

THE EDITOR'S LETTER-BOX.

Correspondence on all subjects is invited, but we cannot in any way be responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents, who must give their name and address as a guarantee of good faith, but not necessarily for publication. Correspondents are reminded that brevity of style and conciseness of statement greatly facilitate early insertion.

"How Long Halt Ye?"

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—I have read with interest Mr. Eason's letter to you which appeared in last week's issue of THE HOSPITAL. Like Mr. Glenton-Kerr, he has overlooked the fact that the so-called working-classes are not the only classes who should support the hospitals. There should be no exception so far as helping the hospitals is concerned. No one belittles what the Hospital Saturday Fund has done, and is doing, and, as stated in my previous letter, I will gladly do anything I can to assist the Fund's Council. Mr. Inman's letter in last week's issue is of great interest, and even he infers that we have to get beyond the so-called working-classes for support. We must appeal to the masses and not the classes. There must be no exceptions. It is not the time to be raising questions as to the desirability or otherwise of new versus old agencies for collecting. It is the time only for action and getting in the funds. To do this personal appeals

must be made to the masses, and the workers in this great cause must be increased by thousands, aye, by hundreds of thousands, if we are to succeed.

I am glad to see that Mr. Inman points out the weakness of collecting-boxes in so far as workmen's collections are concerned. They are a failure because they *do not* record who contribute, and who do *not* do so. There is nothing like a systematic list of contributors who definitely agree to contribute a definite sum weekly, monthly, or otherwise. The best system of all is that where the employees, including clerks, shop assistants, accountants, members of other professions, and even domestics, request their employers to retain from their salary or wages at regular intervals the amount they have individually decided to give to the hospital.—

Yours truly, RICHARD J. COLES, Secretary.

King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, S.E. 5.

January 4, 1921.

Private Nurses and the Hours of Employment Bill.

THE EFFECT OF A "SPECIAL ORDER."

To the Editor of THE HOSPITAL.

SIR,—I wish to thank all those who have so kindly responded to my request to send me their views as to the advisability of the inclusion of private nurses in a State Bill for the regulation of nurses' hours. Many have replied, but not by any means all, whose opinion is required. My fellow-sisters will understand that if they wish me to help them they must help me. No Member of Parliament can be of any use to his constituents unless he knows their views. One or two sisters ask me that their names may be kept confidential. This is thoroughly understood. It is the opinions of the majority I want, that I may honestly and truly as their representative voice their wishes.

I hope that sisters when thinking of legislation fully understand the difference between the inclusion in the Hours of Employment Bill as now drafted and inclusion

in a "Special Order" under the Bill. The reason for a "Special Order" is that the peculiar needs of any trade or profession shall be especially provided for. For instance, in the scheme which the College drew up the private nurse is allowed to arrange the hours of duty as the needs of the patient determine. During the critical period the nurse would be on duty as many hours as she deems necessary. Her safeguard, however, would be that during the convalescent period she would work fewer hours, so that over a certain period, say, two or three weeks, she did not exceed the number of hours prescribed by the "special order." Whether it should be a forty-eight or a fifty-six hours' week seems immaterial just now; that could be settled in conference with all nurse societies. The chief point is the principle of the State Regulation of Hours in a Special Order.—Yours faithfully,

GERALDINE BREMNER.

63 Wimpole Street, W. 1. January 4, 1921.

The Labour Ministry and Unemployment Insurance.

THE inquiry by the Ministry of Labour whether the employment of sisters, staff nurses, and probationers employed in a voluntary hospital is such employment as to bring them under the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act was held on Wednesday, January 5, at 8 Richmond Terrace, Whitehall. Mr. B. O. Bircham, Legal Adviser to the Ministry, was in the chair, and made it clear at the outset that the inquiry was being held as regards the three classes of employees specifically mentioned, and though he would not confine the speakers to those cases, he desired them to limit their remarks as far as possible to nurses employed in voluntary hospitals. The hospital authorities represented at the inquiry were Mr. G. Q. Roberts, C.B.E. (St. Thomas's Hospital), Mr. E. W. Morris, C.B.E. (London Hospital), and Mr. J. Coartney Buchanan, C.B.E., honorary secretary of the British Hospitals Association, who also represented St. Bartholomew's Hospital in the absence of Mr. Hayes. The nursing profession was represented by Miss Cox-Davies (Royal Free Hospital), Miss Hogg (Guy's Hospital), Miss Rundle (College of Nursing), Mrs. Bedford Fenwick and Miss Macdonald

(Royal British Nurses' Association), Miss Pearse (National Union of Trained Nurses), and Mrs. Richmond and Miss Peterkin (honorary secretary and general superintendent of Queen Victoria Jubilee Nurses' Institute). All the speakers were unanimous that nurses, both those employed in hospital, private nursing, and district nursing, desired exclusion from the Act, which was not calculated to benefit them as individuals or as a profession; in fact, that it would lower the status of nursing and therefore make the profession unattractive to the more educated class and to the right type of woman; and that unemployment insurance is unnecessary for nurses, as there is practically no unemployment amongst them. Individual cases of appeals for exemption (from St. Thomas's, St. Bartholomew's, and the London Hospitals) were also gone into.

The Chairman pointed out that nurses whose rates of remuneration and emoluments exceeded in value £250 a year would be excepted under sub-section (h) of section 2, and it was admitted by some speakers that the senior sisters in large hospitals would fall under this exception. He went fully into questions concerning the duties, contracts,