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EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, REGISTERED NURSE.

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EDITORIAL.

LEGAL STATUS THE ONLY SOUND BASIC ASSET.

There is a parrot-cry when the Registration of the semi-trained nurse is under discussion: "See how well it works in the United States." Does it? But it does not appear to be realised "on this side" that in this little Island there is but one Parliament and in U.S.A. upwards of 40, as every State has its own local Legislature which makes its laws—many of which differ one from the other; that we can travel from one end of England or Scotland to the other in a few hours—whereas it is a five days' trip from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and *vice versa*, and that the people, North, South, East and West, differ in blood and custom. Britain and America are not comparable but have much to learn from each other.

What is very necessary to meet the need of sick and wounded in war is to depreciate as little as possible the training of the regular student nurse. The League of Red Cross Societies, in a recent article, "The Influence of War on the Training of Nurses," does well to emphasise this important matter.

After referring to special courses to fit nurses for work involving heavy responsibilities for which their original training did not prepare them (administration, supervision, organisation of relief services), the article continues:—

"There is still another category of nurses on whom a state of war has direct influence, namely, nurses in training. Certain schools, with the aim of training staff to be able to meet the needs of the moment, have added supplementary courses to their curricula, such as the care of victims of air-raids, war surgery, epidemiology. In some instances the Red Cross has suggested that all nursing schools in the country introduce a practical course on protective measures against chemical warfare. In others, similar courses have been made obligatory for all degrees of training given by the Red Cross. Finally, a number of schools have intensified their first-aid instruction.

"War may have serious consequences for the nursing profession if discernment is not exercised towards the wave of patriotism and the spirit of service which uplifts the population in general when their country is in peril. On the other hand, it can exercise a favourable and stimulating influence in so far as responsible authorities guard against the danger of allowing the exceptional circumstances to constitute a pretext or a reason for lowering professional standards. A study

of the measures taken by national Red Cross Societies to increase the number of their nurses shows a more and more marked desire to give new recruits the best possible training, and persons attracted by the nursing career are encouraged to follow the regular training from the outset."

The leading training schools in England and Scotland are doing much to consolidate nursing schools under great difficulties, and students are wise who refuse to be diverted from regular training to what is known as "war work." It is inevitable that when the war ends, there will be serious disorganisation in nursing ranks, and those students who have fulfilled their obligations, passed their examinations and become Registered Nurses will realise the wisdom of steady application and its result. Legal status is the only sound basic asset: attain and maintain it.

HOSPITAL MATRONS' DEFENCE COUNCIL.

With a liberal-minded member of the Hospital Matrons' Association we recently studied the Report, presented at a meeting at Guy's Hospital. It contained many interesting items, the most significant being the enquiry by the President whether at the October meeting members would like to hear a speaker from the Medical Defence Union in addition to other speakers. The Association, it was stated, felt that many Matrons have great difficulties, and it is not possible to give them the help and support that they would like to, and it would be a very complicated and expensive process to have a Matrons' Defence Council, but perhaps the members would like to hear an expert on the subject. We are not surprised that Matrons are beginning to realise that as an isolated class of officials they are open to attack, and so far they have done little to support a colleague unjustly treated. We still have the continued persecution of Miss A. M. Brownlow, S.R.N., the Matron of the County Hospital, Farnborough, before us—eliminated from office, without a public enquiry, and we believe deprived of her pension. The Press has only just ceased to support the case of Miss Margaret Forbes, Matron of Wembley Hospital, whose resistance to unjust ejection has with its help been successful—her enemies having folded their tents and faded away. We know of many other cases of injustice, which, however, the injured had not the moral courage to fight. Little doubt a Matrons' Defence Council might find useful employment, and should the Hospital Matrons' Association ever carry their demand for a legal Roll of Assistant Nurses with a smattering of

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