

Royal British Nurses' Association.

Incorporated by



Royal Charter.

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

PUBLIC MEETING OF PROTEST.

NURSES, DEFEND YOUR REGISTRATION ACT INVIOULATE!

In our last issue we intimated that a group of Members had sent up a request to the Executive Committee asking that a public meeting be organised to discuss the Interim Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services. Naturally the Committee felt themselves bound to accede to this request, in view of certain exceedingly dangerous recommendations contained in the Report. Arrangements have now been made that the meeting shall take place at the Caxton Hall, Caxton Street, on Tuesday, March 21st, at 8 p.m.

It is expected that the speakers will deal chiefly with the Recommendation of the Inter-Departmental Committee to extend the functions of the Registration Act so that it will cover, to quote from the Report, "a large body of women, varying greatly in age, skill and experience, who are not trained nurses." Such a recommendation is not merely irresponsible. It is something worse, for, if adopted, it will stand in nursing history as a great betrayal. It will be interesting to find how many, and who, are going to take their stand and say that it shall not be perpetrated without their determined opposition. For some this opposition will be "a fight to the death," and it is in this spirit that the Association is entering upon the struggle; it is not going to stand consenting to the tearing down of the present professional standards. On that point the Members may place reliance.

Some of us may have thought that, when the Registration Act was passed, the privileges and protection which it conferred could not be rescinded. But we can learn something from history as regards this point of view. From the days of Henry I it was the custom of Kings to grant charters to the people and, often enough, as in the case of the Magna Carta, these charters were granted unwillingly and kings and governments would try to filch from the charters the rights and privileges which they were granted to secure. And so history repeats itself, for here arises an effort to filch a very large slice from the magna carta of the nursing profession (*i.e.*, the Nurses' Registration Act) and to dilute, to an almost unlimited extent, its privileges and protection for the high qualifications of the Registered Nurses. In this connection we owe a great responsibility to the future, and we must not approach the question in a frivolous mood or one of unconcern, but in one in which conscience and courage are both

alive, remembering that the past is always existent in the present and that therefore we are, in great measure, the weavers of the destiny of our profession. But—let us face facts—it is the indolence and unconcern of a great body of the nurses that we have to fear. In every age there are vast numbers of people who are blind to the facts of their time (and some of them are wilfully blind) so that they can be used by those whose interest and convenience it is to exploit them. That is a fact in every epoch.

Individual nurses have their responsibility, so also has the Association as a corporate body, that it shall not shirk its responsibility. It indeed concerns its honour that it shall fight to prevent a great professional wrong, an injury not merely to the nurses of the present time but to those of the future. High defeat is better than low victory and the Association seeks to keep faith with those valiant pioneers of the past who were its founders and its creators, those whose great spirits transformed their ideas into ideals and brought them into the realm of accomplished fact.

We have referred to the Association as a corporate body (*i.e.*, by virtue of its Royal Charter of Incorporation), but it is to be remembered that, just as a finger or a limb is a member of the physical body, so is each nurse, on our Roll, a member of this corporate body and, by her inertia or her spirit, she contributes to its weakness or its efficiency. We have strenuous days before us and we ask each member to participate in the struggle so far as she can. Now we offer her an opportunity to do so by asking her to make known to her friends the fact that this Meeting of Protest is to take place. Free tickets of admission can be had on application to the office and we hope that nurses will do what they can to make this known, for the meeting is not arranged merely to convert the converted. Thus will members add strength to the demand of the Association that there shall be no violation of the Nurses' Registration Act.

In this struggle we are asking of you all a great thing—to keep faith with the past and to pledge your honour to the future.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS.

The Executive Committee will shortly proceed to prepare the ballot papers for the election of Members to the General Council. Those Members, who wish to nominate Members of the Association for election to seats on the Council, should send up the names of those they wish to have added to the ballot papers before the close of the month.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)