

THE NURSES' PETITION TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

GOVERNMENT BY CONSENT.

The Nurses' Petition is going to be a big success. It goes straight to the root of good government, and simply asks for professional enfranchisement for the organised members of the Nursing Profession, so that they may help to make the Constitution by which they will be controlled in the future.

It is only tyrants and sycophants who claim, or are content, with any other form of government.

To neither of these classes do the Constitutional Registrationists belong.

The Petition expresses their aspirations, and should, and we feel sure it will, appeal to a democratic Government.

Our enemies are also sure of it. Hence the bluster and sophistical inaccuracies in last week's employers' press.

An infuriated onslaught appears in the *Nursing Mirror*, which apparently emanates from Bedlam, and whilst carefully omitting to print the Petition, it implores its readers to send the writer a post-card "stating her wish to add her name to the Trained Nurses' Protest Against, and Her Reprobation of the Attempt to Mislead the Prime Minister, as to Actual Facts, Feelings, and Wishes of the Overwhelming Majority of British Nurses." This rodomontade is addressed to "every intelligent British Nurse throughout the Empire!"

We should like to see the faces of overseas Nurses when they read it. They are not usually classed with the Gadarene swine. One thing we promise the easily-recognised writer of this ribald invective—the Prime Minister and our legislators shall see it. Tabulated with other gross attacks made upon working nurses, through the hospital governors' press, it will convince the most lethargic legislator how imperative is protection for the members of the nursing profession from intimidation by those who exploit them through the pseudo-professional press. We cannot imagine more cogent argument in favour of self-government for Nurses, which the Petition invites, than the series of articles which have appeared for months past in the Burdett publications.

AN INACCURATE STATEMENT.

The *Nursing Times*, another lay-governed publication, makes the inaccurate statement that "A Petition is being circulated among members of the nursing profession, in which they are asked to oppose any other Bill than that promoted by the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses. This means direct opposition to the Bill drawn up by the College of Nursing, Limited, the principles of which are entirely in accord with those of the Central Committee, the difference

being in method of procedure," and refers its readers to Miss Rundle, the secretary of the College of Nursing, for information!

THE NURSES' PETITION.

The following is the text of the Nurses' Petition to the Prime Minister:—

I, the undersigned, petition that any Bill for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, brought in by the Government, or otherwise, shall provide for the direct representation of the Organised Societies of Nurses in England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland on the Provisional Governing Body authorised by Parliament to frame the Rules and Regulations to which the Registered Nurses will have to conform, as provided in the Bill drafted by the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses.

It will be seen that the statement made by the *Nursing Times* that members of the nursing profession "are asked to oppose" any Bill is not true. What they are invited to do is to support the principle of self-government. If this means "direct opposition to the Bill drawn up by the College of Nursing, Limited," the sooner the College of Nursing, Limited, redeems its written pledge to provide for "self-government" for its nurse members on the Provisional Governing Body set up in its Bill the better!

But this is just what it declines to do.

This is not "a difference in method of procedure." It is a fundamental difference in principle. Our Petition asks for government by consent. The College intends to govern us without consent. No amount of specious misstatements upon the part of the employers' press will mislead convinced registrationists on this point. We know what we want and we are out to fight for it, and we are neither to be intimidated nor deluded by those who have no right to express an expert opinion on nursing affairs.

THE MORE THE MERRIER.

Two nurses have written to know if members of the College of Nursing can sign the Nurses' Petition to the Premier for direct representation on the Provisional Council, should a Bill for Nurses' Registration be introduced. Of course they can, and several have already done so. The College programme includes a promise of direct representation and self-government for the nurses; and if it does not provide for this principle in its Bill, it is breaking faith with those nurses who have joined under this promise. The more members of the College who sign this Petition the better, and let them inform their present Council of their reason for doing so. It is very little use to grant representation after the Rules are made and must be obeyed.

The Petition will be found ready for signature on the inside cover of this issue. It can be signed at the Office, 431, Oxford Street, London, W.1, and forms will be sent free to Matrons and Nurses upon application to the Hon. Secretary, Nurses' Petition, at the same address.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)