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EDITORIAL.

THE CHARTERED ASSOCIATIONS (PROTECTION OF NAMES AND UNIFORMS) ACT, 1922.

A Bill which it is expected will shortly become law is of considerable interest both to the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association and to the nurses working as Queen's Nurses under the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute. Both these bodies are incorporated by Royal Charter, and the Bill to which we refer is intitled "An Act for the protection of the names, uniforms, and badges of associations incorporated by Royal Charter."

The principal provisions are as follows:—

1.—(1) His Majesty may from time to time, by Order in Council made on the application of any association incorporated by Royal Charter, protect—

(a) The name of the association; and

(b) Any special name or designation specified in the Order and used by the association for the members thereof or for the members of any organisation constituted by the association in pursuance of their charter; and

(c) Any uniform with distinctive markings or badges used by the association and described in the Order; and

(d) Any badge to be worn without uniform used by the association and described in the Order.

(2) Where the use by an association of any name, designation, uniform or badge has been so protected, a person shall not without the authority of the association use the name, designation, uniform or badge the use of which is so protected, or any name, designation, uniform or badge so closely resembling the name, designation, uniform or badge the use of which is protected, as to lead to the belief that it is that name, designation, uniform or badge.

(3) (i) An Order in Council under this section shall not be made unless notice of the application for an Order has been given in

such manner and accompanied by such particulars as the Secretary of State may direct.

(ii) The Secretary of State shall consider any objections to an Order which are made by, or on behalf of, any persons or societies affected, or likely to be affected, by the Order, and shall give special consideration to the existing user by any organisation of any name, designation, uniform or badge, on which it is proposed to confer protection.

(4) If any person acts in contravention of this section, he shall be liable in respect of each offence on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding ten pounds:

Provided that this section shall not prevent any person from wearing or using any uniform, badge or distinctive marking in the course or for the purposes of a stage play or representation, or a music-hall or circus performance, if the uniform, badge or distinctive mark is not worn or used in such a manner or under such circumstances as to bring it into contempt.

3. This Act may be cited as the Chartered Associations (Protection of Names and Uniforms) Act, 1922.

Nurses have for long had to bear the results of the depreciation of their uniform by persons who have no right to call themselves nurses, and who bring it into disrepute, and less often, but still quite frequently, to the theft and misuse of their Badges.

Now, for the future, those nurses belonging to the above-named Chartered Associations will have legal protection for both their Uniforms and Badges provided this is authorised by the Secretary of State; and we have no doubt that this will be done in both instances.

Already, under the Nurses' Registration Acts, provision has been made for the protection of the Uniform and Badges of Registered Nurses, and we may therefore hope that the day is passed when ignorant and disreputable persons will find it profitable to adopt the nurse's uniform, and that its use will henceforth indicate that the wearer is a skilled, professional, and self-respecting woman.

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