

the passing of the Nurses' Registration Bill, though in doing so, they deprived, not only the Nursing Profession of the status and privileges of legal status, and the organisation of Trained Nursing by the State, but the helpless sick of protection from unskilled Nursing, from which for years they have been the suffering victims.

The only enemies the Nurses have had in the House of Commons during the consideration of their Bill, have been the clique of Manchester members, directed by the representative of the College of Nursing Company (Mr. Leonard Lyle). We repeat, the Council of the College deliberately planned to wreck the Nurses' Bill, which would have given protection to the helpless sick, and to trained Nurses, rather than allow the Central Committee's Bill to become law. The responsibility for this dastardly betrayal of our professional interests must be clearly understood if we are to prevent worse befalling us in the future.

THE WRECKERS PLAY TO THE GALLERY.

Two amendments relating to a Supplementary Children's Register having been moved by Colonel Burn, and accepted and seconded by Major Barnett;—

Lieut.-Commander Astbury (Salford, W.), then moved:

"In sub-section (1) to leave out paragraphs (a) to (h) inclusive."

The purpose of this amendment was to leave out the whole of the clauses in which the composition of the General Nursing Council has been carefully defined by the Central Committee.

Lieut.-Commander Astbury evidently anticipated that his amendment would be regarded as a wrecking one, because he prefaced his remarks by repudiating this, and saying that every member of the House was in favour of the registration of nurses.

He said, however, that there was a very strong feeling of resentment between different bodies of nurses with regard to this Bill. If it were possible for the Central Committee to withdraw this Bill and for the Government themselves to bring in a Bill, that would be the best course to pursue. Even if the Bill went through that afternoon, it would not give the satisfaction which they wanted to give to the whole nursing profession in the country. He asked the ruling of the Deputy Speaker as to whether he was in order in asking the promoters of the Bill to withdraw it.

The Deputy-Speaker replied that the hon. Member proposed to move an Amendment, and that he could not raise this point of order on his own Amendment.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH PLEDGES THE GOVERNMENT TO BRING IN A NURSES' REGISTRATION BILL.

Dr. Addison, Minister of Health, here said "Perhaps it may save time if, by leave of the House, I make a statement now. The Govern-

ment have considered this matter carefully since the Bill passed through Committee. They arranged for meetings with the various parties who are interested in this Bill and another Bill of quite a different character dealing with the same subject which has been introduced into the House of Lords, and we have had conferences with them with a view of discovering whether a sufficient common measure of agreement could be reached by which we could obtain a Bill which would give effect to the registration of nurses, which, I think, by common consent, is regarded as most necessary and desirable. I am sorry to say that the results of these conferences have convinced me against my will that such agreement is not attainable. I think it arises from the fact that, whilst everybody agrees that the registration of nurses is desirable and necessary, it was quite clear in the conferences that those who are interested in the two Bills were not by any means agreed, nor were they likely to agree, as to what was implied by registration. It was quite clear that in some quarters it was thought that the authority responsible for registration should deal with the conditions of training—not only the standard arrived at, but the conditions and conduct of training. If you take the parallel case of the General Medical Council, you will find that, while it lays down the standard attainable, it does not conduct the medical schools. The conduct of the medical school is an educational function. The examining bodies are charged with the responsibility of seeing that their candidates receive a certain minimum standard of training and that they reach certain medical attainments. But the educational practices of these bodies are not, of course, controlled in any way by the Council. As educational bodies they receive grants from the Board of Education, and the same would apply with respect to nurses."

NOT THE FUNCTION OF A SEMI-JUDICIAL BODY TO CONTROL CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

"Another difficulty which has been made clear by the conferences is that it appears to have been thought by some that as an essential part of the registration the body responsible for the register should control the conditions of employment, which, again, is a function quite apart from the semi-judicial purpose of such a body. The conditions of employment of nurses or midwives or anybody else are matters of which, no doubt, we shall have to take cognisance when the time comes—I hope it will be shortly—when we have to make grants. It may be that the conditions of employment will then have to be considered. I quite agree with those who attach importance to the conditions of the employment of nurses. Nurses have been scandalously underpaid and grossly overworked, and it is about time that proper or improved conditions of employment were secured for them. Still, that is not the function to be exercised by a semi-judicial body which has to decide who is to be on a register. I found that the differences on these and kindred

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)