

The Doctors' Dilemma is an article in the October 14th issue of *The Spectator*, dealing with Mr. Lloyd George's National Insurance Bill, and its relationship to members of the profession and the friendly societies. As Mr. Punch has recently put it, Mr. Lloyd George now understands why these societies are called friendly.

Mr. George recently had an important conference with representatives of the medical profession and members of the friendly societies which has served to emphasize the points at issue. While the doctors are trying to escape the present tyranny of the friendly societies, the latter are determined not to lose control over the members of the medical profession who attend their members. As they cannot hope for means of settling their grievances against the Bill, the friendly societies in some quarters are demanding the measure be dropped.

The Spectator takes a very judicious view of the entire matter, and practically endorses the stand taken by the medical profession.

There are six cardinal points which physicians say must be carried out before they accept the Bill:—

1. The patient is to have free choice of his own doctor. As this is in the interest of the patient more than the physician, *The Spectator* states this should receive the hearty support of the general public.

2. The doctor must be free of friendly society control. This, in the language of *The Spectator*, is absolutely vital to the medical profession, as the Bill proposes to convert friendly societies from voluntary organizations into state agencies.

3. The wage limit should be £2 for those insured. This the journal considers too moderate.

4. The medical profession should be adequately represented on the health committees. It doubts if the medical profession would obtain any real value from this concession.

- 5 and 6. That the medical profession determine the method and rate of payment in each district, with due regard to the duties performed. *The Spectator* considers it would be better for the profession to say: "Unless you pay us at such a rate as we consider adequate, we will refuse to work."

The Spectator, after having given considerable thought and consideration to this Bill, believes that the doctors under the new régime will be worse off than under the friendly society control as at present, and goes further and says flatly that the whole idea of any compulsory scheme for insurance against temporary sickness ought to be dropped.