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EDITORIAL.

CEASE FIDDLING WHILST ROME BURNS.

It will be remembered that what was summoned as an Open Meeting at the Royal College of Nursing, on November 15th, after some home truths on the subject of the legal registration of the Assistant Nurse had been expressed, the Secretary, Miss F. G. Goodall, summarily dismissed the Meeting—to reassemble at a later date—so that no vote was permissible.

This deferred Meeting was summoned to meet on February 14th, when those present were informed that no discussion on the Assistant Nurse question would be allowed.

A Voice. Why? That is what I came for?

To this ejaculation there was no reply.

The following Resolution was discussed: "That this meeting approves of the establishment, as soon as practicable, of a more comprehensive training for the General State Registered Nurse; such training to include in its syllabus—

(a) theoretical instruction and practical experience as at present outlined, including experience in children's wards combined with some theory and experience of fever, tuberculosis, maternity, mental and chronic-sick nursing; and subject to nurses being recognised as students, and not as employees only;

(b) an introduction to the principles and practice of Public Health Nursing, and some experience in both health teaching and domiciliary nursing.

This would appear a pretty comprehensive curriculum. How many years the students were to expend at the public expense in acquiring this monumental store of knowledge was not defined, nor was any reference made to the proposed two years' term of training for the ubiquitous Assistant Nurse, equipped *cap-à-pie* for State Registration and competitive fees! Such economic details are apparently negligible. But are they? In the organisation of their professions men have wisely decided otherwise.

We have recently been studying the Report on the Assistant Nurse, suggested by the Assistant Nurse Sub-Committee, prepared for the consideration of the Nursing Reconstruction Committee of the Royal College of Nursing. It takes some assimilating, and we shall criticise its provisions at a later date. Of course, it recommends that the G.N.C. shall bear the odium of its practical application, though why, having taken the semi-trained nurse to its bosom, the Royal College does not organise and control the proposed legislation itself is a mystery. Presumably its Registered Nurse members

have been consulted and agreed to the degrading of the Nursing Profession, which the scheme would make inevitable. If not, why not?

The proposal in these democratic days to make Nursing a "closed" profession shatters the Report to smithereens—the public will never submit to any such restriction. But the Royal College has let loose the dogs of war in the nursing world, let it face the consequences and control them. There is no reason in the world why the Royal College should not compile a Roll of semi-trained nurses in competition with their highly trained Registered Nurse members, if the latter will submit to it, but it has no right to call upon the Governing Body of the Nursing Profession to pull its chestnuts out of the fire.

Incidentally, we hear that quite a number of members of the Royal College of Nursing are opposed to its degrading policy, and intend to oppose it.

The sooner they take public action the better for all concerned, especially for the sick it is their duty to protect.

The Power of the Employer.

It is the same old struggle between employer and employed which raged for 30 years in the past, before we wrenched legal status from the Government of the day; and before we are placed under the heel of Public Assistance Authorities and other interested and ignorant persons we shall fight to a finish.

In the meantime, no educated woman should enter a hospital for training where the matron supports the cheap competition of the semi-trained assistant nurse. Let this become a definite principle. Starve out the disloyal schools.

Meetings in Support of Self Interest.

The one matter on which the patriotic members of the profession appears to be unanimous, is the unjustifiable waste of time in attending meetings to consider questions which should be deferred until war ceases. For this selfish concentration on personal affairs, when every hour should be devoted to the service of our country and its glorious campaign in support of humanity, the Royal College of Nursing is to blame. Nurses' Salaries, the degrading of nursing standards, redrafting of educational curriculum, sweeping away of Special Registers, clamour for personal advancement and comfort [swinging past our window as we write is a phalanx of boys of 16, marching gaily to the sound of the drum—*death staring them in the face*].

If every nurse would realise that there is not a minute to lose thinking of self, if she is to help save all that is worth living for, then and then only will she be worthy to attain her heart's desire.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)