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## EDITORIAL.

### A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF SOUND PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION.

It is a fundamental principle of sound professional organisation that the principal officers of the governing body of a profession shall be members of the profession whose business they are appointed to manage, and it is therefore satisfactory to learn that the General Nursing Council for Scotland has appointed a State Registered Nurse to fill the vacancy for a Registrar—a position which since the Nurses' Registration Act for Scotland was passed 17 years ago has been held by a layman.

The reason that such an appointment is desirable is twofold. (1) Only a State Registered Nurse can understand the many professional questions which arise in the office of its Governing Body, or can create the professional atmosphere which should be maintained at its Headquarters, and, further, it is incompatible with the dignity of the Profession that it should be assumed that it cannot produce from its own ranks members who are competent to hold such positions.

(2) If such members are available there are strong reasons why their applications should have priority of claim to consideration for appointment. (a) The possibility of promotion to highly paid professional positions is an incentive to well educated young women to enter the Nursing Profession, and thus the supply of a good class of candidates for training is increased with the corollary that the efficiency of the Service can be maintained at a high level; and (b) as Registered Nurses provide all the funds connected with the expenses of the office of their General Nursing Council, and the salaries of their Registrar and the subordinate officials, and the very substantial fees of medical and nursing examiners, it is only just that the post of Registrar, and, where possible, the positions of the subordinate staff should be held by Registered Nurses.

That State Registered Nurses were conscious of these points, and of the need to take concerted and public action is evidenced by the course pursued by the Council of the British College of Nurses, which, when the vacancy for a Registrar in Scotland was declared, passed the following Resolution, and sent it to the Chairman and the leading members of the General Nursing Council for Scotland, and to the press:—

“That the Council of the British College of Nurses is unanimously of opinion that in the interests of the Nursing Profession the time is now relevant when a Registered Nurse should be appointed to fill the office of Registrar to the General Nursing Council for Scotland. Such a

professional appointment would appear to be the more equitable as Registered Nurses provide the emoluments for the maintenance of the office of Registrar.”

It was known that opinion on the General Nursing Council for Scotland was sharply divided on this question and that some of its more reactionary members were strongly opposed to the appointment of a State Registered Nurse as Registrar.

The General Nursing Council for Scotland had thus before them the claim of Registered Nurses for the position, supported by the facts that since the establishment of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales a State Registered Nurse has occupied the post of Registrar, and further that since 1926 the position of Chairman of the Council has been held with distinction by a State Registered Nurse.

These examples, together with the fact that they had before them applications for the position from several highly trained nurses no doubt influenced the decision of the Council to appoint a State Registered Nurse, which affords one more illustration of the fact that when a group of persons, animated by conviction, act courageously and forcefully, they may achieve far-reaching results of high importance. We congratulate the British College of Nurses on its forceful and successful action.

There is another point which requires stressing in regard to public statutory appointments now open to members of the Nursing Profession and needing their expert supervision, which is the need of a defined curriculum of training to qualify them for these important posts, the holders of which should not only be Registered Nurses with experience in administration but should have some legal knowledge.

Further, State Registered Nurses who are aspirants for secretarial posts should possess power of accurate and expressive speech, if possible a knowledge of foreign languages, a taste for literature, and appreciate the value of statistics. Such a nurse should have studied Nursing History, especially the records of Nursing organisation. She should keep herself informed of public affairs, and should bear in mind that by her manner and manners (by no means the same thing) she can do much to make or to mar the reputation and the popularity of the institution or organisation of which she is the chief executive officer.

Miss Nightingale claimed that the Matron should be the best qualified nurse in a hospital, and a secretarial nursing officer should, in addition to possessing high nursing qualifications and powers of organisation, be the best qualified secretary in her office.

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