

## A VOLUNTARY REGISTRATION SCHEME.

A Special Meeting of the Executive Committee was called on February 10th, and was very influentially attended, when the Hon. Secretary reported that seven gentlemen of the City of London had petitioned the Board of Trade to form them into a Society named "The Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses."

The Articles and Memorandum of Association were considered by the meeting so dangerous and injurious to the personal liberty of trained nurses that it was decided to hold a Public Meeting of Protest, and to send copies of the resolutions then passed to the Board of Trade against its Licence being granted to those gentlemen.

It was also decided to forward a Protest on behalf of the Society to the President of the Board of Trade against the application of this Society, and the following document was drawn up, signed by the President, and forwarded to the Board of Trade office:—

431, Oxford Street, London, W.,  
February 16th, 1905.

To the Right Honourable the President  
The Board of Trade,  
Board of Trade, Whitehall, S.W.

Sir,—The Executive Committee of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, numbering nearly 1,500 certificated Matrons and nurses, has learnt that seven gentlemen have petitioned the Board of Trade for powers to form themselves into a Society, to be called "The Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses." It desires, therefore, to place before the Board of Trade the reasons which appear to it cogent and conclusive why its licence should not be granted to these gentlemen, and to respectfully petition for its refusal.

1. There is not amongst the signatories making application for powers which if granted would involve questions affecting the education, examination, certification, registration, discipline, and control of trained nurses, the name of one medical practitioner, hospital Matron, or trained nurse. We respectfully submit that no laymen can determine, and should not, therefore, be granted powers to determine, questions involving technical and highly specialised professional matters, a principle recognised in connection with all professions.

2. In connection with the maintenance of a Register of Nurses the Society seeks power "to remove from such Register the name or names of any person or persons as the Society may in its discretion think proper." It is submitted that such powers involving the professional ruin of a trained nurse should not be exercised at the discretion of any Society, but only after the person concerned has been proved guilty of serious misconduct, and has had an opportunity of being heard in her own defence, either personally or through her legal adviser, for which no provision is made in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. It is noteworthy that a quorum of three, or at an adjourned meeting of the Council of two, could exercise this most arbitrary and dangerous power.

3. The interests involved in the organisation, con-

trol, and discipline of nurses, affecting not only trained nurses but also the medical profession and the public, are too great and complex to be effectively dealt with except by a Representative Board having behind it the authority conferred by Act of Parliament. Two Bills providing for the State Registration of Trained Nurses were introduced into the House of Commons last Session, and will again be introduced this Session, one promoted by this Society and the other by the Royal British Nurses' Association, both of which provide for the direct representation of trained nurses on a Central Governing Board.

4. Further, a Select Committee on Registration of Nurses of the House of Commons was appointed, and took evidence last Session, and at the conclusion of its sittings reported the Minutes of Evidence taken to the House, with a recommendation that a Committee be appointed in the next Session of Parliament to continue the Inquiry. It is therefore submitted that until this Committee has presented its Report to the House the whole question of the Organisation of Nursing and the Registration of Nurses is *sub judice*.

The Executive Committee of this representative Society of Matrons and Nurses therefore respectfully petitions the Board of Trade to refuse the application for Incorporation of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Association of the "Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses." Signed on behalf of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses,

LOUISA STEVENSON, President.

(Member of the Board of Management of the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, Member of the Executive Committee and Council, Scottish Branch, Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, Member of the Council of the Scottish Branch of the Colonial Nursing Association).

At the Public Meeting, which was held in London, on February 22nd, the following Resolutions were passed:—

"That this meeting of Hospital Matrons and Trained Nurses emphatically protests against the attempt now being made by seven gentlemen in the City of London to obtain the Licence of the Board of Trade to incorporate a Society which seeks for authority to organise the professional education of Trained Nurses, to exercise disciplinary powers, and to control their work."

"This meeting is strongly of opinion that no such powers can be usefully or successfully exercised except by a Body composed of professional persons upon which Trained Nurses have direct and sufficient representation."

2. "That this meeting earnestly supports the Bill for the Registration of Trained Nurses, introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Munro Ferguson, being convinced that the only possible remedy for the present disorganised condition of nursing education in this country, and the many evils now existent in the nursing world, would be the institution of a representative Nursing Council, empowered by Act of Parliament to supervise nursing education, and maintain common rules of discipline in the nursing profession."

3. "That copies of these resolutions be sent to the Chairman of the Select Committee on Nursing, and that a deputation be now appointed to wait upon the Right Hon. the President of the Board of Trade (if he will receive the same), to present to him copies of these resolutions."

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