

of what is being done in the medical services of the German army. We do not come in contact with them. We do not see their journals. With our increasingly effective air-offensive they will have their problems and difficulties. We do know that their army medical services were completely reorganised shortly before the war on a very practical basis. We may rest assured that the medical services of our own peoples are ready and alert to deal with the trying conditions which face them. In things medical, as in other phases of the war, we know that ultimately the peoples of the English-speaking democracies will not be found wanting in any field of human endeavour.

*Editor's Note.*—These excerpts are taken from an article which appeared in the December issue of *The Canadian Medical Association Journal*. The author is J. A. MacFarlane, F.R.C.S. (Edin.), Lt.-Col. R.C.A.M.C.

## THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

### NATIONAL ACTION AGAINST RHEUMATISM.

Rheumatic disease involves the nation in an annual loss of £25,000,000, even at a conservative estimate. The economic damage, in sick pay, lost wages, cost of medical treatment, etc., is indicated by the calculation that, among the insured workers of England and Wales, a loss of £17,000,000 a year is incurred.

These figures are given, reports *The Times*, in a plan for national action against rheumatism, outlined in a book by Lord Horder, prepared in collaboration with the Empire Rheumatism Council. It embodies the results of four years' investigation of systems of treatment in Britain, Europe and America.

"The purposes of the document," writes Lord Horder in a preface, "is to show that the plan is possible of application without incurring vast expense, and that its application would result in prompt reduction in the ravages of rheumatic disease."

Explaining the proposed national plan, the following points are made:—

The establishment for adults of an adequate number of specialised treatment centres on a regional basis (estimated at from 10 to 15 for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland).

The education of the public in regard to the onset of the disease and the necessity of early attention to first symptoms.

Post-graduate education of the medical (and auxiliary) professions in diagnosis and treatment.

An arrangement that every school medical officer should take a post-graduate course in rheumatic disease.

The application of the London County Council system for the diagnosis and treatment of juvenile rheumatism to the school population of the kingdom to bring other local systems up to its standard where necessary.

### INCREASED DEATHS ON THE ROADS.

In the old days "beneficent plague" kept the population within bounds, now motor traffic has been substituted. The deaths on the roads showed an increase of 65 per cent. on February of last year. The Ministry of Transport states that too much speed and too little care have unfortunately left their mark.

A pity petrol is not more determinedly rationed.

## WOMAN POWER.

On March 20th, what has become known as Women's Day took place in the House of Commons. It was the first time that women's interests have been given a full day to themselves, and thanks were expressed for the privilege. The ladies gave a good account of themselves, and invited consideration for their sex in matters in many directions—especially where finance and power were concerned. Like *Oliver Twist* they asked "for more."

Miss Horsbrugh, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, took an active part in reply—and, as nursing matters were to the fore, we would advise those interested to procure a copy of *Parliamentary Debates*, Thursday, March 20th, from His Majesty's Stationery Office, York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

Miss Irene Ward (Wallsend), who opened the Debate, expressed the opinion that it created a milestone in British Parliamentary history. To-day, for the first time, when we are officially discussing matters relating to women, we have got the women Members of Parliament of all Parties united in a common policy.

### A DIVISION OF NURSING IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

Referring to Nursing, Miss Ward said:—

I now want to say a word or two about the nursing services. I am sure that my right hon. Friend (Mr. Assheton) and the Parliamentary Secretary (Miss Horsbrugh) will agree that this country is very much indebted to its nursing services, and it is up to this House of Commons to see that they receive adequate treatment and that their services are properly acknowledged. I know that my right hon. Friend has been in the Department for only a very short time, but, in view of the request that he is making, the appeals that are being made for nurses, and the remarks that were made by the Parliamentary Secretary to-day, I would ask my right hon. Friend to examine the position with regard to nurses, to see whether he thinks that justice is being done and whether the organisation is all that it should be. I am neither qualified nor competent to speak for the nursing services, but I have gone into this subject very carefully, and I have had the advantage of seeing most of the papers and of talking with those professional bodies which represent the nursing services in this country. They ask—and I put this request quite specifically—for a division of nursing in the Ministry of Health. They go one step further, because if one looks back over the record of the organisation of the nursing services since the outbreak of the war, it is not found to be a very happy one. The position has not resulted in a very happy organisation of the nursing services. The professional organisations which speak for the nurses, in addition to asking for a division of nursing in the Ministry of Health, want people who are qualified and experienced in the nursing world to have charge of that Department.

### NURSING POLICY AT THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health (Miss Horsbrugh), in an exhaustive speech, said:—

I would particularly like to reply to two questions put by the hon. Lady the Member for Wallsend (Miss Ward) on the subject of the nursing profession. In order to show the difficulties we are up against, and how we may hope to meet them, may I first very briefly give a picture of the present situation? As hon. Members know, an Emergency Medical Service was set up in which practically all the general hospitals were included. Also it is our responsibility to maintain the staffs of fever, tuberculosis and maternity hospitals. A much larger staff is required in war time for the maternity hospitals, which are now spread throughout the country in the safer areas. At the present moment the nursing staff in the hospitals included in the emergency scheme numbers 75,000, but we need more. Of that 75,000, 17,000 are in the Civil Nursing Reserve, which was set up at the beginning of the war to give extra help to what might be called the permanent nursing staff of the country. We asked fully trained nurses who have married and given up work to come back and use their skill in our hospitals. We asked those who were without training

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)