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EDITORIAL.

REPORT OF THE VOLUNTARY HOSPITALS COMMITTEE.

The Report of the Committee appointed on January 25th last by the Minister of Health "to consider the present financial position of the Voluntary Hospitals, and to make recommendations as to any action which should be taken to assist them" has now been published. The Committee consisted of the Most Honourable the Marquess of Linlithgow, the Right Hon. the Viscount Cave, Sir William Peat, Mr. Vernon Hartshorn, M.P., and Mr. R. C. Norman. Viscount Cave acted as Chairman and Mr. L. G. Brock, C.B., of the Ministry of Health, as Secretary of the Committee.

The Committee recommend to the Minister :

(1) That a Hospitals Commission be formed on the lines of the University Grants Committee, to be appointed by the Minister of Health.

(2) That Voluntary Hospitals Committees be formed for the country as a whole, the King Edward's Hospital Fund for London continuing to perform the functions of the latter for the Metropolitan Police District.

(3) That Poor Law Guardians be authorised to enter into arrangements as to the use of infirmaries.

(4) That county councils be empowered to contribute to the expenses of voluntary hospitals committees.

(5) That failing the provision in the National Health Insurance Acts of a "hospital benefit," the courts be authorised to award to hospitals compensation under the Employers' Liability and Workmen's Compensation Acts.

(6) That local authorities be authorised to pay the cost of the treatment in hospitals of persons in their employ.

(7) That the payment out of technical education funds of grants for the training of nurses be considered.

(8) That provision be made for obtaining and tabulating returns of cases treated in hospitals.

(9) That all contributions by employers to hospital funds be allowed as deductions from profits for income-tax purposes.

(10) That where the payment to a hospital of a testamentary gift of residue is delayed for more than a year, the hospital be authorised to claim repayment of income-tax.

(11) That legacy and succession duty on testamentary gifts to hospitals be remitted.

(12) That Parliament be asked to sanction a temporary grant of £1,000,000 to be expended under the direction of the Hospitals Commission in the assistance of hospitals which require it.

(13) That the Hospitals Commission be authorised during a period of two years to recommend grants for the extension and improvement of hospitals, subject to like contributions being made from private sources.

In reference to the recommendation that the payment out of technical education funds of grants for the training of nurses be considered, the Committee state that "a considerable volume of evidence was given in support of a proposal that grants should be made for the training of nurses, who not only receive a practical education in the wards but at many hospitals are taught by lectures and classes. This proposal was supported by the witnesses called on behalf of the British Medical Association, who pointed out that nurses trained in the hospitals are regularly absorbed by the education authorities, or by the general nursing service of the country."

It might also be stated that a large number of trained nurses are absorbed by the health authorities.

We note, in support of the continuance of the voluntary system, the statement of the Committee that "it is in the wards of the voluntary hospitals that most of the doctors who rendered such fine service in the war were trained, and it is there that the majority of the young doctors and nurses upon whom the future health of the country depends are being equipped for their work."

We think, so far as nurses are concerned, this statement does less than justice to the many nurses trained in the great Poor Law infirmaries, which are really State hospitals, who rendered admirable service in the war.

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