

CONTROL OF UNQUALIFIED WOMEN IN NURSING PRACTICE.

Would that we had space to insert the whole report which appears in *Una*, the organ of the Royal Victorian College of Nursing, of the extraordinary meeting held in Melbourne to discuss the control of unqualified women in nursing practice.

Miss J. Bell, President, presided, and her irrefutable arguments should be supported by every Registered Nurse. Throughout the world, Miss Bell said, the advocacy by certain members of the profession for the setting up of a second grade of nurse was, in her opinion, the negation of all that trained nurses had stood for in the last 40 years, and especially for the last 20, since when the standards for qualifications have been laid down by the Nurses' Registration Boards, and the system of training regulated by them. To her it seemed an inverted type of reasoning to invite a professional body of women, like trained nurses, to depart from ethical standards and to commit what would, in effect, be professional suicide. They must lose their sense of proportion. To senior matrons and sisters who had spent their lives in the training of nurses, and trying to inculcate those principles of character and integrity leading to efficiency and competence, which still remained the unshakable base on which successful nursing rested, this proposal came as a shock. The very name, *semi-trained nurse*, which had crept into the profession in recent years, carried its own condemnation; there was no such thing as a semi-trained nurse, a nurse was either qualified, or she was not.

This had been done in England—to her that was the saddest part of it, to think that the country that was pre-eminent in the development of a calling for educated women with the right qualities of head, heart and hand, should have been beguiled into making such a mistake. This reactionary movement was not a war measure but began in 1935 in certain institutions, and its protagonists had taken the opportunity to foist their ideas on trained nurses when the country was engaged in the greatest struggle in its history and when so many of its finest members were scattered over the world.

There seemed to be two angles from which the control of these unqualified women could be argued. The protagonists said their proposals would bring control, on the other hand some argued that there was a definite place in the community for these unqualified women. If they wanted to work in households to feed, keep clean, and look after people who were not very ill, let them do it, but they should not be called *nurses*. Nurses required proper training and examination to see if they knew enough to be entrusted with this important work.

Only actual personal trial and contact with the sick in hospitals could provide the necessary testing as to whether a woman were suitable for the work of nursing or not; those who picked bits out of it and used such as a means of livelihood were a distinct menace to the sick in the community, and did not even know enough to realise what harm they could do.

The Chairman read letters from THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING which, she said, were significant of what could be expected if recognition were given to unqualified women, and the speaker wished to impress the meeting that registration for trained nurses was not compulsory, and it would be impossible to make registration of the semi-trained nurse compulsory either, and to make nursing a closed profession.

This demand was made by the Royal College of Nursing, London, and failed.

After a varied expression of opinion by some of the nurses present, Miss Bell said: "It was a matter for the majority

of nurses to decide, enrolment of these untrained women gave them some recognition and would bring them more than ever into economic competition with the trained nurse."

Miss Walsh said that she felt there was grave danger to the trained nurse in the menace of the semi-trained nurse, and through State Registration they would be given a professional status, and this would increase the menace. Once registration were granted, this body of women would organise, and the movement would grow so big that it would become a very serious power with which to be reckoned, the competition with the highly trained nurse would be more serious than ever. To attempt control by State Registration of the unqualified woman would be unfair to two sections of the community—the sick and the nurses—and both sections should be safeguarded.

Miss Bell then reminded the meeting that representatives of the College were going to Sydney to the Australian Nursing Federation Conference. The meeting had been called to discuss the matter of the semi-trained nurse. In terminating the meeting she urged them to consider well before setting up a second-grade nurse or inferior nursing in the profession.

APPOINTMENTS.

MATRONS.

Whipps Cross Hospital, Leytonstone.—Miss Kathleen Mary Fogarty, S.R.N., S.C.M., M.B.C.N. has been appointed Matron. She was trained at Fulham Hospital, Hammersmith (1926-1929), where she was awarded the Silver Medal and Bar, and where she was Ward Sister and Assistant Sister Tutor. Miss Fogarty has also been Sister Tutor at St. Mary Abbots Hospital, Kensington; Assistant Matron and Sister Tutor at Wembley Hospital; Deputy-Matron at the County Hospital, Farnborough, since September, 1942—to date; and is an Examiner for the General Nursing Council for England and Wales. It will be realised, therefore, that Miss Fogarty is a lady of considerable professional experience, and as her new charge will necessitate the supervision of 1,200 beds it will be realised that her energies will be exercised to the utmost, and her colleagues on the Council of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., will wish her health and strength for her onerous duties.

Battersea General Hospital, Battersea Park, S.W.11.—Miss Ethel Taylor, S.R.N., has been appointed Matron. She was trained at St. Stephen's Hospital, London, S.W.10, and has been Assistant Matron at the Royal South Hants and Southampton Hospital, Southampton.

Prestwood Sanatorium, near Stourbridge.—Miss Margaret A. Peoples, S.R.N., has been appointed Matron. She was trained at King's College Hospital, London, and has been Ward Sister and Theatre Relief at the Royal National Hospital, Ventnor; Relief Sister and Administration Sister Theatre, X-Ray and Light Therapy at King George's Sanatorium for Sailors, Hampshire; and Tutor Sister, Home Sister and Assistant Matron at the Prestwood Sanatorium.

Peace Memorial Hospital, Watford, Herts.—Miss M. E. Craven, R.R.C., D.N., S.R.N., S.C.M., has been appointed Matron. She was trained at the General Infirmary, Leeds, where she was later Ward Sister, Night Sister, Sister Tutor, Preliminary Training School, and where she held various temporary administrative posts. Miss Craven has also been Matron at the West London Hospital, Hammersmith, W.6; Matron, T.A.N.S. 17th General Hospital; Command Matron, H.Q. Southern Command; and Command Matron, H.Q. London District E. and S.E. Command.

ASSISTANT MATRONS.

Chesterfield and North Derbyshire Royal Hospital.—Miss Freda Storm, S.R.N., has been appointed Assistant Matron. She was trained at the Infirmary at Leeds, and has been Ward Sister, Night Sister and Home Sister.

HOME SISTER.

Redhill County Hospital, Earlswood Common, Redhill.—Miss Margaret E. O'Loughlin, S.R.N., has been appointed Home Sister. She was trained at the Lambeth Hospital, London, and has been Queen's Nurse in Eire; Trained Nurse in the Civil Nursing Reserve; and Ward Sister at the Redhill County Hospital.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)