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EDITORIAL.

THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL.

We greatly hope that before another issue of this Journal appears the Minister of Health will have announced the constitution of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and that his appointments may give general satisfaction.

It will be realised that his task has been a somewhat difficult one, owing to the various schools of thought in the Nursing Profession, and the long continued demand of influential managers of training schools to govern nurses who are not in their employment. Dr. Addison has promised that he will "do his best," and it is well that we should realise the difficulties of his position.

We presume the Minister of Health is cognisant of the diversity of thought amongst certain sections of nurses, and that in "doing his best" he will provide that each of these sections has representation on the Council.

The first of these sections is the creative and progressive group standing for solidarity and professional co-operation. To this group, inspired by professional conscience, must be awarded the credit of initiating and voicing the demand for the protection of the sick from spurious nursing, and for higher education and better economic conditions for trained nurses. This group, while encouraging social evolution amongst nurses, has determinedly demanded the Registration of Trained Nurses by the State, knowing full well that without the strong arm of the law behind organisation no security is possible in regard to improvements achieved. Its members demand organisation on lines ensuring self-government, self-support, and self-respect, and they object to public charity for their profession, because they are well aware that charity and sound economic government are incompatible.

The final efforts and exposition of their

policy are demonstrated in the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses, in which are federated—with the British Medical Association—the Royal British Nurses' Association, the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, the National Union of Trained Nurses, the Fever Nurses' Association, the Scottish Nurses' Association, the Irish Nurses' Association, and the Irish Nursing Board, some of which have, for over a quarter of a century, worked consistently for State Registration of Nurses. To their untiring efforts the triumph of the evolution of the profession of nursing is undoubtedly due.

This reasoning group of persons, whose expert professional opinion as to nursing organisation is the outcome of many years' work in this connection, have always been opposed by the majority of the lay governors of the voluntary hospitals. This reactionary group, together with the higher officials in their employment, maintained, for many years, a *non possumus* attitude in regard to State Registration of Nurses, and declined not only to co-operate with those promoting this reform, but opposed every effort made to secure the self-government of the Nursing Profession. This section is now grouped under the title of the College of Nursing, Ltd., which originally attempted to thrust its obsolete policy of voluntary registration on the nursing world, but was compelled to realise that it was only by supporting the principle of registration by the State that it could continue to exist at all.

It therefore adopted the shibboleth of "State Recognition," whatever that may mean, but fought strenuously for power under the Nurses' Registration Acts, so that the control of the Nursing Profession might be practically in the hands of the Boards and officials of Nursing Schools.

There is a strong objection to the ethics of

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