

National Health Insurance has been very aggravating to probationers and trained nurses, as "7s. 6d. a week was not worth bothering about." The amended Act makes conditions a little better:—

Contributions and benefits have both been raised. The new weekly rates of contribution will be 10d. for men and 9d. for women, of which amounts the employer will contribute 5d.

New rates of illness benefit will be 15s. a week for men and 12s. a week for women. Disablement benefit in each case will be 7s. 6d. a week, and maternity benefit £2.

The estimated additional expenditure will be £30,000,000 a year.

From the published reports of its proceedings the Poor Law Workers' Trade Union appears to be making great strides. It has recently federated with the Asylums Workers' Union. Brotherhood through effective co-operation is the ostensible aim, and the social side as well as the economic is to be strongly developed in the future. Many Boards of Guardians are co-operating, and have met the Union in the best and kindest spirit, recognising that common justice must be done to secure a contented service. Given model authorities, a model service will be secured.

The Poor Law Workers' Trade Union has urged nurses to join it, without much success, but now that Trained Nurses have their own Trade Union, both societies can help one another in times of stress.

A very interesting dispute is in progress between the Guardians of Blackburn Union and their nursing staff on the question (dating back to April, 1919) of payment for overtime, owing to shortage of nurses. The Guardians admit the principle, but offered nurses only 3½d. an hour. Now the Poor Law Workers' Trade Union of England and Wales have taken up the cause of the nurses, and demand the usual trade union time-and-a-half rate—1s. 3½d. for nurses, and 1s. 9d. for Sisters. Additional feeling has been lent to the matter by the fact that those nurses, receiving all told from £2 os. 10d. per week to £2 5s. 3d. per week, have as their colleagues and helpers, male nurses at £3 12s. 9d. At Blackburn thousands of girls in industrial work, with a guaranteed week of 48 hours, earn anything from £3 to £5 per week, with every evening and every week end then at their own disposal.

It may be argued that an entirely different class and type of girl is required for nursing—from that suited to industry. True, but conditions are turning a somersault, and the fact remains that the old altruistic spirit which animated nursing recruits in the past becomes rarer every day, and the Victorian love of gentility is passing away. Well-educated girls worked in factories very skilfully during the war, and we know of more than one professional man's daughters who have good billets in factories, and find the life full of interest and the pay very acceptable.

The lesson has got to be learned that unless the nursing profession is organised on modern lines to meet the restricted altruism of modern women, and they are treated like average human beings and not like martyrs and saints, the shortage of nurses will continue. You can't pour out of a pitcher what isn't in it!

Modernise the system. Let the brain enjoy its functions as well as the hand, and the nursing world will cheer up all round. Overtime, which leads to pottering and avarice, should be discouraged in an efficient scheme of training and hospital work.

The Toledo District Nurse Association which has been doing excellent constructive health work among the poor and uneducated of the city, has introduced a new educational feature of inestimable value, says the *Modern Hospital*. To the duties of Household Educator has been added that of teaching classes of children, ranging in age from seven to fourteen the principles of right eating. At these nutrition classes which meet once a week at the dispensary, charts are used showing by the picture method what should and should not be eaten. Talks and stories on health subjects are part of the programme, and the children are given weekly charts to be filled out at home giving information as to what they have eaten each day, how much water they have drank, how much play time they have had, how much sleep, and how many hours they have spent in school. Each child is given a thorough examination by a physician, is weighed once a week, and is measured for height every three months.

The Household Educator's general line of duties is to instruct mothers of families concerning the proper choice, purchasing, and cooking of food, to aid them, when necessary, by supplying either funds, or the essential food, to obtain a well-balanced ration, and to instruct them in all phases of practical household economics.

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