

NURSING ECHOES.

We are glad to learn that the National Union of Trained Nurses is convening a conference to discuss the question of the unemployed insurance of nurses, and to see if some united scheme can be agreed upon.

Nurses trained and in training bitterly resent inclusion in the Act, as they realise unemployment insurance premiums paid by them will result in no benefit to nurses as a class, but that they are in reality being taxed to finance a scheme for the benefit of industrial workers. Domestic servants are exempt from the tax, so unless a highly skilled professional and "Registered" nurse chooses to rank as an unskilled domestic worker, she cannot avoid the toll. "I won't pay it, so that's that," we have heard nurses say, but they cannot escape without breaking the law—and their employers can also be penalised for their default. It only proves that the Labour Ministry has not had sufficient political pressure brought to bear upon it to compel it to treat the opinion of the profession of nursing with attention and respect. Apathy and lack of cohesion is our undoing. Once we have the power of the law behind us we shall pipe on a new note.

It is reported that the staff at the Colwyn Bay Isolation Hospital at Bronynant having objected to pay the unemployment insurance premiums the Health Committee recommended that the Council should pay the premiums on their behalf.

Strong opposition to this proposal was offered at a recent meeting of the Council by Mr. D. Edwards (Labour), who was supported by other councillors. The point made by the Labour speakers was that these contributions should be paid by the workers as their quota towards providing for the time when they might be unemployed.

By a very large majority the proposal was rejected. It was explained that the scale of salaries at the hospital was rather low.

We hear from several matrons that they do not mean to permit their Nursing Schools to lag behind the G.N.C. Syllabus. This is encouraging, because would-be probationers will more and more make enquiries as to the educational facilities available before they sign a three or four years' contract with a hospital for training, and they now have a right to know whether or no the syllabus of training

covers the requirements for the State Examination in 1924.

Some of the leading schools are already working up to the standard, and the enthusiasm of several of the matrons of Poor Law Infirmarys in doing all that they possibly can to bring the teaching up to standard is exceedingly hopeful.

Hospitals too small to provide a thorough practical curriculum must be looking around and be willing to affiliate in the group system with other local institutions with special but valuable clinical material, to train on which cannot provide sufficient variety of cases and experience to qualify for the General Part of the Register.

What has quite recently been done at the York County Hospital (230 beds) can be done by others. Miss Margaret M. Steel (the Matron) informs us that "we are battling with the Syllabus here, and have got the York Education Committee to give the probationers a course of lectures on Physics, Biology, Elementary Science, and Pharmacology, for which the Committee is paying the fees. The other teaching has been undertaken by our Hon. Medical Staff, and I have got it all fitted in quite well with the exception of Infant Welfare, but the Medical Officer in charge of that Department in York is kindly lecturing here for us. Being a matron in these strenuous times is no joke!"

Placing before a clever young Sister we know, the urgent need that now exists in the training schools for Sister-Tutors—hoping she would see her way to adopt this branch of her profession—she replied: "I entered the Nursing Profession to be a Nurse, not a whole-time teacher. What I love is the patients and the ward management, and studying and learning side by side with the students from great physicians and surgeons. I don't want to be a school marm."

We find quite a number of highly trained experienced nurses do not want to be "school marms." It is helping sick people which makes them happy, and, indeed, we cannot afford to deprive the sick of such women—but with the State Examination of 1924 coming along apace, more whole-time teachers must be trained. Here is a real field of usefulness for the College of Nursing Ltd., and one with others it might push—the while, ceasing to compete with the G.N.C. in duties deputed to it by Act of Parliament, such as classifying the training schools, defining the educational

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)