

# Royal British Nurses' Association.

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Royal Charter.

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

## THE STATE REGISTER.

We have received from members many letters inquiring whether they ought to place their names on the State Register. The answer, most decidedly, is in the affirmative. It is argued that, under the present arrangements, power is given, towards packing the electorate, to one large organisation promoted on every hand by those who employ nurses and by those who, in the past, put the weight of their great influence against the movement for the organisation of the profession through the medium of State Registration. This is undoubtedly so, and we shall always maintain that the General Nursing Council gave a most unfair advantage to one Company, and enabled them to use means whereby, in such "tied houses" as the hospitals, for instance, blocks of nurses, whose vote can be relied upon for the College interests, are practically being lifted into the electorate. Such manipulation is very easy under the new Rule 9A and the "instruction" to the Registrar, and it is quite true that, as one correspondent remarks, there is "not much chance of a look-in, in the elections, for the votes of members of the free organisations," who are scattered up and down the country, and who cannot be brought into the Register in battalions when the Matron decides that the moment has come to use her influence to get them there. It is quite evident from our correspondence, and from interviews which we have had with nurses who belong to the various Societies which have been built up by their own efforts, that they consider that they have been placed at a great disadvantage, and that they greatly resent the steps adopted, as being calculated to pack the Register and to allow the factions who opposed Registration to leap into the saddle now the Act which they opposed is won. So much for their former scruples and opinions about State Registration. Of them all, Lord Knutsford alone has proved his policy to be governed by conviction, and not expediency. One member pointedly asks whether many of the nurses from hospitals whose Matrons are members of the Council applied before Rule 9A and the "instruction" were carried, or whether their registration was accomplished after those had come into force. That is not a question which can properly be put to an Association, or to

individual members of the Council, seeing that all applications are brought before the Council *in camera*. The right quarter to forward the inquiry to is the Office of the General Nursing Council.

But even if we know that the reasons given for putting forward Rule 9A, and the "instruction" to the Registrar, do not embrace the full compass of their possibilities and intentions, even although many of the members are convinced that there was more behind Rule 9A and the "instruction" than was put forward, even although something ugly may have been dressed up in pretty clothes to protect the sensibilities of those who promoted it, or who were too weak to dare to analyse its true purpose, yet the answer to the nurses who are asking for advice is perfectly clear: Register, certainly Register. Do so for your own sake. A State Registered Nurse will undoubtedly, in the future, rank above those who are not recognised by the State as qualified nurses. Register for the sake of your Profession. In the Act that you have done so much to promote you have laid the foundation for tremendous developments in the future, sown the seeds of a new evolution, and transformed nursing into a profession in the eyes of the State. Register also in order that you may record your vote at the forthcoming elections, and so play your part in influencing the constitution of the new governing body, even if you are convinced that Rule 9A and the much-criticised "instruction" have "downed the working nurses' Societies." A set-back doesn't so much matter, though it may delay reaching the goal. What does matter is that you should *think* and *act* and *use* the powers that belong to you as a Registered Nurse. A great victory was won when, on December 23rd, 1919, the Acts for the State Registration of Nurses were placed upon the Statute Book. Like all other great events, this will require the passage of years to place it in its true perspective, and to ray out its full significance in the establishment of a new profession on really sure foundations. But for those who study the development of nursing there are no doubts of the ultimate value of State Registration, and we therefore have not the slightest hesitation in urging nurses to see that their names are placed on the Register without delay. If they fail to, they may have grave cause for regret on their own accounts.

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