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EDITORIAL.

THE NATION'S FUND FOR NURSES.

At last, the British Women's Hospital Committee, after an existence of four and a half years, during which they received and spent large sums of public money, have sufficiently yielded to public opinion to publish a Report of their work, and of their receipts and expenditure. Such protracted delay in giving account of their stewardship must be almost unique amongst Associations receiving and spending public funds. Section III of this Report deals with the Nation's Fund for Nurses, and is, therefore, the part which will chiefly interest our readers. In view of our criticisms of this Fund, it is noteworthy that the Report commences, and occupies most of its space, by describing the rise and progress of the College of Nursing. It states the British Women's Hospital Committee was approached by the Council of the College with the request to collect funds to Endow the College, and to create "a Benevolent or 'Tribute' Fund for the relief of individual nurses during sickness and disablement."

The Report gives a most inaccurate and misleading account of the action of the College of Nursing in reference to the Act for the Registration of Nurses. It excellently illustrates the professional ignorance and biased credulity of the Nation's Fund Committee by the statement that "important as State Registration undoubtedly is for the betterment of the nursing profession, the College programme is planned upon ampler lines and contemplates the use of all efforts to standardise the education of nurses by a three years' general training, a uniform curriculum and one portal examination." The British Women's Hospital Committee is evidently unaware of the simple fact that the Act was passed by Parliament in order to obtain these results; and that no limited liability company like the College of Nursing could, in the most minute degree, carry out such a national reform. It is noteworthy,

as evidence of the unbusinesslike methods of the British Women's Hospital Committee that none of the Reports are dated, and that no address of the Committee can be found anywhere in the whole Report. And it is, therefore, not surprising that although the Report is said to be up to December 31st, 1919, statements are made in Section III concerning events which took place in 1920.

The one outstanding feature of the Report which we desire to emphasise is that the closest possible connection is proved thereby to exist between this so-called Nation's Fund for Nurses and the College of Nursing, Ltd.

We pass now to the consideration of the audited accounts of the Nation's Fund for Nurses from June 6th, 1917, to December 31st, 1919; that is to say, for a period of two and a half years; and only made up to a year ago, although just issued now. In doing this, we must ask our readers to remember clearly the objects of the Fund as above expressed:—

(1) To Endow the College of Nursing, Ltd.

(2) To form a Benevolent or "Tribute" Fund for the relief of individual nurses in sickness or distress.

The Receipts, as shown, then, should fall under these two perfectly distinct headings, and it must be remembered that the appeal for the Fund, the appreciative letters it received from Earl Haig and the heads of the Medical Department of the Army, all and only advocated the idea of benevolent assistance to nurses disabled in the war. The guileless public were told very little of, and undoubtedly gave very little cash to, the College of Nursing, Ltd. In the first place, then, it is noteworthy that the audited accounts do not definitely state what was received for the special purpose of endowing the College, excepting one item, and one item only, viz., £18,636 2s. 9d. All the other items on the Receipts side were therefore, presumably, given and collected for the purpose of assisting disabled nurses. It can easily be understood that this would be so. The apparent net result for the College of Nursing,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)