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## THE NURSING RECORD

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### EDITORIAL.

#### A GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE ON NURSING.

The announcement made by the Right Hon. Sir Kingsley Wood, Minister of Health, that a Government Committee is shortly to be set up to investigate the Recruitment, Training and Working Conditions of Nurses, has been received with a sense of satisfaction and relief. We hope nurses of all ranks will have ample representation on the Committee; we may then hope that practical advice will be forthcoming which will help to solve the undeniable difficulties of those engaged in recruiting a sufficient supply of student nurses and staff nurses.

Never were conditions of training and service in organised training schools more satisfactory, if pupils can avail themselves of them, than to-day, but to benefit by systematic teaching and training pupils must have received a thorough and sufficient general education. In our opinion, the lack of it is the cause of failure, of overstrain, of breakdown.

To meet the continuous uprising of medical science and surgical technique, the student nurse, to be of any use, must be able to assimilate the theory as applied to practical nursing. The time is past for rule of thumb.

A great extension of Preliminary Schools of Nursing, systematically organised under professional tutors, should be much more widely available. Such schools would necessarily require financial endowment, and as such splendid endowments for the benefit of the sick are constantly being announced, the endowment of Preliminary Nursing Schools should come within the scope of benevolence. It may also be advanced that there is a strong case for State-assisted preliminary training schools for Nurses.

This is an age when apparently liberty of thought and action is claimed in an ever-increasing degree, and as Nursing is the last remnant of catholicism, in so far as women's work is concerned, this demand has been met with less sympathy by those who control it than it should have been. The excuse must be that nursing the sick cannot be compared with any other profession, where, when the clock strikes, down tools is permissible.

In the service of the sick the human entity is for ever with us.

There has been an amazing outburst on nursing conditions in the daily press during the past month. Much of the criticism is sensational in the extreme. Such criticism may, however, have its uses, if the grain is winnowed from the chaff. One medical writer reminds us that the nursing profession at the present time is in process of growth and evolution, and adds that

the British Nursing Service is the best in the world, and has served as a model since Miss Nightingale recreated it, and adds that the degree of discipline attained affords to every patient the best of all guarantees of efficient service. That sounds good to us.

#### THE NATIONAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN.

Since our last issue the great national health crusade has been inaugurated by the Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, to encourage the wider use of the Health Services, who in a speech which was broadcast on the National and Empire programmes, appealed for "a concentrated and determined crusade against ignorance, carelessness and indifference about health services."

Sir Kingsley Wood, the Minister for Health and three former Ministers of Health, added their support at the inaugural meeting held by the Central Council for Health Education at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. An enthusiastic audience supported this influential health team in the demand for an A1 nation; and all parties were represented on the platform.

Indeed, it is not possible to imagine a difference in principle on a question of high standards of health for man, woman and child. How to attain it is the duty of every member of the community.

The Prime Minister in his speech made several points we shall do well to realise.

To members of local authorities he said "there is a task of transcendent importance."

"We have not yet succeeded in ensuring that our services for improving the health of the people, services not surpassed by any country in the world, are used to the full."

"We believe that to persuade people to take full advantage of their health services something in the nature of a national campaign is needed."

"In the last 50 years the standardised death rate has been brought down from 18.7 to 9.2 per 1,000, and the expectation of life of a new-born child to-day is 19 years longer than it was when I was born."

"A very large amount of publicity will be required, including Government posters, millions of leaflets, meetings, lectures, health exhibitions, and appropriate films."

Of course, no health campaign can be really effective without the whole-hearted co-operation and devotion of the Nursing Sisterhood, so let us take counsel together and offer the best that is in us in support of our fellow men.

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