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## EDITORIAL.

### THE GREAT BETRAYAL.

*"Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."*  
Lincoln.

In another part of the JOURNAL we publish correspondence read at the last Meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales. From it our readers will learn that the Council, sitting *in camera*, have adopted the policy of appeasement, of expediency, the line of least resistance and have thrown to the winds the ideals and purposes that primarily inspired the Registration movement for the space of thirty years, and which are embodied in the Nurses' Registration Act as it at present stands. The Council have, in fact, capitulated. They are ready to elevate ignorance; more than that, they have expressed their willingness, in their approval of the Recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee's Report, to recognise and protect it. Why? The time has come to speak the truth. This action has been taken by the Council to propitiate the Minister of Health by enabling him and other authorities to create a pool from which to draw cheap nursing by what is described as "dilution of labour" (*i.e.* by bringing in the hosts of unqualified to compete with the qualified, inducing economic undercutting and competition). There are ways enough whereby these women could have been organised without Parliamentary recognition, but the machinery lay ready to hand in the Act if it could be subverted to cover the half-trained by an amending Act. Both cost and effort, it was recognised, would be spared thereby if the edifice that the Registered nurses had built up could be taken by attack or acquired by "peaceful suasion."

### AN UNWARRANTED LEGACY OF RESPONSIBILITY TO FUTURE COUNCILS.

By their action the General Nursing Council, and more particularly the nurses on it, have assumed a great responsibility. By approving the Recommendation to establish, under the Nurses' Registration Act, a section for half-qualified women, they shift the responsibility from the Inter-Departmental Committee which made the Recommendation, to their own shoulders and to succeeding Councils. By expressing their willingness to create and compile this Roll, they shift to their own shoulders also the responsibility of the Minister when patients have to suffer from the results of ignorance of which we hear far too many instances when the sick are entrusted, to even a very small extent, to the tender mercies of the ignorant—the ignorant

on whom, apparently, it is to be the function of the General Nursing Council to place the hall-mark of its recognition and approval. Moreover, by its action, the General Nursing Council is contributing to place the Registered Nurses more and more in economic bondage, to swell the ranks of those nurses who have to be helped by charity, for inevitably the people the Council propose to "recognise" will come into competition with the Registered Nurses with, of course, the exception of a minority of the latter whose lucrative and stabilised positions would not be theirs for long were they to seek, with any sort of effective action, a similar security for their colleagues in general.

### THE CONSIDERED OPINION OF THE PROFESSION.

Again and again of late nurses have raised questions on the matter of the Conference held by invitation of Dame Ellen Musson, Chairman of the General Nursing Council, in December of 1936, and therefore we must refer to it. They have hitherto regarded it as important and so in truth did those who attended it, until comparatively recently. It will be remembered that the Chairman of the General Nursing Council invited the chief organisations of nurses to send delegates to a Conference to consider the establishment of a second grade of nurses for the care of the chronic sick.

In opening the Conference the Chairman of the General Nursing Council said:—

"I suppose it usually happens that when a definite status is conferred on any body or profession, persons, without the requisite training, endeavour to obtain recognition under those same auspices. This has certainly been the case from time to time with the General Nursing Council. For some time past, as you are aware, some Local Authorities have been agitating to have recognition given to a second grade of Nurse to care for the chronic sick. It is admitted that such second grade Nurses (as they proposed) would be trained in Institutions which do not afford sufficiently varied experience for teaching purposes and which cannot therefore be recognised as Training Schools, and further that these Nurses would be chiefly those whose education and intelligence were not of a standard which would enable them to pass the Preliminary Examination of the General Nursing Council.

The reasons for refusing to consider such second grade Nurses on the part of the General Nursing Council have been as follows:—

1. That having been set up by Act of Parliament to lay down a basic standard of training for Nurses for the Sick, the Council could not recognise anything below that basic standard. It should be remembered that,

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