

## The Royal British Nurses' Association Petition for a Charter.

The Petition of the Royal British Nurses' Association, praying to be incorporated by Royal Charter, was on Monday before the Privy Council, the members present being the Marquis of RIPON, Lord HOBHOUSE, Lord HANNEN, and Lord OXENBRIDGE.

The application being opposed, the parties were allowed to appear by Counsel. Sir HORACE DAVEY, Q.C., Mr. MUIR MACKENZIE, and the Hon. W. H. CROSS, M.P., represented the petitioners; and Sir RICHARD WEBSTER, Q.C., M.P., and Mr. L. S. BRISTOWE, appeared for the opponents. The solicitor for the petitioners was Mr. F. S. RANDOLPH, of No. 3, Old Serjeants' Inn.

The proceedings took place in the Court of the Judicial Committee, which was crowded throughout the day by persons interested in the application, many of whom were ladies.

Lord SANDHURST occupied a seat near the table at which sat the members of the Privy Council.

The text of the petitions was as follows:—

PETITION.

*To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.*

The Humble Petition of Your Majesty's dutiful and loving daughter Her Royal Highness Helena, Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, Princess of Great Britain and Ireland.

SHWETH—

That in 1887 a Society was established in London called the British Nurses' Association, which has, since its establishment, been joined by more than 3,000 Nurses, each one of whom has been engaged for three years or more in attendance upon the sick.

That the said Association was not established for the purpose of gain, but for the purposes of the improvement of the profession of Nurses, and of the promotion of their efficiency and usefulness, and of assisting them by various benevolent schemes.

That in furtherance of the said objects a list of Nurses has been compiled and published, setting forth the names and addresses of Nurses, with the names of the hospitals or other places at which they have been trained, and the length of training which each has received, thus enabling the public to form a more accurate judgment of the professional education and experience of the Nurses so registered.

That a Benevolent Fund has been established for the purpose of giving aid to Nurses, and that the management of the said Association is vested in certain eminent members of the medical profession, matrons of hospitals, and other persons interested in Nursing.

That in 1891 Your Majesty was graciously pleased to confer on the said Association the prefix and title of "Royal," and to command that the said Association should be styled the "Royal British Nurses' Association."

That your Petitioner is President of the said Association. And that it would conduce to the welfare of the Association and to the furtherance of its objects if the said Association were incorporated by Your Majesty's Royal Charter.

Wherefore Your Majesty's Petitioner humbly prays that Your Majesty may be pleased to grant a Charter of Incorporation to your Petitioner and the Members of the said Association under the title of "The Royal British Nurses' Association."

And your Petitioner as in duty bound will ever pray, &c.

HELENA.

*To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty in Council.*

The humble petition of the undersigned medical men, nurses, and members of the general public, who are equally concerned that those who are employed in attendance upon the sick should be efficient and trustworthy,

SHWETH AS FOLLOWS:—

That at present any woman, even if quite ignorant or untrustworthy, can term herself a trained Nurse, can obtain employment in that capacity, and bring much danger to the sick and discredit upon the vocation of nursing

That the law requires no public record or register, as in the case of other skilled professions—of women who have been certificated as qualified Nurses by responsible authorities.

That, consequently, hospital certificates can be, and have been, forged or stolen and used to obtain positions of great trust, to the manifest disparagement of genuine certificates, to the discredit of hospitals, and to the danger of the public.

That the Royal British Nurses' Association has, at great expense and labour, commenced a *voluntary* system of registration, and published a register of trained Nurses, shewing the names and addresses of 1,800 women, with the hospitals or other places at which they have been trained; and will remove from this list the name of anyone who proves herself to be unworthy of trust.

That this system, if carried into full effect, would, as in the case of the registers of other professions now maintained by authority, undoubtedly be of great advantage to the public in protecting them against untrained and untrustworthy persons; to medical men by giving them easily obtainable information concerning a Nurse's training and experience; and to trained Nurses, by distinguishing them from those who now adopt the name without being entitled to do so.

That the Royal British Nurses' Association is by far the largest body of Nurses, and the only society of its kind in the British Empire. That it has commenced, and is successfully carrying on several important schemes for the aid of Nurses in the practice of their profession, and in times of adversity, sickness, and old age. That it chiefly desires to be incorporated in order to receive and administer funds for the benefit of Nurses. That it has been unable to obtain incorporation as a professional and non-trading association in the ordinary way. And that it seeks no special powers or privileges beyond those which incorporation would confer.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that the Royal British Nurses' Association may be incorporated by Royal Charter,

And your Petitioners will ever pray,

&c., &c., &c.

Sir HORACE DAVEY in opening the petitioners' case, said: I appear, my lord, on behalf of Her Royal Highness Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, Princess of Great Britain and Ireland, as President of the Royal British Nurses' Association, to support the prayer of her petition for a grant of a Charter of Incorporation to the petitioners, and the members of the Association under the title of the "Royal British Nurses' Association."

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