

Committee. Nurses would have read his tirade with more interest, had it been directed against an Institution which treats its Nurses with less consideration. I agree, however, entirely with his criticism of the proposed constitution of the Central Board:—

“The one and only remedy for these evils lies, as I have repeatedly argued, in the creation of a central Hospital authority, invested with the requisite control over the financial and general management, and over the creation of new Hospitals. In this, again, I am glad to find that my opinion is endorsed by the Lords’ Committee. The one solid and practical proposal, in fact, which their Lordships offer to the public, is the creation of a “Central Board,” which they propose to empower to collect reports, balance-sheets, and statistical returns from all Hospitals; to require all accounts to be audited by chartered accountants; to visit and inspect all Hospitals; and to report annually on their sanitary and financial condition, upon the work done, upon the important subject of Nursing, upon proposals for new Hospitals, or the redistribution of old ones, and so on. These powers, if placed in the right hands, should be sufficient to prevent the recurrence of such scandals as that at St. Bartholomew’s or either of the other Hospitals to which I have referred above; but I am entirely at issue with the Committee in regard to the constitution of the proposed Board. It is suggested that this body shall be formed of forty representatives of individual Hospitals; five representatives of the medical profession, chosen respectively by the Medical Council, the three medical colleges, and the general practitioners; and four representatives of the University of London, the London County Council, and the Hospital Sunday and Saturday Funds. It seems to me that such an authority would be nothing that it ought to be, and everything that it ought not to be. The trail of the hereditary legislator is over it all. The first essential of the authority which we have to create is that it should bring to bear upon Hospital management the force of outside and independent public opinion for the purposes both of criticism and control. The representation which is required before all others is that of two great classes of the public—the class which supports the Hospitals and the class which uses them. This supreme condition of the problem the House of Lords’ scheme makes no attempt to fulfil. Their Lordships’ proposal proceeds on the fantastic principle of entrusting the functions of criticism and control to those who require to be criticised and controlled. The present Hospital authorities, reinforced by the representatives of the medical profession, would dominate the proposed Board in the proportion of forty-five votes to four, and the only representatives who could possibly claim to speak on behalf of any section of the people of London would be those of the County Council and the Hospital Saturday Fund—two votes out of forty-nine. Such a body could never possess, what it before all things requires, the confidence of the public; and it would infallibly develop to a fatal degree all the qualities of a hide-bound official and professional ring. Apart from these general considerations, the mere fact that two such corrupt, effete, and unrepresentative bodies as the two Medical Colleges would possess on the Board double the representation of the London County Council, is sufficient in itself to damn the scheme.

This, however, is a mere question of detail, and I sincerely trust that no differences over details will prevent the report of the Lords’ Committee receiving that further and full consideration to which the invaluable work done by the Com-

mittee entitles it. The evidence which they have taken proves up to the hilt the contention of those who prayed for the inquiry, that the present system is in many important respects dangerously defective. It is certain that the public have to a great extent lost confidence in Hospital management, for the support accorded to the Hospitals does not increase in proportion to the growth of the population in wealth and numbers—on the contrary, there are clear signs, the latest being the serious falling off in the last Hospital Sunday collection, that support is being withdrawn. I am myself further of opinion—though this is a subject on which the House of Lords has unfortunately failed to throw any light—that the working classes are by no means favourably disposed towards the present system, and if that is so, the day is very close at hand when the rate-supported Hospitals will displace the voluntary. Unless, therefore, steps are promptly taken to restore public confidence by the establishment of an effective public control, the House of Lords’ inquiry, so far from mending the evil, will only have the effect of further damaging the Hospitals; and if the supporters of the present system understand their own interests, they will lose no time in bringing the question to the attention of the new Parliament and the new Ministry.”

\* \* \*

I SEE it is proposed that this Central Board should deal “with the Nursing of Hospitals, and the proceedings of Nursing Associations in the Metropolis,” and yet, strange oversight, it does not seem to be suggested that Nursing should be officially represented on the Board. I do not doubt, however, that one of our leaders will take care that our interests are carefully considered, and Lord SANDHURST is the last man, with his liberal views and maternal traditions to overlook the importance of this matter. It is absolutely certain that a body of men—and especially laymen—cannot investigate the Nursing arrangements in force at the Hospitals which the Central Board, it is proposed, should cause to be inspected and reported upon.

\* \* \*

CONCERNING the Central Board proposed in the Report of the Lords’ Committee, the *British Medical Journal* suggests the following from a medical point of view:—

“Lord SANDHURST intends, as soon as the turmoil of the general election is over, to issue invitations to the managers of metropolitan Hospitals to take part in a conference to consider the best means of giving practical effect to the suggestion of the Lords’ Committee on Hospitals as to the creation of a central board representing the Hospitals and Dispensaries of London, and certain other institutions and bodies interested in medical charities. It is satisfactory to find that the Chairman of the Lords’ Committee does not consider that his duty in the matter has ended with the presentation of a report, and satisfactory also to know that he recognises the wisdom of submitting this, the main proposal contained in the report, to discussion and criticism.

“There can be little doubt that if a public, representative and recognised body were to report, as is proposed, annually on every Hospital and Dispensary on certain definite lines, and issue a special report on every proposal to establish a new

Every Nurse who makes her own Underclothing should send her address to the HOPWOOD MANUFACTURING CO., 1, Princess Mills, Hopwood, near Manchester, for Patterns of Pure Calicoes (bleached and unbleached), Twills Longcloths, Sheetings, and Seamless Pillow casings, which are forwarded Free and need not be returned. All goods carriage paid. Any length cut.

WORTH TRYING.—Dodd’s Borax and Camphor Soap.—Mrs. Henry King-Parks, F.R.S.A., says: “For washing the hair it eclipses all others, rendering it smooth, lustrous and elastic, and is one of the best for toilet purposes; prevents and cures many skin affections.” Sold everywhere, in tablets, 6d. each, or post free eight stamps; from Sole Proprietors, Dodd Brothers, Stamford Hill, N.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)