

RESOLUTIONS.

The Chairmah then called on Miss Heather-Bigg, R.R.C., to move the first Resolution :—

AN INDEPENDENT NURSING COUNCIL.

"That in the opinion of this meeting the Registration of Trained Nurses should be carried out by an independent Nursing Council constituted by Act of Parliament, entirely dissociated from any one organisation of Nurses, such as the College of Nursing, Ltd."

MISS HEATHER-BIGG said :—

"In enlisting your support of this Resolution I would ask your consideration of the vital part of it, viz., 'an independent Nursing Council constituted by Act of Parliament.' This is the crux of the whole matter, that the nursing profession, as a whole, shall govern itself by an electorate furnished by the nurses themselves.

"The nurses shall carry out the working of the Act of Parliament, setting up the curriculum and length of training, the examination of persons seeking to be registered, providing examination centres throughout the whole of England and Wales: There is no wish to monopolise the right of independent action in Scotland and Ireland; on the contrary, we desire that each of the three countries shall have its own Divisional Board.

"It is because the matter is one of such supreme importance that I ask one and all of you to support this Resolution. I also ask you all to rouse the interest and secure the co-operation of others, to make the public realise that we will *not* surrender the government of our nursing profession to any one organisation of nurses, such as the College of Nursing, Ltd., that we mean to have representatives from all the organised Societies of Nurses, as well as representatives elected by the nurses.

"If we fail in our duty to-day, if we neglect to voice a unanimous protest against efforts being made by the College of Nursing, Ltd., to secure, by Statute, power over the Nursing Profession, we must not be surprised if we find the uninitiated public supporting the College of Nursing, Ltd.—doing so, too, in full faith that they are thereby securing to the Nursing Profession the object it has been striving after for years.

"And let me add one word more. Women have now a power they never had before—the power of the vote. Many women clamoured for it, many others worked for it, and, still more, women by their lives proved that they merited it. It is up to you—as our American friends would say—to put it to good use. In other words, oppose all legislation that would destroy, and support all legislation that will secure the economic independence of the worker. I therefore ask your support of the Resolution."

The Resolution was seconded by Miss LE GEYT, who said :—

I have much pleasure in seconding the resolution proposed by Miss Heather-Bigg that the Nursing Profession should be governed by an independent professional body as the medical profession is.

What has the College of Nursing done to deserve

our confidence? That we should submit to the handing over of what would be nothing short of autocratic power to this comparatively newly-formed company of laymen, far be it from our Society to assist this Company in any way in obtaining sanction by Act of Parliament to frame the regulations which would eventually govern the profession. Can we imagine such a state of affairs arising in any large organised Professional Union, or the A.S.E., for instance?

Let us suppose a certain number of employers banding themselves together in a company proceeding to co-opt a number of foremen, and then declaring their intention of appealing to Parliament for autocratic control over the Amalgamated Society of Engineers.

I venture to hope there are few employers in Great Britain who would contemplate or even wish for such an indefensible method of overcoming difficulties of organisation.

Is it not unendurable that an attempt should be made to thrust such conditions on an honourable profession of women?

In my opinion it behoves all committees connected with schools of nursing and all committees of nurses to hold meetings and construe every phrase of each draft of any Bill for State Registration so promoted by the Company of Nursing, Ltd., interpreting and weighing every phrase from the legal standpoint, realising that if successful in Parliament these powers will practically for all time enable the College to frame the rules and regulations governing the nursing profession.

There is really no need for these exertions on the part of the College. We, the members of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and other self-governing nurses societies, made up our minds decades ago, thanks to our pioneers, exactly the form of self-government we mean some day to obtain.

The annals of this society are open for the wise to learn by its history how in the past obstruction has been met, overcome, removed, obliterated.

In judging the attitude of the College of Nursing, Ltd., it would be as well to bear in mind the allegory contained in that old nursery tale Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf.

I have great pleasure in seconding the resolution.

MISS BEATRICE KENT compared the campaign for State Registration of Trained Nurses to Bunyan's allegory of the Pilgrim's Progress, and carrying the simile further, said we had reached the point where the highway led to the Delectable Mountains, and the by-way to the City of Destruction. Those who follow the by-way will find that it leads to the destruction of their economic independence. The College of Nursing, Ltd., claimed to be a democratic institution. What did it mean by democracy? She thought it meant the same thing as she understood by autocracy.

Major Chapple enquired whether the Resolution, if passed, would be mandatory.

The Chairman replied in the negative. It was an expression of opinion on the part of the Society

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)