Aid and Home Nursing.

It will be seen that a little amateur nursing does not come amiss! The salaries of these ladies are: (a) and (b), £383 14s.; (c), £319 14s. The reason for this discrepancy is not apparent. The scale includes bonuses. Now, we have in our list two trained nurses as Health Visitors, employed as Infant Welfare workers, who receive only £170 including bonus. Another, with a two-years certificate of the Evelina Hospital for Children, one year's training at the Battersea Polytechnic, and ten years' experience in Infant Welfare work, receives the same.

The moral is obvious; namely, the highest qualifications are essential in order to fill the best-paid posts. This is a healthy and encouraging sign. The Public and Public Bodies do not yet realise that the Nursing profession has been raised to legal status, and trained nursing does not at present command the attention and respect that it merits. But

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