

consultations was made known in a Letter issued from the office of the Joint War Committee, and signed by its Chairman, the Hon. Arthur Stanley, M.P., addressed to the committees of certain hospitals, and by Miss Swift, the matron-in-chief, to selected Matrons; but not one of the national groups of trained nurses who for years had been honourably associated together for the effective organization of trained nursing by Act of Parliament, and who, together with progressive medical men, had drafted the Nurses' Registration Bill, were communicated with. As fate would have it, I received a copy of Mr. Stanley's Circular Letter, which we are here to consider to-day, as a press woman, as editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, not either as the former Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, or as President of this influential National Council of Trained Nurses. What are known as the vertebrate and articulate groups of nurses, who have formed strong conscientious convictions concerning their own professional organization, who have spent years in working devotedly to attain legal status, who have drudged and paid for propaganda, and have converted the obtuse electorate of this deliberate nation, who have by their determination made State Registration of Nurses a live and national question, who have seen their Bill pass the Lords, and by a majority of 228 votes obtain a contested first reading in the House of Commons, who have seen the Legislatures of colony after colony pass Registration Bills for their nurses, who have seen forty-two States in the American Union deal justly with this question in fourteen years, and, low be it spoken, have even seen the German Reichstag, the Imperial Diet of the Hun, give its nurses legal status!—these nurses have received no intimation whatever from the promoters of the voluntary Nursing College scheme, that such an organization was contemplated!

This being the case, we took the following action:—A meeting of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses was summoned. It considered Mr. Stanley's Circular Letter. It promptly came to the conclusion that the proposed scheme was dangerous to the best interests of the nursing profession, and that its delegates on the Central Committee for State Registration should be instructed to oppose it in its present form, and to push forward legal registration. A meeting of the Central Committee was called, and its Executive Committee was instructed to seek an interview with Mr. Stanley and his advisers, and this interview, which, let us hope, may have

desirable results, is to take place when the arrangements in connection with the proposed College of Nursing scheme are a little further advanced—that is, when they have been considered by the governors of hospitals and others.

We then communicated with the Comptroller of the Companies' Department of the Board of Trade asking for information, to which we received a courteous reply, and later inquired if the Joint War Committee was responsible for the College scheme, and were informed by the Secretary "that the members of the Joint War Committee (on which there is not one trained nurse) have approved of Mr. Stanley carrying on negotiations in connection with the proposed College, reserving to themselves the right to decide at a later stage whether they will associate themselves definitely with the scheme, and if so, to what extent."

Upon the request, primarily, of the Matrons' Council, this meeting has been convened, so that, although we have not been invited to do so, the organized societies of certificated matrons and nurses may consider the Circular Letter, and take such action as seems desirable, and resolutions will be put forward for your consideration. You have each a copy—there is no need to consider it in detail, as it merely foreshadows the scheme. The crux of the question is, Who is going to govern the Nursing Profession? In the College scheme as in the Nurses' Bill, a governing body is defined. In my right hand I hold the Nurses' Registration Bill; you know its underlying principles. First and foremost an **elected** Governing Body, representing primarily the interests of the class to be governed, it provides for a central independent examination, one portal to the legitimate practice of Nursing, for legal status, registration—and some degree of economic protection—all great levers of professional liberty.

In my left hand I hold the Circular Letter, defining the scheme for the Voluntary Nursing College, which provides for a **nominated** Governing Body by employers of nurses, presumably a variety of portals to the practice of Nursing, to be defined by lay opinion, no independent central examination, no legal status, no State protection. In fact, the proposed Council of Management deprives the individual nurse of professional enfranchisement and all power of self-government, and sets in motion the wheels of privilege, whereby you may be ground exceeding small.

Mrs. Fenwick then touched on a few of the

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