

league, who holds, under the "Nursing in Workhouses" Order of 1897, a similar post in England and Wales. It is to be regretted, however, that she is not described as Matron of the Infirmary or Superintendent of Nursing, which is the position which she actually holds. We congratulate the Irish Local Government Board on its new Order. We hope its next step will be the organization of a central nursing department, under the supervision of a trained Nurse Superintendent, working in conjunction with the Medical Officer.

### Annotation.

#### THE DIRECT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL AND MIDWIFERY LEGISLATION.

It is significant of the importance attached by the medical profession to the proposed legislation for midwives, whether its members support or oppose such legislation, that at the meeting held at Cheltenham during the session of the British Medical Association to discuss the question of the election of the Direct Representatives on the General Medical Council for England and Wales the present Representatives, as well as the gentlemen who aspire to this honour at the coming election, found it incumbent upon them to declare themselves at some length on this midwife question. Speaking with reference to it, Mr. George Jackson, of Plymouth, said that in regard to the question of midwives, the trend of opinion in the House of Commons seems to be in favour of some form of registration. The medical profession should try to guide legislation so that it shall not be registration of midwives as midwives, but rather as nurses, and he was of opinion that all nurses should be registered. It should be impossible for any woman after just three months' training to be turned out as a midwife. He went on to say that the Government had insisted on the provision of medical assistance for the poor, but it is a farce to a very great extent. There should be a system by which nurses also should be provided by corporate bodies and guardians. He advocated the appointment of District Nurses, who might give lessons in elementary sanitation, and attend to ordinary dressings. The population was not increasing, and one woman in fifteen was said to die in her first confinement. He did not know if it were true, but at any rate the mortality was very considerable, and it

behaved us therefore to take more care of our population-producing people, to take more care of the mothers of the country, and not to allow them to die in this way, and to take more care of the children. He suggested that the British Medical Association should introduce a Bill into Parliament, and that nurses should be required to pass through a prolonged training, as this was necessary to drill them in their work. If taught only for a limited time they lapsed into careless ways. It was more important for the public at large to be well nursed than well doctored. The whole body of the profession, as represented by the British Medical Association, must push forward legislation.

All the candidates having declared their policy as to legislation for midwives, various questions were put directly to them.

The Chairman (Mr. Garrett Horder) asked them if they believed it probable that the practice of midwives will be restricted by legislation, so as to make the attendance of a medical man compulsory in cases of confinement. This was answered in the negative.

Mr. Broadbent asked if the candidates opposed legislation for midwives which would make them independent practitioners, and was answered in the affirmative. He then asked if the candidates considered that it was for the good of poor women that every case of midwifery should be more or less under the direct and personal supervision of a medical man, even if details were conducted by a trained and registered nurse, and received affirmative replies.

It will be observed that the question of the registration of midwives is directing the attention of the medical profession to the broader and more statesmanlike course of the registration of trained nurses by Act of Parliament. We have urged the necessity of such legislation for the last fifteen years.

It must, however, be remembered that the assistance and advice of trained nurses are essential in drawing up any Bill dealing with their regulation and control. The British Medical Association would be well advised to confer with the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland—one of the objects of which society is "to bring about a uniform system of education, examination, certification and State Registration for nurses in British Hospitals"—before drafting a Bill for the State Registration of Nurses.

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