

BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, the recognised organ for higher education and legal registration of trained nurses, is fresh in all our minds. Its rapid conversion from a system of useless voluntary registration to the need for State Registration—if it was not to be a dismal failure—and the negotiations between its representatives and those of the constitutional Registrationists, have been widely commented upon in the press.

These negotiations have not yet been discontinued, and it is in the hope of coming ultimately to an agreement, honourable to the rank and file of the nursing profession, that we propose to publish in parallel columns the proposals of the Nursing College as embodied in its first and subsequent Bills, of which there have been six, although the most recent is issued as the "Fourth Draft, as approved by the Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd., July 27th, 1916."

Let us hope, therefore, that this Bill, although a very great advance on No. 1, is not in final form, as, though the latest Draft contains so many amendments proposed by the Central Committee, others, which it considers imperative for the safe and just organization of the Nursing Profession, have yet to be accepted before the Committee can give its support to the Bill.

Without bitterness it is our duty to remember that the College of Nursing Company is a body of laymen, who, without a mandate from the Nursing Profession, and, indeed, contrary to its considered convictions, is attempting to set up a Governing Body for thousands of skilled women workers, and that the more intelligent members of the profession strongly deprecate this action, however well intentioned it may be. We are assured that everything is being done for our ultimate good, and like a flock of sheep nurses are being rounded up by patriarchal persons and directed into the Nursing College fold.

The fact is that it is our duty to consider carefully any system of legislation and government by which it is proposed that we shall be controlled; and we advance without any hesitation that the simple form of professional organization—as proposed by the Bill of the Central Committee, by which Parliament sets up a Central Authority (the General Nursing Council) composed of professional persons who understand the science and practice of nursing, and who are therefore qualified to define nursing educational standards, and to certificate and register such trained nurses as give evidence after examination that they have attained such standards (a system in force

under the Medical, Midwives, and Teachers Acts)—is the only satisfactory system.

The Nursing College Scheme is set up entirely by lay male authority. Its constitution is cumbersome in the extreme, with its huge Consultative Board composed largely of the laity, already wrangling about what they do not understand. It has started out on the charity ticket, and even if the Bill is so amended as to be ultimately supported as a conjoint Bill by the Central Committee, it will be a makeshift until such time as, in the dim and distant future, trained nurses are accorded the same degree of professional self-government in Europe, as they already enjoy in the United States of America. We have no delusions as to the degree of self-government the nursing profession will secure under the College Constitution. There is nothing to prevent the Consultative Board becoming almost entirely composed of the laity, as indeed it is. Membership of the College can be bought. No Matron or nurse who is not in active practice—that is, no *economically independent* member of the profession—is eligible to represent her profession on the Council, although no such drastic restriction is in force for medical members. The subscription of a guinea paid by nurses for registration and membership is not sufficient to make their organization self-supporting, and therefore independent, and so far all the Hon. Official positions have been given to men, so that executive power is in the hands of non-professional persons.

We merely allude to a few of these idiosyncrasies of the Nursing College Constitution which make it indefensible in the opinion of those who claim independence and a wise degree of self-government for the Nursing Profession, as secured by the form of legislation proposed by the Central Committee. There is no power behind their Bill: its General Nursing Council is the supreme authority. But behind the College Bill is the dangerous Memorandum and Articles of Association of the College of Nursing, which must either be amended or opposed, unless trained nurses are prepared to hand over the practical control of their profession to those who employ them and to their officials. We shall deal with these provisions in a future article.

When, after incorporation by the Board of Trade as a limited Company, the College of Nursing decided to support State Registration, it was proposed that the existing Nurses' Registration Bill should be taken as the basis of discussion. This was not done. And an informal discussion on the Constitution of its Council did not result in agreement; the pro-

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