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EDITORIAL.

A NEW DANGER.

One by one, as dangers threatening the liberties of trained nurses have risen on the horizon, attention has been called to them in this JOURNAL, which, as the official organ of the organized nurses in the United Kingdom, holds a watching brief on their behalf, and one by one, by concerted action, they have been overcome. We have only to remind our readers of the scheme devised in 1905 by seven financiers of the City of London, who sought to obtain wide powers of control over nurses from the Board of Trade, and of the introduction by the Central Hospital Council for London of the Official Directory of Nurses Bill into the House of Lords in 1908, to prove that professional conscience is a force more potent than wealth or social influence, when directed aright.

Owing to the publicity given in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING to these schemes, secretly discussed and promoted, both were successfully frustrated. The Financiers' Scheme can never be resuscitated with any hope of success, and only last July, when, as a member of a Deputation in support of Nurses' Registration to Mr. McKenna, then Home Secretary, we drew attention to the useless and dangerous substitute, the Nurses' Directory Bill, offered by the Central Hospital Council for London, we had the satisfaction of receiving, in the Home Secretary's Reply to the Deputation, the assurance that he fully appreciated our contention that an Official Directory of Nurses would tend to mislead the public, and that he would never be a party to the proposal.

Now we are confronted with a new danger. Writing in the *Weekly Irish Times* of June 19th, Lord Knutsford states that he wants "the Education Department to recognize good Training Schools of Nurses, and to register them. . . . This would guarantee *the schools*, and not *the nurses*, which is an all-important difference."

Concerning this latest proposition on the part of the opposition, the details of which are not available, we must at once point out that whenever employers seek to secure legislation,

whether through Departmental action, or otherwise, without consulting the workers concerned, it must be obvious to the least suspicious that such legislation is not framed in the interests of the class to be governed.

The proposition for the registration of training schools is no new one. In Clause 12 of the Nurses' Registration Bill it is provided that those candidates who present themselves for the examination prescribed by the General Council for the Registration of Nurses in the United Kingdom, which, after the conclusion of the term of grace, they must pass before they can be registered, must satisfy that Council that they have had not less than three years' training, under a definite curriculum prescribed by the Council, in the wards of approved hospitals or other institutions. It follows that just as the Central Midwives Board publishes a list of approved training schools, so the General Nursing Council would do likewise.

The question really at issue is not whether the schools shall be registered or not, but whether the nurses themselves shall have any power to define those worthy of registration, and thus some measure of self government. That is the point round which the opposition has always, and will always, centre until the Nurses' Act is placed upon the Statute Book. And this is what has to be fought when Lord Knutsford uses his social influence to induce a Government Department to legislate for trained nurses without their knowledge or consent.

In once more taking up the gauntlet which has been thrown down by the anti-registration protagonist, there is some consolation that a Labour Minister rules at the Board of Education, and that it would be contrary to the ethics of Labour to legislate for any class of workers, even women, without at least affording them an opportunity of expressing their point of view on a matter which is of such vital importance not only to their educational, but to their economic condition.

The nursing profession knows its own objective to be straight ahead, and does not intend to be side tracked and diverted from its purpose.

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