

cognise the East Ham Borough Isolation Hospital as a training school, to qualify for registration on the Fever Nurses' Register, was referred by the G.N.C. on December 15th, for investigation, owing to the conditions prevailing there.

Owing to the "Second Interregnum" of the G.N.C. since December 23rd last, presumably this inquiry has not taken place, with very injurious results to the institution. To quote the *East-End Observer* :—

"The revolt of nurses at East Ham Borough Isolation Hospital is continuing, and the position at the institution is declared to be more acute than ever.

"It is such as to give the Town Council cause for grave anxiety. An official inquiry by the Ministry of Health seems to be regarded by many as the only means of rescuing the hospital from the present chaotic state, and it is firmly believed that in the not distant future an inquiry will be held by the Ministry.

"The one consolation during this period of trouble is that cases of infectious disease in the Borough are comparatively few in number; in fact, the number of patients in the institution is lower now than it has been for a long time. A year ago the accommodation was taxed to the utmost.

"The latest resignations of staff include a sister and four staff nurses. Several probationers—said to be six in number—have also refused to sign on under present conditions. The reason for this action of the probationers, and also for that of some of the four staff nurses, is that the hospital has not been recognised by the General Nursing Council which has been set up by the Ministry of Health to register training schools for nurses.

"A month ago, when the General Nursing Council met to deal with the registration of hospitals as training schools for nurses, the question of registering East Ham Isolation Hospital was deferred pending an inquiry into the conditions prevailing there. That inquiry has not yet been held by the General Nursing Council, and it is feared that their action in having delayed the granting of recognition will create a difficulty in staffing the hospital."

We repeat the opinion we expressed in relation to this institution in a previous issue, "that the sooner an inquiry into the management of the hospital is made the better." The present nursing staff appear loyal and willing, and it is scandalous that they should be made to pay the penalty for the errors of others.

A person associated with the East Ham Borough Council remarks in a private letter: "We want an inquiry by the Ministry of Health—not by the General Nursing Council—which would indeed be a case of the blind leading the blind."

### A DANGER TO THE PUBLIC.

An interesting correspondence has been taking place in the *Birmingham Post*, as the result of a paragraph in the "London Letter," supporting the demand for a minimum training of one year, and criticising the policy of the College of Nursing, Ltd., in its agitation to depreciate the State Register by opening the General Part of the Register to all and sundry.

Miss Musson, Matron of the General Hospital, Birmingham (a member of the College Council), writes in the *Post* denying that the College is making an attempt "to place V.A.D.s and other untrained persons" on the State Register. . . . "It advocates, however, that liberal treatment should be accorded to certain nurses during the 'period of grace,' in order that injustice may not be done to those older nurses who received their hospital training some years ago, before the three years' system was generally accepted, many of whom have spent their whole lives in nursing the sick."

This is a very misleading statement. The "period of grace" makes it possible for nurses with only *one year's training* up to November, 1919, to be placed on the General Part of the Register till July 14th, 1923—a most liberal provision for the semi-trained nurses, who may be quite young women, who obtained one year's training in 1917, and not in prehistoric times.

Moreover, the three years' system has been enforced throughout the hospital world for the past thirty years—and at Miss Musson's training school to which she refers, for *forty years*—so that a very limited number of nurses are excluded from registration by the present slight standard—and their needs could be met by a rule to deal with individual hard cases, without thrusting through a new Rule—as the College is attempting to do—to make it possible to swamp the General Part of the Register with persons *recently* entering the nursing profession without any general training at all—a Rule which is a gross breach of faith with the 16,000 nurses who have already been registered or applied for registration under the existing Statutory Rules.

A "Registered Nurse" proves, in the *Post*, as we have done, that liberal treatment has been accorded the older nurses by the G.N.C., and adds: "As State Registration is voluntary, there is nothing to prevent the partially or untrained nurse from continuing her work, and, therefore, no hardship arises, while it is difficult to see why the public who pay for fully trained nurses should not be protected by the State Register, which, after all, was formed with that object in view, together with the protection of the trained nurse."

Miss Maude MacCallum, P.U.T.N., contributes some keen criticism of the College tactics in its campaign to depreciate the State Register—the while claiming that it maintains the three years' term of training, which in the past it has not done, and she calls for an explanation of why nurses appear on the College Register as "certificated" who do not possess such a qualification.

The truth is that the College advocates are instinctively and temperamentally "anti." They always have been and they always will be. They have no sympathy with the aspirations of the minority of the rank and file for self-determination, or personal and professional responsibility. Nurses always have been "done for" by their superior officers. Let well alone!

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)