

THE COLLEGE OF NURSING, LTD.

We have been requested by members of the College of Nursing, Ltd., to explain to them the meaning of the proposed changes in the Articles of Association of the Company which are to be considered at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Members, summoned to meet for that purpose on Thursday, the 4th day of November, 1920, at 4 p.m. Briefly the changes proposed to be made are—

(1) That "every member shall pay" an annual subscription to the College.

(2) That no member registered after the 20th November shall have the privileges of membership or shall be able to vote at an annual meeting unless she has paid her annual subscription, and her name may be struck off the Register if her subscription is in arrear for five years.

(3) That no member shall be struck off the Register until she has had an opportunity of defending herself before the Council before that penalty is inflicted.

Ever since the College was incorporated, we have strongly denounced the great injustice and danger to the members, of the arbitrary power taken by the Council of the College to strike any nurse off the Register without giving her any legal right, by the Articles of Association, to defend herself. Our frequent protests and the fact that the Nursing Acts give Registered Nurses that elementary measure of justice, have, we are glad to find, at last compelled the College of Nursing, Ltd., to adopt the same cardinal principle of English justice for any accused person.

With regard to the second provision above stated, the College and its members have, of course, an absolute right to charge *future* members an annual subscription and to withhold the privileges of membership from those who do not pay those subscriptions.

But Article 6, as now drafted, rouses grave suspicion of the good faith of the Council. Members are keenly alive to the fact that they were originally induced to join the College on the definite printed pledge that, if they did so and paid one guinea, they would automatically and without further fee be placed on the State Register of Nurses as soon as the Act for the Registration of Nurses was passed. They have since discovered that the Council of the College had not the slightest right to give them such a pledge; and that Parliament has definitely declined to recognise that pledge. In other words, that every member of the College will be required to make separate applica-

tion for Registration to the General Nursing Council—which that Council may accept or refuse, as it pleases—and moreover, each one must pay such fees as that Council may from time to time determine. And members of the College have been astounded also to learn that efforts have been made, on behalf of the Council of the College, to pretend that their pledge was a misunderstanding; or, at any rate, that it would be embarrassing to the Council to pay back the money they had taken from nurses on that definite pledge. These extraordinary facts compel members of the College, therefore, to examine very closely any fresh demands for financial support which are made by its Council.

Briefly, the members must clearly understand that if, on November 4th, they pass the new Article of Association (No. 6) as drafted, and it is confirmed at the subsequent meeting on November 20th, it becomes binding upon *every member* of the College. We are informed that the present members have been told that it will not apply to them. But they have been told other things which proved to be inaccurate. And it is the actual words of the Articles of Association, and not any fancy private interpretation of them, which the law holds to be binding on the members of any limited liability company. And the essential words in the new Article are: "*Every member shall pay such annual subscription, not being more than Twenty Shillings, as the Council shall from time to time appoint.*" "Every member" means in law every member; that is to say, every present member, as well as every future member. If the Council of the College really intended that present members should not be compelled to pay an annual subscription—as indeed they promised the original members by the existing Articles 6 and 8—they would have worded the new Article quite differently; as for example, as follows: "*Every member registered after 20th November, 1920, shall pay such annual subscription, &c.*" But the Council of the College has deliberately omitted those words, and that obvious protection for existing members; and their reason for the omission should certainly be demanded at the Extraordinary General Meeting. We advise the members present at the meeting on November 4th, to move an amendment to Article 6, in the words we have suggested, or other words to the same effect, and to vote for that amendment. We fail to understand how the Council of the College could oppose such an amendment for the protection of all existing members, in the face of

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