

Nurses *in forma pauperis*—a degradation they are determined to resist.

Trained Nurses owe Lord Amptihill a deep debt of gratitude for again coming forward as the champion of their professional liberties, and we hope they will show their gratitude by presenting their case to members of the House of Lords.

RULE OR WRECK.

THE COLLEGE COUNCIL INVITES ITS MEMBERS TO WRECK THE NURSES' REGISTRATION BILL.

It is a relief that the College of Nursing has removed its mask and is no longer pretending to help the Nurses' Registration Bill, as the battle for the emancipation of the Nursing Profession can now be fought out before Parliament without further camouflage.

State Registration is, as it has always been, a straight issue between a body of exploited women workers and their uncontrolled employers.

The Central Committee's Bill is the workers' Bill, and the College of Nursing Bill is the Employers' Bill.

Now we know where we stand. Gloves off!

The Council of the College did not oppose the second reading of the Nurses' Bill, because it is pledged up to the hilt, and much against the inclinations of its Anti-Registration promoters, to the principle of State Registration, and its officials knew well that its flimsy structure would collapse in ruins if it attempted to oppose it. Moreover, as the Central Committee had converted the country and Parliament to the principle of State Registration, as proved on March 28th, the College would have proved its absolute futility had it attempted to wreck the Bill at that stage.

In Committee—the College had the audacity to attempt to have its own autocratic Provisional General Nursing Council (which did not secure the nomination of one trained nurse upon it) substituted for that approved by the Central Committee—it also attempted to have its own Voluntary Register incorporated as the State Register—and forthwith to appeal to that constituency to elect the Council, disfranchising professionally the 50,000 nurses who will never join the College and who have a right to elect their own representative Governing Body. In all its attempts to filch from the State Registrationists privileges which their Bill secured to the nursing profession at large the College failed as it deserved to fail. To attempt to reap the results of the labour of others is not in our opinion playing the game.

In spite of this inexcusable policy the representative of the College did his best for it, and it was very well treated in a Conference in the Committee Stage, when its representation on the Council was doubled from two to four, being placed on the same basis as the Royal Corporation, the Royal British Nurses' Association,

whilst all the pioneer organisations of Nurses most generously agreed to one representative each. Generous indeed, when we realise that these organisations and their professional organ, THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, have expended some £20,000 in hard cash, not counting the devoted voluntary labour of their members, whilst the College campaign has apparently been, and is to continue to be, supported on charitable doles which are offensive in the highest degree to professional women who desire to be self-supporting. As the Nurses' Bill left the Standing Committee, it had been amended by experienced Parliamentarians with the consent of the Government who are fully aware that to get any Bill through Parliament in these days concessions must be made. But in the abstract the President of the Local Government Board dealt in a masterly manner with the constitution of the Nursing Council, laying down a few fundamental principles providing for national representation, and giving the nurses the controlling vote on their own Governing Body, and granting Clause after Clause without alteration. All sincere registrationists are thankful for the Bill as amended so far, as they realise that with a few more amendments, with good faith and constructive ability the organisation of the Nursing Profession can be effected on sound democratic lines. No doubt the College Council realises this as well, but the very last thing its autocratic promoters desire is to permit any such freedom of action to a class of women hitherto often treated and controlled in hospitals like charity children, and who in their docile and unquestioning attitude often behave as such. And this brings us to the active policy of the College in its frantic attempts to wreck the Nurses' Registration Bill.

1. We have reported the unjustifiable attacks by the College Matrons on their colleagues associated in the Matrons' Council, because, after twenty-five years' work for the benefit of the public, it is to be rightly accorded representation in the Bill on the initial Nursing Council. How hastily the Matrons of St. Thomas' and the Royal Free Hospitals are forming a rival Matrons' Association, which without having done a stroke of work or paid a penny for nursing organisation, is out to claim representation. What for? Those Matrons, many of whom have stood aside for years signing every anti-registration Manifesto, cannot claim that the protection of the public from bogus or inefficient nursing has disturbed their sleep o' nights! Besides, all these Matrons are members of the College, and have ample representation through their four seats accorded to them on the Council in the Bill.

2. We also reported the issue of a misleading Petition by Miss Dalton, a matron member of the College. She invited nurses to sign against a £3 3s. registration fee in the time of grace, which was not in the Bill, or recommended by the Standing Committee, which proves how dangerous it is for nurses to sign documents without enquiry even if placed on the Matron's Board.

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