

### NURSING ECHOES.

Nurses are required immediately for temporary service in the grade of staff nurse with British troops in India.

Inquiries should be addressed to the Secretary, Military Department, India Office, Whitehall, S.W.1, marked "Temporary nurses."

An admirable article by Miss Rosaline Masson appears in *Time and Tide*, December 23rd, on "Nurses' Pensions," well worthy of perusal. After reviewing present conditions the writer comes to the conclusion "that the balance of opinion is in favour of a Federated Scheme—and certainly on a contributory basis—the nurses' contribution being, as in the Universities, say, 5 per cent. of their pay (including emoluments), deducted from their salaries, and the Hospitals' contribution being, say, 10 per cent. Such a contributory scheme would have the recommendation that it would necessitate higher salaries in order to allow deductions for pensions, which the present wholly inadequate salaries certainly could not stand."

This resolves itself practically into the hospitals paying the whole increased cost of Nurses' Pensions.

Miss Masson touches on the undoubted unpopularity of the Unemployment Insurance Act, and lays stress on a point we have already mentioned, that as hospital nurses are seldom out of employment, the unemployment benefit for which they are compelled to contribute goes to support the lazy and inefficient of other classes of workers, and she considers that if an amending clause could be introduced into the Act, allowing the contributions of nurses and of their employers to be diverted to form a pension scheme for nurses, it is held by those within the profession that real good might be gained, for it is undeniable that a superannuation benefit or pension scheme would be of much more practical benefit to nurses as a class than would be unemployment benefit.

Representatives of several of the chief nurses' organisations have already had a conference with the Minister of Labour on the question, and he promised to meet the deputation again after he has surveyed the subject.

We have inquired into the matter, and find there is a wide diversity of opinion on it. One group considers the hospitals cannot possibly at the present time undertake further expendi-

ture on their Nursing Departments; their cost has risen enormously of recent years. Another wishes to be left entirely free: matrimony, emigration, "a whole floor full of things may happen." A third expresses the opinion that unless the profession of Nursing is going to receive more encouragement—as to educational facilities and personal independence—it is going, like the Arab, "to fold its tents and silently steal away."

And this reminds us that the opposition of Guardians of the smaller Infirmaries to the Syllabus for General Training of the General Nursing Council, and its continued hold up, is having a most unfortunate influence by discouraging the type of woman we want from entering hospitals for training.

Miss Monk, Matron of the London Hospital, has taken the press into her confidence. She states that in order to keep the supply of probationer nurses up to the minimum demanded for the ward requirements, 208 girls must go through the preliminary course annually at Tredegar House. Last year no more than 156 came forward. The next course about to open will do so with seventeen girls in place of the thirty-two that are needed.

The contrast is the more marked if the eagerness of girls to take up nursing in the closing decade of the last and opening years of the present century can be recalled. Miss Monk herself had to wait seven months for a vacancy twenty-one years ago, when she desired to start upon her own training, and other ladies can tell of similar experiences. There are, of course, many more callings and vocations open to women than there were a quarter of a century ago.

We well remember that in the early eighties we received, as Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, something like 2,000 applications for some 50 vacancies annually, mostly from well-educated young women, some of whom are leaders and strenuous workers in the nursing world to-day. That proves the fine material we had to choose from in those far-off altruistic times. What we are suffering from in these days is the lack of the fine old nursing spirit which defied the flesh, with its qualms and langours and self-indulgence.

Forty years ago we commiserated a pupil on looking dead beat. "Not a bit of it," she replied with spirit. "If you think I am going

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