

hospitals, and the organisation of which, for the humane treatment of the sick, has never been attained by publicly elective bodies—"Barts," "Thomas's," "Guys," "The London," are household words to humanity—Long may they remain so.

LET US HELP TO PREVENT SERF LEGISLATION:

As the Nursing Profession is an integral part of any scheme for the evolution of a thoroughly efficient service for a high standard of National Health—What is our first duty in this matter? We would reply: "a thorough knowledge of the organisation required to effect it."

THE CONSERVATIVE SHADOW CABINET.

A Free Health Service for All.

The Conservative "Shadow Cabinet" has decided to move the refusal of second reading to the Government's National Health Bill.

A reasoned amendment will be tabled for the rejection of the Bill on the grounds that:

The principle of confiscation is involved in the decision to appropriate the funds of voluntary hospitals;

It is proposed to organise and direct the medical profession without adequate consultation with its representatives;

The Government's proposals will flout rather than build upon the traditions of the profession.

The amendment is likely to be tabled shortly. It will be phrased in a manner which will indicate the complete acceptance by the Conservative party of the principle of a free health service for all.

In the debate, Conservative speakers will stress that they are in full agreement with the Government on this principle, but that they will not countenance the hasty and careless methods in which the Government has sought to rush it into law.

Mr. Churchill presided at the meeting which took this decision. Its members discussed the subject in the light of the report from the Conservative Members' Health Committee, of which Mr. Richard Law is chairman.

Mr. Law is member for Kensington South, in whose constituency many nurses live and have votes.

To allow the fullest consultation with the local authorities and other interested bodies, such as voluntary hospitals, on the terms of the National Health Bill, the Government have agreed to defer the second reading stage until after Easter.

On account of the pressure of the legislative programme, combined with the Government's desire to get the Bill through this session, it may be necessary that the discussions on the proposals are curtailed.

OUR PERSONAL OPINION.

Our personal opinion on the proposed health legislation is that no human being, Cabinet Minister or not, has the right to seize our body and dictate how it shall be treated, and by whom, when in health. In sickness, the present confidential relations between medical attendant and patient must be maintained.

Under the Bevan Bill, no one's soul is their own. Who empowered this man to compete with the Deity?

PROFESSIONAL LIBERTY DEMANDED BY REGISTERED NURSES.

We have been requested by a Matron who has received the following letter from the Royal College of Nursing to publish it, as she is of the opinion that the Trades Disputes Act is a most unjust and tyrannical form of legislation. Moreover she, and we agree with her, considers Registered Nurses should continue to join such organisations of the policy of which they approve. The fact that the Royal College of Nursing admits the medical profession and the laity to exercise authority in its governing body, disqualifies it as a purely professional organisation.

The fact that the Royal College of Nursing drafted the Bill for the organisation of Assistant Nurses—semi-trained competitors to Registered Nurses—and supported the Brown Bill of 1943, which has de-graded nursing standards, disqualifies it, in her opinion, as the representative single professional body to represent and control Registered Nurses.

THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING,
Henrietta Place, Cavendish Square,
London, W.1.

April, 1946.

DEAR MADAM,—The Council of the Royal College of Nursing desire to draw your attention to an aspect of nursing organisation and policy which they feel calls for serious reflection at the present time.

The Minister of Health in his publication: "Staffing of Hospitals," makes the following statement: "No obstacle should be placed in the way of professional organisations or trade unions representing their members in negotiations with the governing body or authority."

It is therefore particularly desirable that all State Registered Nurses should be members of a professional organisation so that they, on the one hand, may have an effective channel for the expression of their views, and, on the other, their representatives may be assured that every step of their policy is endorsed and supported by the profession as a whole.

The Royal College of Nursing, incorporated by Royal Charter, is the largest representative body of nurses and is recognised by the Government as a negotiating body. It is felt, however, that many nurses are not sufficiently aware of the activities of the College, the value to themselves of membership and the importance under present political conditions of having a powerful negotiating body to represent them. In particular, the Professional Association Department, which handles hundreds of confidential enquiries for professional help and advice, is ever vigilant in its protection of nurses' interests and the maintenance of high standards of nursing.

As you will know, the repeal of the Trades Disputes Act will empower authorities to refuse to employ anyone who is not a member of a representative organisation, and it is therefore of the utmost importance that nurses should unite now in support of a single professional body strong enough to represent their interests, improve standards and protect their ideals.

The strength of College membership will be a vital factor in deciding whether nurses are to retain control of nursing policy and education in the future, and will be of equal importance in maintaining the status of nursing which the College has done so much to establish.

Yours faithfully,

FRANCES G. GOODALL, *General Secretary.*

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