

STATE REGISTRATION UP TO DATE.

COLLEGE COUNCIL DIRECTS ITS MEMBERS TO WRECK THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE'S BILL.

THE REPORT STAGE.

The Nurses' Registration Bill is down for Report Stage on Friday, May 9th. As there are two Bills in front of it for Second Reading, it may, or may not, be reached. Those of us who have given years of work and every penny we can spare in forwarding this Bill, in the interests of our profession and for safeguarding the community, will, no doubt, be in the House to await the decrees of Fate. After the hearty reception given to our Bill on March 28th, and the interest evinced in its amendment in Standing Committee, whilst doing everything in our power to promote progress, we must show no impatience whilst it is being guided through Parliament. Steady consistent work, to refute the scandalous tactics of the College of Nursing, Ltd., in its attempt to wreck the Bill, must be our policy.

COLLEGE OUT TO WRECK BILL.

The College of Nursing has issued a letter to its Nurse members inviting them to wreck the Nurses' Registration Bill on the Report Stage in the House of Commons. Words, of course, fail to express the indignant contempt of genuine registrationists for this latest outrage upon the part of the anti-registration Party, for "anti" they are in spirit and always have been. A Bill to place us under the heel of lay hospital Committees and their officials—Yes. But a Bill for providing (as the Bill before Parliament does) a Statutory Authority free from Training School control—No! a thousand times, No! Helots you are, and helots you shall remain, and we will now, as we have ever done, attempt to smash up your self-governing societies, and oppose any form of legislation which frees you from the autocratic control of your employer!

We will take this manifesto, issued by the College of Nursing, Ltd., from its official address, paragraph by paragraph:—

THE NURSES' REGISTRATION BILL.

I. COLLEGE STATEMENT.—The Council of the College feels compelled to appeal to every Nurse to do her part in bringing to the notice of Members of Parliament the serious crisis which has arisen by the passing through Standing Committee E in the House of Commons of the Bill for the State Registration of Nurses promoted by the Central Committee, the Hon. Secretary of which is Mrs. Bedford Fenwick.

OUR COMMENT.—As we have reported, the College of Nursing, Ltd., attempted in Committee E. to have—(1) the College incorporated in the Bill—including its autocratic Constitution—and the name of every self-governing Nurses' Society removed from their own Bill! (2) The College attempted to have its own Register incorporated as the State Register, and, by a

hasty election of the General Nursing Council by its own members, to disfranchise some 60,000 Nurses who have not handed over their liberty of conscience to the College Company. (3) The College pleaded in *forma pauperis* that a self-supporting registration fee should be prohibited—thus leaving professional organisations at the mercy of charity. All these dangerous propositions were negatived by the Standing Committee, which approved an independent, self-governing Nursing Council, and liberty of action for every "registered Nurse." This is what the College describes as "the serious crisis." Serious, no doubt, for the pretensions of the Nurses' employers, but a triumph for light and liberty.

II. COLLEGE STATEMENT.—There is a great danger that the Bill, as it now stands amended, may pass without criticism through the Commons because the ordinary Member of Parliament knows little of the subject, and has a vague sentiment that in giving State Registration he is doing something for Nurses, to whom he feels the Country owes much and has given little.

OUR COMMENT.—We are not inclined to agree with the College Council that "the ordinary Member of Parliament" is a fool. Listening to the debate on the Second Reading of the Nurses' Bill, and the consideration to details given to it by Standing Committee E, we are bound to confess we know few Matrons who know the registration case—as it affects both the Nurses and the public—or could discuss it so effectively as "the ordinary Member of Parliament." These "ordinary" persons may not know how to make a poultice, or how to kow-tow to hospital officialdom, but they do realise the human rights of Nurses and patients, and, fortunately, they brought common sense rather than "vague sentiment" to bear upon the case, with the result that they refused to hand over the control of some 60,000 women workers and the sick public to the absolute authority of a few hospital officials, who have no more right to govern them than the Lama of Thibet—if such a potentate still exists at the end of the war.

III. COLLEGE STATEMENT.—What the College would point out to you is this:—

Firstly.—That the registered Nurses ought to elect a clear majority (two-thirds) of the General Nursing Council, and that they should be free to elect anyone they please, not as the Bill prescribes, so many Matrons and so many Nurses.

OUR COMMENT.—In the Bill as it left Standing Committee E, the Nurses do elect "a clear majority." It provides for twenty-six nurses and 16 doctors and persons. Of the eighteen direct representatives of the women Nurses, on the General Council, four only *must* be Matrons. Considering that the Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd., has no nurse on it (other than Matrons, and that twenty-two seats are filled by Matrons), this claim is very superficial. Seats are secured to the medical profession and the laity—to

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)