

The coming election will go far towards making ours a *self-governing* profession or binding us still more firmly to the chariots of the employers. Nurses, which do you prefer? Independence or Patronage? If you elect independent candidates a big stride will have been made towards a free Council and *self-government*; if you vote for the employers' nominees you will have forged a chain about your necks that will take five times five years to break.

Again wishing you all success, and thanking you and your minority colleagues for your courageous stand.

I remain, Dear Madam, Yours faithfully,

MARY BURR,

*Registered Nurse.*

Neuilly-sur-Seine, Paris.

#### MISS VILLIERS AN INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE FOR G.N.C.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—May I point out that the statement in last week's issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING that the College of Nursing, Ltd., had nominated me on its list of Candidates without my consent is not quite accurate.

The Secretary of a Joint Committee of three Associations of which the College of Nursing is one, wrote and asked if I were standing for election, and added that if so they would like to support my candidature.

When later I received nomination papers from this Committee I declined to fill them in, on the ground that as I was standing as an Independent Candidate it would be undesirable to be nominated by any particular Committee or Association.

Yours truly,

SUSAN A. VILLIERS.

[We still consider that before placing Miss Villiers' name on the list of its nominees, and issuing it to the Press, the Joint Committee of the College of Nursing, Ltd., and the Matrons' Associations should have obtained her consent, which apparently they did not do. To offer to support her candidature if standing for election is quite another thing, and is all to the good, should Miss Villiers have to contest the election, which up to date does not appear probable.—ED.]

#### PROTECTION OF OUR PROFESSIONAL STATUS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MADAM,—I am sure you will agree that the facts connected with the action of the Governors of this Hospital in respect of the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1920 as it affected the Nursing Profession, should be correctly put on record. It is because your editorial note of November 18th does not state them quite accurately that I have to ask you to print this.

The Governors, with many others, interpreting the Act by the decisions already given of its provisions, as exempting nurses, had from the first refused to pay or to allow their nurses to pay, holding that it was a most unfair burden placed

upon both hospitals and the nursing profession. Finally, under pressure from the Government, it was decided to appeal for a decision which should definitely exempt nurses.

That appeal has now been withdrawn in deference to a widely-expressed feeling based on the fact that in order to obtain exemption nurses must have come under the definitions which have already so widely extended the meaning attributable to domestic servant.

It is here that I venture to correct your statement that "nursing has to thank the independent organisations for averting a very grave injury to its professional status." As a fact, the Governors had no communication of any kind with any independent organisation; they were entirely and solely influenced by three conditions—the views of their own nurses, the withdrawal of the hospital which had joined in the appeal, and the feelings of nurses generally which was brought before them by a representative deputation.

Again, you ask, "what have the members of the College of Nursing done to maintain the status of their profession?" The reply to this is that the seven nurses who formed the deputation referred to were all members of the College of Nursing.

I must request that these corrections be given in your next issue, and I reserve the right of making this statement of the real facts public.

I am, Madam, yours truly,

ALICIA LLOYD STILL,

Matron of St. Thomas' Hospital.

Superintendent, Nightingale Training School.

St. Thomas' Hospital,  
London, S.E.1.

[We do not concede to Miss Lloyd Still that our Note last week was "not quite accurate." The fact is, that the Governors of St. Thomas' Hospital made a most disastrous blunder in interfering with our professional affairs, as usual, without consulting our profession. The case is, in a nutshell. We pleaded with the late Minister of Labour for exemption from unemployment insurance because we were professional workers, not domestic servants. The Minister listened to our plea and exempted nurses trained and in training from July, 1922, stating that the fees must be paid up to that date. The Governors of St. Thomas' Hospital appealed against this decision and desired that exemption should be made retrospective, arguing that their Senior Staff Nurse was engaged in domestic service. The Royal British Nurses' Association, the National Union of Trained Nurses, and the Professional Union of Trained Nurses intervened to dispute and disprove this argument. They went, of course, straight to the Ministry of Labour, not to the Governors of St. Thomas' Hospital, who have no authority over them. And we repeat that the widespread indignation throughout the Nursing World as focussed in these organisations has "averted a grave injury to its professional status." We have referred to this question in another column.—ED.]

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