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EDITORIAL.

THE REGISTRATION OF NURSING HOMES.

The danger to which women are subjected by remaining as disunited units, when they enter into industrial and professional work is strikingly illustrated, in the present proposals in connection with the registration of Nursing Homes under the London County Council.

It is specially important that trained nurses whose work touches the community at every point should be able to take united action concerning their own affairs and to protect their own interests.

It is now four months, at least, since the press gave publicity to the proposal of the London County Council to register Nursing Homes. Neither in their personal, nor their corporate capacity, have the hundreds of women who are engaged in managing such homes taken any steps to lay their expert views before the Council, to help in the promotion of effective legislation, or to protect their own interests. Indeed, had it not been for the action taken by the National Council of Trained Nurses, who presented a memorandum on the subject to the Council, no professional opinion of any sort would have been placed before it. The lack of any corporate spirit amongst the Superintendents of Nursing Homes is therefore largely to blame for the invidious position in which those in the metropolis now find themselves.

The General Powers Bill of the London County Council now before the House of Commons, which deals with this professional question, so far as we can gather included Nursing Homes in its scope merely as part of a scheme to prevent immorality, in houses popularly described as Massage Homes, and other bogus places which can pose and flourish as professional institutions owing to the lack of any professional status

for the properly qualified persons who alone should be permitted to conduct them.

Last week, we reported that the suggestion to shift the responsibility for registering and inspecting Nursing Homes from the London County Council to the Metropolitan Borough Councils, in order to placate the opposition of the latter, had been defeated in the House of Commons. Nevertheless, efforts may be made when the Bill is in Committee of the House to alter this decision, and it is therefore imperative that Superintendents of Homes who disapprove of being classed with disorderly houses, and, practically, of being made to give proof to the police that their private hospitals, which are what professional Nursing Homes really are, are not used for immoral purposes, should use all the influence they possess to prevent such prejudicial legislation being effected.

But, even if the control and supervision of these Homes is entrusted directly to the London County Council, there is nothing in the present Bill to effect any improvement in the management, or protection of Nursing Homes. It merely requires ladies engaged in conducting them to satisfy the Council, if required, that these institutions are not disorderly houses; and in fact is merely an attempt upon the part of the police to place the responsibility which is provided for under the Disorderly Houses Act upon the London County Council.

Under these circumstances, only one thing remains, which may make the proposed legislation less obnoxious than it might be, which is that when the bye-laws for carrying out the Act are drafted by the London County Council they shall provide that the inspection of Nursing Homes shall be conducted by thoroughly qualified professional persons, so that the proprietors shall be protected from police supervision, and also that they shall not be compelled to waste

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