

My natural deduction was that no further steps would be taken without the opportunity having been accorded to my Society of explaining its views on a matter so clearly affecting the profession.

No communication, whatever has, however, been received, and the first intimation we had that the decision "not to undertake work of a controversial nature" had been revoked was to find the Press flooded with advertisements and appeals asking for funds for the *double* purpose of providing annuities for nurses and of endowing the College.

We at once wrote letters to upwards of 25 newspapers pointing out the danger of this double appeal—framed to touch the hearts of those who have friends fighting at the front or who are actually doing so themselves. To subscribe to a benevolent fund for nurses is one thing, to endow the College of Nursing is another, quite another; but the average member of the public would not possibly realise this. Of the 25 letters we wrote, only two were published, and I know that of a number of letters written by other nurses none appeared.

Madam, I feel sure that your Committee cannot have realised that when advertisements are paid for on a large scale the Press is practically muzzled, for I feel sure that a Franchise League would be the last body to wish to drown the voice of the working woman by the power of wealth. And yet this is exactly what is happening. Allow me to put the question before you as shortly as I can.

For a number of years Nurses' societies have been gradually organising the workers on self-governing lines and have, moreover, formed public opinion on the subject of State Registration, so that when the War broke out the passing of the measure was practically assured.

On the declaration of War, however, for patriotic reasons, all propaganda was dropped by the Societies advocating State Registration, though they fully realised that the War would strengthen their cause. A brand new society—the College of Nursing, Ltd.—was then suddenly sprung upon the nursing profession, without in any way consulting the existing societies who had done the work in the past.

And although it proceeded to set forth a claim to keep the Official Register under the State and consequently exercise disciplinary powers over the nursing profession, it refused representation under the Bill to the existing societies of working nurses.

Madam, we are fully aware of the generosity of the impulse which has caused your Committee to desire to raise a fund for the benefit of nurses. And, as a tribute from one set of working women to another set of working women, I think it would have been a splendid thing to do. But to put a weapon into the hands of those who, consciously or unconsciously, are smashing the efforts towards independent thought and professional responsibility of a large body of hard-working women is to harm those whom you desire to serve.

Large numbers of nurses have joined the College because they are afraid of keeping out

of it, owing to the influence of the matrons. Many employers are paying the fees for joining and so taking away every free choice; the Hon. Officers of the College are men and employers; the democratic societies are refused recognition; the Press is gagged.

Fortunately, the Privy Council has recognized the danger of conceding the monopoly of the State Register, and has refused to grant the right to keep the "official Register" as proposed under the scheme for the amalgamation of the Royal British Nurses' Association and the College of Nursing, Ltd. Consequently, the many nurses who joined the College on the assurance that the College Register would become the State Register are likely to find themselves woefully deceived.

There is to be no amalgamation with the R.B.N.A., and, consequently, no Royal College of Nursing, but simply a Limited Liability Company forming a Society like any other, but with no long record which would justify a claim to be subsidized on a large scale.

Madam, I venture to maintain that it will be a blur on the honourable scutcheon of the British Women's Hospital Fund, if, after its fine record of service to the nation, it continues to support an institution which is not promoting the cause of freedom for women, and which, by the force of money and influence, is destroying the aspirations of the nurses of England who have striven for so many years for the good of their profession. I trust your Committee will forgive my plain words. I feel that the matter is one of life and death to the higher development of our profession and I can do no other than state the matter simply as I see it and as I believe your Committee would wish me to state it.

Believe me, Yours faithfully,

E. L. C. EDEN.

WAR CHARITIES REGULATION AND THE NATION'S FUND FOR NURSES.

The Charity Commissioners for England and Wales have made the following regulation:—

Where any appeal is made to the public for donations or subscriptions in money or in kind to any war charity registered under the Act, or any attempt is made to raise money for any such charity by promoting any bazaar, sale, entertainment, or exhibition, or by any similar means, the name of the charity as appearing in the certificate of registration shall be stated in full in all posters, bills, circulars, advertisements and notices relating to such appeal or attempt to raise money, with the addition of the words, "Registered under the War Charities Act, 1916."

For the future, therefore, the charitable status of the "Nation's Fund for Nurses" must be declared in inviting money from the public. No further evasion will now be permitted. London may no longer be defaced by these offensive posters without breaking the law.

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