

## NURSES AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT.

### LABOUR MINISTER COMPELS NURSES AND HOSPITAL AUTHORITIES TO PAY.

We attended, with Miss I. Macdonald, as a delegate of the Royal British Nurses' Association, the conference convened by the Minister of Labour on January 5th, to discuss the exclusion of nurses in training, and others, whose salaries and emoluments did not amount to £250 per annum from the operations of the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1920. The following communication has now been received by the Secretary of the Association:—

MINISTRY OF LABOUR  
(Employment and Insurance Dept.),  
Queen Anne's Chambers,  
28, Broadway, S.W.1.

MADAM,—I am directed by the Minister of Labour to advert to the letter addressed to you from this Department on December 31st, 1920, notifying you of the Minister's intention to give a decision under Section 10 of the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1920, on applications submitted to him raising the question whether the employment by a hospital supported out of voluntary contributions of a Sister, a Nurse and a Probationary Nurse is employment within the meaning of the Act.

I am now to inform you that decisions have been given by the Minister to the following effect:—

(a) "That the employment of a person by a Voluntary Hospital as a Probationary Nurse is such as to make that person an employed person within the meaning of the Act."

(b) "That the employment of a person at a Voluntary Hospital as a Nurse to nurse patients is such as to make that person an employed person within the meaning of the Act."

I am to add that the application submitted with reference to the employment of a Sister at a Voluntary Hospital is still under consideration, and a further communication will be addressed to you on this question as soon as the Minister's decision has been given.

I am, Madam,

Your obedient servant,  
N. R. L. BLAKISTON.

### AN UNJUST TAX.

This decision of the Minister of Labour will be very disappointing to the Nursing Profession, as nearly every nurses' organisation has expressed to his Department its strong objection to the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act, which compels them to pay a tax from which, owing to their conditions of work, they will derive no benefit. All the nurse delegates at the Conference were unanimous in their desire for exclusion from the Act, and we consider it most arbitrary that a class of professional women

workers should be made to pay for the benefit of classes of industrial workers, whose conditions make the provisions of the Act an advantage to them. Moreover, thousands of pounds of charitable funds must be contributed by trustees who employ nurses in hospitals and institutions. We ask you: Will nurses tramp daily in queues to the Employment Exchanges with "chars" and other out-of-work women for a weekly wage of 12s.? It is scandalous that the law provides that they should do so.

## MINISTRY OF PENSIONS.

### NURSES DISABLED BY WAR SERVICE.

The Minister of Pensions desires Nurses who have served in the Great War and are suffering from disabilities due to their service to apply to the Officers' Friend, Ministry of Pensions, Millbank, S.W. 1, for copies of a new leaflet (M.P.O. Leaflet, No. 2), which explains how to obtain advice and information regarding the benefits to which they may be entitled.

Disabled nurses eligible for pension or gratuity, allowances from the Special Grants Committee, medical treatment, and training, comprise members of the following nursing services: Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service (and Reserve), Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (and Reserve), the Royal Air Force Nursing Service, the Territorial Force Nursing Service, and other nurses (*e.g.*, V.A.D. Nursing Members) who have been employed regularly and full time on nursing Imperial Naval, Military or Air Force personnel in hospitals or under organisations recognised by the Service Departments.

## A DECOY DUCK.

As we go to press we have received further information concerning the appeal being made by Lady Martin Harvey, on tour in Canada, for the Nation's Fund for Nurses, with which we shall deal next week.

The form of receipts used by Lady Harvey are contained in a College of Nursing Ltd. receipt book with the lithographed signature "Arthur Stanley," countersigned by "N. Martin Harvey," so that the Council of the College of Nursing Ltd. has apparently instigated this degrading appeal throughout the Dominion of Canada, although it has not been officially announced to the members in the *Bulletin*, its official organ, nor has Lady Harvey mentioned the College Company in any press report of her spoken appeals. The "distressed" nurse is being used as a decoy-duck in Canada—as she has been in England. So far the Canadian public has not had its withers wrung by the lurid tragedy of "Nurse Juliet"!!!

Why should not Lady Harvey impersonate this heroine on the stage? It should prove a draw.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)