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EDITORIAL.

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND THE HOSPITAL CRISIS.

In a closely reasoned pamphlet, entitled "The Labour Movement and the Hospital Crisis: A Scheme for a Hospital Service," the Labour Party puts forward a complete and well-thought-out scheme for the future organisation of a Hospital Service.

1. The Labour Movement, recognising the importance of health to individual and national well-being, considers that all hospitals, both special and general, together with allied institutions, should be so organised under one authority as to form the foundation on which a complete hospital system for the nation, with sufficient accommodation to deal with all cases requiring institutional treatment, can be built.

2. It would establish treatment centres in outlying districts, local or cottage hospitals in the smaller towns, one or more county hospitals conveniently situated in each public health area, and national hospitals in London and Edinburgh and other University Towns.

3. It would organise intimate co-operation between all the hospitals in each public health area, and also between them and the nearest national hospital. It would make arrangements for easy and rapid transference of patients from one hospital to another, according to the nature and requirements of the case.

4. It would organise intimate co-operation between the medical staffs of the various hospitals and also between them and general practitioners, making the participation of the latter an essential feature of the hospital scheme.

5. It would provide the health authorities with sufficient beds under their own control to deal with all patients for whom they have already undertaken the responsibility (patients suffering from tuberculosis or venereal diseases; children from the school clinics; mothers and infants from the maternity and child welfare centres; and adults under the National Health Insurance scheme).

6. It would introduce the necessary legislation for the transference of the Poor Law Infirmaries from the Guardians of the Poor to

the Local Health Authorities, thus placing at their disposal many beds now vacant. It would remodel these infirmaries, where necessary, equipping them and conducting them in every way on the lines of the best existing General Hospitals.

7. It would give Voluntary Hospitals the option of being taken over by the health authorities entirely, of remaining on a voluntary basis entirely, or of receiving grants from public funds conditional on efficiency and the representation of the local health authority on the boards of management. It would secure close co-operation between those remaining on a voluntary basis and the public hospitals.

8. It would relieve pressure on hospital beds in the cities and towns by acquiring convalescent homes in the country, into which should be admitted cases of threatened breakdown, and patients no longer requiring hospital treatment, but not sufficiently recovered to return home.

9. It would establish free dental clinics connected with all hospitals, believing that supervision and treatment of the teeth are essential to health.

10. It would also arrange a scheme for visiting nurses and home helps in connection with the hospital system, and lays special stress on the importance of skilled supervision and after-care of patients who have recovered, or partially recovered, from illness.

11. It would make all public hospitals free and open to everyone who would be likely to derive benefit from institutional treatment.

12. While doing this it would insist on the treatment offered being equal to that of the best Voluntary Hospitals in efficiency.

13. It would endeavour to forestall the necessity for so many hospital beds by a forward social policy generally, and in particular by establishing a "national minimum," by abolishing all slums, and by undertaking a comprehensive housing scheme.

That is the scheme in broad outline, but the pamphlet should be read in its entirety. It may be obtained from the office of the Labour Party, 33, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1; price 1s.

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