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EDITORIAL.

THE PROPOSALS OF THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION FOR A GENERAL MEDICAL SERVICE FOR THE NATION.

The British Medical Association in a supplement to the *British Medical Journal* of April 26th submits a comprehensive scheme to the public for a General Medical Service for the Nation based on a few simple basic principles, and states its belief that the scheme would "provide a service available for every class of the population, comprehensive enough to cover the whole field of preventive and curative medicine and sufficiently elastic to permit of further developments as these may be found necessary." Of this scheme it invites the fullest criticism. The Association states that "the plan has the advantage which a great many schemes from time to time presented to the public conspicuously lack—namely that it is in accordance with the belief and traditions of the medical profession, and would have its wholehearted support. It is open to criticism and to suggestions for amendment, but the Association believes that the essentials cannot be seriously altered if the public desires to have a scheme which is comprehensive, and which will be satisfactory both to the recipients and to the givers of the service."

The Association holds that a health service which should be at the disposal of every member of the community should include "every kind of service which may be necessary for the prevention and cure of disease, and for the promotion of full mental and physical efficiency" and lays down certain fundamental principles.

FOR PREVENTION OF DISEASE.

1. That a satisfactory system of medical service must be directed to the prevention of disease, no less than to the relief of individual sufferers.

FOR TREATMENT OF DISEASE.

2. That the medical service of the community must be based on the provision for every individual of a general practitioner or family doctor.

3. That a consultant service, and all necessary specialist and auxiliary forms of diagnosis and treatment should be available for the individual patient, normally through the agency of the family doctor.

4. That the interposition of any third party between the doctor and the patient, so far as actual medical attendance is concerned, should be as limited as possible.

5. That as regards the control of the purely professional side of the service, the guaranteeing of the quality of the service, and the discipline of the doctors taking part in it, as much responsibility as possible should be placed on the organised medical profession.

6. That in any arrangement made for communal, or subsidised, or insurance medical service the organised medical profession should be freely consulted, from the outset, on all professional matters by those responsible for the financial and administrative control of that service.

7. That medical benefits of the present National Health Insurance Acts should be extended so as to include the dependants of all persons insured thereunder.

8. That every effort should be made to provide medical and nursing service facilities in institutions (Home Hospitals) where the family doctor may treat those of his own patients who need such provision, and who can thus remain under his care.

Under these headings are discussed in detail the views of the Association as to how its proposals should be carried out, and we refer those interested to the Supplement of the *British Medical Journal*, to which we have alluded, for full details.

Studying the scheme from the point of view of the Nursing Profession, we find scant reference to it, and such reference as there is is disturbing, for from first to last there is no mention of the Registered Nurse, and we say at once that no scheme can be acceptable to the Nursing Profession, or satisfactory for the public, which does not ensure that the nursing service provided shall be given by Registered Nurses. It is over 10 years since the passing of the Nurses Registration Acts, raising nursing to the status of a profession, and just as the medical service is restricted to registered medical practitioners so should the nursing service be restricted to Registered Nurses.

The *British Medical Journal*, in a leading article, reminds us that the Minister of Health has promised a general survey of the social services and adds "certainly in undertaking this survey he ought to be informed about the lines on which the medical profession would co-operate in making the services more effective, in promoting and preserving the health of the nation."

We are of opinion that the Minister should be informed, forthwith, about the lines on which the Nursing Profession would be prepared to co-operate in making effective the proposals of the British Medical Association for a general medical service for the nation.

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