

NEED FOR LEGAL REGISTRATION.

Mr. Stanley must also be aware that it is now ten years ago since a Select Committee of the House of Commons, after exhaustive inquiry, reported unanimously that "it is desirable that a Register of Nurses should be kept by a Central Body appointed by the State."

He is also presumably aware that in November, 1908, the House of Lords passed a Nurses' Registration Bill, without a division having been taken at any stage, and with the support of the Liberal Government then in office. Also, that when the Nurses' Bill was introduced into the House of Commons in 1914, under the ten minutes' rule, the House by an overwhelming majority supported the first reading of the Bill which grants a measure of self-government to nurses, and would confer powers for independent examination, and the exercise of discipline in the nursing profession.

Therefore the nurses of the United Kingdom who have been working so devotedly for State Registration stand exonerated from all blame for the invidious position in which Mr. Stanley finds the nursing profession, and we are glad that the injustice with which they have been treated by those in power is realized by him, because, not only is the withholding from them of power to organize themselves a gross injustice to one of the most invaluable classes of workers in the body politic, but, by the neglect of Parliament to pass this long overdue measure, the public are exposed to grave danger when compelled in sickness to employ nurses.

So much for legal registration.

A GRAVE DISCOURTESY.

As a Member of Parliament, and therefore responsible to the public for the efficient care of the sick, Mr. Stanley, in launching a scheme to organize a woman's skilled profession, stands condemned of placing his name to the proposed scheme without intimating to the Organized Societies of Trained Nurses that a scheme, closely affecting their professional work, was under consideration, and without any consultation whatever with the representatives of at least 10,000 certificated nurses, who have had the public spirit to associate themselves together for the benefit of the public. Moreover, the registrationists have been subjected to this grave discourtesy at the instigation of the irreconcilable employers of nurses, whose determined opposition for a quarter of a century to any measure of legal protection for the workers is one of the most reprehensible episodes in the history of the struggle of British women for fair play.

This voluntary scheme for the establishment of a College of Nursing is, in reality, one for the absolute control of the nursing profession by its Promoters, who, Mr. Stanley tells us, are to be Chairmen and Governors of leading Hospitals—who, as a rule, have no expert knowledge of what nursing education should consist, and who have more absolute power over the women they control than is permitted to any other class of the community; Matrons, and Medical Lecturers to Nurse Training Schools, both under the jurisdiction of Lay Committees; and other persons interested in the education of women. The Promoters are to nominate the first Council.

It is noteworthy that the College, which will aim at securing the support of the Governors of Hospitals and others, and "last, but not least, of the trained nurses themselves" (we suppose we must be thankful for small mercies), deliberately excludes trained nurses when enumerating those amongst whom the Promoters of the College are to be sought, nor is there any suggestion in Mr. Stanley's Letter that they shall be included in the members of the Council.

POWER IN HANDS OF SMALL, NOMINATED COUNCIL.

This small, *nominated*, and unrepresentative Council are to be given power to form an unwieldy Consultative Board, appoint examiners, and—here is a very important point—to accept the internal examinations in certain recognized training schools to qualify for the certificate of proficiency in nursing to be granted by the College. In other words, the influential and autocratic governing bodies of certain large hospitals are to be exempt, in certifying their nurses, from any independent tests of efficiency, thus opening innumerable portals, instead of one, to the practice of nursing.

POWERS TO BE SOUGHT TO CONTROL ALL BRANCHES OF WOMEN'S WORK CONNECTED WITH HOSPITALS.

It is further proposed that this College of Nursing shall exercise similar functions in all branches of women's work connected with hospitals, and a suggestion is quite distinctly projected of innumerable grades of nurses; to meet, no doubt, the demands of persons who decline to qualify themselves thoroughly as trained nurses, or who belong to grades of persons calling themselves nurses, greatly to the detriment of the poor, and whose labour at present is, throughout the country, notoriously sweated.

WHAT REGISTRATIONISTS WANT.

To sum up: we registrationists know what we want—and we know that our demands are

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