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EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

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## EDITORIAL.

### SUPPLY OF NURSES FOR THE SICK AND WOUNDED.

A few years ago it flashed into the brain of some brilliant personage that the way to meet a shortage of nurses in Poor Law Wards, owing to intolerable conditions, was to bestow the title of "qualified nurse" upon an unqualified person. It did not occur to him to alter the bad conditions of service—presumably he knew nothing of the law of demand and supply. For once a quite unanimous howl arose from all and sundry, irrespective of nursing politics, and the "qualified nurse" fraud was exposed and prevented.

Last week we were once more startled by a professional bomb. A Committee had been quietly engineered, and appointed by the Secretary of State for War, to enquire into the present shortage of nurses in military hospitals at home and abroad, and to make recommendations how to augment the supply—composed of seven men and one untrained woman—a Committee to deal with the economic conditions of the Nursing Profession and not one trained nurse upon it!

The appointment of such a Committee was of course a serious reflection upon the Official Boards at the War Office in control of Army Nursing, and the members of such Boards naturally resented it. Certain members were immensely excited, telephones tinkled, letters flashed hither and thither—everyone was up in arms, and it soon became known that the matrons of Barts and St. Thomas' had been hastily co-opted.

On the 21st inst. the following timely statement from the War Office appeared in the Press:—

Some misunderstanding seems to have arisen as to the function of the Committee recently

appointed by the Secretary of State for War to consider the question of the supply of nurses.

It was intended that the duties of the Committee should be to collect statistics as to the number of nurses available, trained and untrained, and to submit suggestions for the consideration of the War Office and Army Nursing Board. But it has been represented to the Secretary of State for War by the chairman of the Committee that it will be impossible to make such an examination of the statistics collected as will satisfactorily support any recommendation they may make without the assistance, as members of the Committee, of representatives of the Army Nursing Boards and some of the large general hospitals.

The Secretary of State for War has therefore decided to add to the Committee certain representatives of those interested. The names will be announced in the Press as soon as the selection has been made and the invitation accepted.

In the meanwhile, the College of Nursing called an urgent Council Meeting—the following members being also members of the Army Nursing Boards: Miss Cox-Davies, Miss Haughton, Miss Ray, Miss Lloyd-Still, and Miss Amy Hughes.

As the result of this meeting a letter was addressed to the Secretary of State for War expressing the hope that he would suspend any further action in connection with the "Supply of Nurses Committee" until the matter had received fuller consideration.

The Committee of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses at its meeting on the same day, expressed by resolution its indignation at the unprofessional composition of the "Supply of Nurses Committee" empowered to report on their economic condition; and petitioned the Secretary of State for War that the workers might be directly represented through their professional organizations, the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, and the National Union of Trained Nurses.

We welcome the appointment of a Special

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)