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THE Nursing Record

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Editorial.

THE MATRONS' COUNCIL AT THE WAR OFFICE.

ON Tuesday last a Deputation from the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland was received at the War Office by Lord Raglan, Under-Secretary of State for War, when the President, Miss Isla Stewart, presented a Report in writing embodying the views of the Council on the subject of the reforms required in the organisation of the Army Nursing Service. All trained nurses will rejoice that the War Office has consented to listen to the opinions of experienced nurses on their own professional affairs, and we are hopeful that in the hands of Mr. Brodrick and Lord Raglan, and with Lord Roberts as Commander-in-Chief, this Government Department may adopt and inaugurate a more liberal and advanced programme.

The principle which the Matrons' Council has consistently maintained, and which is embodied in its Report to the Secretary of State for War, is that the Army Nursing Service and the Army Nursing Service Reserve should be, both in times of peace

and war, directly under the control of the War Office, in connection with which a Nursing Department should be created with a trained Superintendent of Nurses in charge, who should be held responsible for the control, discipline, and efficiency of the members of the Army Nursing Service.

Patronage and lay control must be eliminated in the organisation of this Government Office, and its control vested in the Department maintained by the British taxpayer, which, through the Secretary of State for War, is directly responsible to the Nation.

In insisting upon the elimination of lay patronage we do not for a moment wish to depreciate the value of the services rendered to the sick and wounded during the South African War by both lay men and women, but their aid can be organised in connection with the Red Cross Society, which has a distinct and important sphere of its own. The selection, training and organisation of Members of the Army Nursing Service, must, like that of all other professions, be placed in professional hands. This is the crux of the whole question, and when once this is conceded, matters of detail will easily fall into line.

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