

vacancies occur, should rest upon the recommendation of the Principal Medical Officer and the Head Sister.

#### NIGHT SUPERINTENDENTS.

The Night Superintendents should rank with Senior Sisters, and it is desirable that their charge should not exceed 400 beds. Working under the night Superintendents should be a certain number of Junior Sisters and Orderlies as may be found necessary.

The value to discipline of the recommendation of the title of "Sister" being secured to every member of the certificated nursing staff in a military hospital was unfortunately not adopted, and the title of "Staff Nurse" was substituted. Actual practice has proved the wisdom of the recommendation in this connection by the Matrons' Council, and endless friction and dissatisfaction would have been avoided during this war if it had been adopted.

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PUBLIC AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

### THE ORGANISATION OF NURSES.

MADAM,—A contemporary states that the efficiency of a Ministry of Health will largely depend on the work of nurses. The effectiveness of their work will again depend on the efficiency of their organisation. One of the main features of this organisation is a proper system of State Registration—a system that will give the proper measure of State control, and represent all the important interests involved, whilst leaving the members of the profession freedom for development and expression.

The pioneer, established promoter, and guardian of the movement for State Registration—the Central Committee for State Registration—has a Bill ready for Parliament, which has been merely awaiting a time when legislation of this kind could be passed without hampering urgent war activities. A recently formed body—the College of Nursing—has also drafted a Bill of its own, which is unfortunate, as all the bodies promoting State Registration had come to a complete agreement about the Central Committee's Bill, and this new one has aroused strong antagonism and plunged the nursing profession into discord.

The Central Committee has been patiently negotiating with the College for over two years in the hopes of putting an end to this harmful state of affairs, without the sacrifice of principle. As a result, the College Bill has been improved, and its latest draft provides guar-

antees that the qualification for the general register after the period of grace shall be a not less than three years' term of training and a central examination, and that registered nurses shall occupy seats on the Permanent Council to administer the Act.

Nominally also the principle that the nurses' societies shall be represented on the Provisional Council has been conceded, *but*—and it is a very big *but*—the value of the concession has been destroyed by the provision that the only duty which that Provisional Council can perform is to "forthwith" proceed to appoint the Permanent Council, on which the nurses' societies are not to be represented! Their only function will, therefore, be to act as their own hangman!

A new and most dangerous provision is that empowering the Council to form as many supplementary registers as it pleases; for instance, registers might be formed of Maternity Nurses, Children's Nurses, and many other partially trained women, thus undoing the value of Registration for the fully trained and upsetting the economics of the profession.

The draft also provides that the College of Nursing shall be specially recognised by the Act and its register of nurses accepted by Parliament. This is obviously unjust to many professional women, for there are registers of nurses and organised societies of nurses of much older standing, which have proved their worth by patient years of effective pioneer work. But, above all, such legislation is unwise for the future of the profession, for it grants a monopoly to one society, that society being largely under the influence of employers.

We ask that the Permanent Council which will control the affairs of the profession shall be independent and representative of all the interests concerned, as provided by the Bill promoted by the Central Committee, which is in charge of Major Chapple, and passed its first reading in the House in 1914.

I am, yours faithfully,

(Signed) E. L. C. EDEN.

The shortage of trained nurses and ward maids in civil hospitals and in private practice is acute, and the Dow. Lady Brassey is taking the Middlesex Hospital in hand, as its work is being hampered. A voluntary corps of women workers is being raised. A rota will be arranged to suit the convenience of members of the corps, who must be prepared to give four hours a day for two or three days a week. Women willing to join are asked to write to Lady Brassey at Middlesex Hospital.

Who says our Matrons have "cushey jobs" these days?

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