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Editorial.

CAPITAL AND LABOUR.

We cannot expect that so far-reaching a reform as the organisation of nurses should be effected unchallenged, and the first note of organised opposition to the Registration Bills to be introduced into the House of Commons this Session was sounded last week at a meeting of the Central Hospital Council for London, held on Tuesday, at St. Thomas's Hospital, at which the Treasurer was present, when the following *non possumus* resolution was passed:—

"That this Council is opposed to any State Registration of Nurses, and that steps be taken on behalf of the Council to oppose any Bill in Parliament having such Registration for its object."

Personally, we like the wording of the resolution. There is no indecision about it. The attitude of the Council is quite unmistakable, and the position is a simple one. The condition of trained nurses at present is that of domestic servants in relation to their masters, the Governors of Hospitals, and, as the employers of nursing labour, the gentlemen who largely form the Central London Hospital Council mean, if possible, to prevent nurses from attaining legal status and any degree of the resulting professional and industrial independence.

There is the matter in a nutshell.

The position is therefore reduced to that of a struggle between the employer and the employed, and the question is divested of all ambiguity.

THE CENTRAL HOSPITAL COUNCIL FOR LONDON.

We doubt if any of our readers have ever heard of this Council, or of its work and constitution. We may therefore state that it is formed of thirty-six members, three from each of the twelve London hospitals with Medical Schools attached, and was founded for consultative purposes some years ago when the scheme of the Charity Organisation Society for a Central Hospital Board for London was receiv-

ing attention and support. Its Secretary is Mr. Sidney M. Quennell, Secretary to the Westminster Hospital.

We can imagine that such a Council might be exceedingly useful as a consultative body in many directions; but one regards its action with some slight suspicion when dealing with nursing matters, for, while it includes representatives of lay governors of hospitals, of their medical staffs, and hospital secretaries, by some strange oversight the nursing departments of the hospitals are not represented; thus there is no expert advice on nursing matters at the disposal of the Board. Consequently, in connection with its action towards the Registration of Trained Nurses, it must be remembered that it is the action of a body of men entirely composed of employers of nurses, and that when it comes to a question of the legal and industrial status of these workers the interests of employers and employed are by no means identical. The Matrons and large numbers of the nursing staffs of many of the institutions represented, notably those of St. Bartholomew's, Guy's, St. Mary's, and Charing Cross, are known to be staunch supporters of the Registration movement, and it is only fair that these views should be represented.

THE OPPOSITION.

From past experience we gather that the moving spirits in the promotion of opposition to the justifiable demands of trained nurses for legal status are the representatives on the Council of St. Thomas's, the London, and Westminster Hospitals. It will be remembered that these three institutions were leagued together ten years ago to prevent the Royal British Nurses' Association from obtaining its Royal Charter, and, presumably, they have not learnt wisdom in the last decade, but are still averse to trained nurses effecting the organisation whereby they can protect themselves from competition with untrained persons, and from unjustifiable sweating of their work by so-called charitable institutions—indeed, that they are averse to any liberty of action or

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