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EDITORIAL.

TO REGISTERED NURSES.

UNITE AND SAVE THE EFFICIENT CARE OF THE SICK, YOUR LEGAL STATUS, AND ECONOMIC SECURITY.

After a year's consideration the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services has issued an Interim Report which can be obtained at His Majesty's Stationery Office, Kingsway. Price 1s. 6d.

We advise every Registered Nurse to obtain a copy without delay, and carefully study its recommendations and thus realise the vital importance to the sick, of the attack upon the Legal Status, Standards of Education, and Economic Security of the professional nurse as defined in the Nurses' Registration Act of 1919.

The Recommendation to introduce an amending Act to grant legal status and protection to women and place them on a special Roll, who have failed to qualify by training, or to give evidence by examination, that they are safe attendants on the sick, and who have in the large majority of cases exploited the suffering public for gain, under the title of "Assistant Nurse," is amazing.

It took 30 years' intensive propaganda, and thousands of pounds of expenditure by those in favour of State Registration of Nurses, before Parliament realised the justice of their demand for the organisation of a Profession of Nursing by statutory authority, and then only if the Registered Nurses paid the entire cost of maintenance of the Governing Body and the compilation and publication of the Register of Nurses. This the Registered Nurses have done by the expenditure of *hundreds of thousands of pounds* during the past 19 years, and now the Select Committee on which the Nurses' Organisations were denied effective representation, proposes to deprive them of the value of all their sacrifices for the public good, by the recognition by the General Nursing Council of unstandardised workers, thousands of whom would be placed on a "Roll" without evidence of knowledge or skill. The apotheosis of the "Assistant Nurse" as proposed by the Select Committee means the deathknell of high standards of nursing in this country, as it is not presumable that highly-educated intelligent women will enter a profession where, after a long and strenuous training, and examination, they will be undersold in the open market by an inferior grade of worker, whose lack of knowledge and skill will inevitably bring discredit on Registered Nurses in the body politic. No

statutory profession of men would submit to such indignity for a moment. Why, therefore, is the Registered Nurse to be subjected to such cruel injustice?

Moreover, the compilation of the "Roll" of untrained nurses by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, would be a gross breach of faith and contract with the 100,000 nurses who have been placed on the State Register, after giving evidence of efficiency and paying for the privilege. It is not presumable that this great body of legalised nurses will be content to suffer this astounding injustice without a public protest.

It remains to be decided what is to be done to defeat the indefensible proposals of the Select Committee in their attack on all the Registered Nurses hold most sacred, which incorporates the determined policy of lay control of a profession largely composed of women; primarily inspired by *The Lancet* Commission through the medical press, eagerly adopted by the lay and medical members appointed by the Government in the General Nursing Council, supported by the British Medical Association, and certain public authorities eager for cheap labour. These powerful people constitute a formidable group for the degradation and consequent control of the Registered Nurse. But the more powerful the enemy the more courage is required to fight it, and those of us who stand for our patients and our cloth must not hesitate to claim justice.

NURSING STANDARDS DEFENCE FUND.

It has been decided to open a "Nursing Standards Defence Fund" in support of the protest by Registered Nurses against the proposal of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services to institute a Roll of second grade Nurses by Act of Parliament, and thus grant them legal status and economic security without any test of efficiency by examination.

It is proposed that the Roll is to be compiled by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, the Governing Body of "Registered Nurses," under the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, and presumably at their Headquarters at 23, Portland Place, W.1., erected and supported entirely with money provided by Registered Nurses, the Treasury having no financial responsibility whatever for the administration of the Nurses' Registration Act.

Subscriptions will be gratefully received by the Secretary, The Royal British Nurses' Association, 194, Queen's Gate, S.W.7, and by the Secretary, The British College of Nurses, 19, Queen's Gate, S.W.7, which will be administered by a special Committee to be set up for the purpose.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)