

The Registration Bill of the R.B.N.A.

A well-attended Special General Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association, convened by order of the President, was held at the Rooms of the Medical Society of London on Tuesday last to consider "A Bill to provide for the better Training and Registration of Nurses and for the Voluntary Registration of Private Nursing Homes." We have only space for a brief account of the meeting in this issue, but propose to refer to it again on a future occasion.

Considerable surprise was felt that the chair was taken by Mr. E. A. Fardon, a well-known opponent of State Registration for Nurses. The Chairman called upon Dr. Comyns Berkeley, the Medical Hon. Secretary, to read the notice convening the meeting, after which the discussion of the Bill itself was opened.

Dr. Berkeley began by reading a statement in which we gathered he was manfully taking upon himself the entire blame for something in connection with the first clause, but what this was we really do not know.

At first the amendments were put to the meeting without the clauses to which they related being read, making it almost impossible to follow the business. A proposition made by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, that the clauses should be read before discussion, was carried, and this certainly added to the subsequent comprehension of the business in hand, although we cannot congratulate the Chairman on his conduct of the business throughout.

Dr. Berkeley explained that it was considered that a Central Board of thirty-one members was not workable. It was, therefore, proposed to substitute an entirely new organisation of the Board by which the number was reduced to twenty. Its composition as now suggested was as follows:—

Three Registered Medical Practitioners, two to be appointed by the Lord President of the Privy Council, and one by the British Medical Association.

Three Representatives appointed by the Lord President of the Privy Council, one each for England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Three Representatives appointed as follows: one by the Directors-General of the Army and Navy conjointly, one by the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute, and one by the Royal British Nurses' Association.

Five fully-trained nurses, one the Matron of a Metropolitan Hospital with a training-school attached, one of a Metropolitan Poor Law Infirmary with a training-school attached, one Matron of a Provincial Hospital, one Matron of a Scottish Hospital with a training-school attached,

one Matron of an Irish Hospital with a training-school attached.

Six fully trained nurses, two to represent the Metropolis, one of whom is to be a mental nurse, two to represent the provinces, one to represent Scotland, and one to represent Ireland, to be elected by the Registered Nurses.

In relation to the representatives of the Army and Navy, the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute, and the R.B.N.A., Miss A. J. Beatty proposed that the word nurse, which had originally been inserted before the word representative should be retained. This was seconded by Miss Clarke, but opposed by Miss Scott, and eventually, on her motion, seconded by Mrs. Latter, the word representative was adopted, so that these bodies may be represented by medical men or laymen.

Dr. Stoker said that in these days of popular representation he did not consider the rank and file were adequately represented. Rather than reducing the numbers of the direct representatives of the nurses they should be increased. He proposed that the direct representatives should be twelve. This was seconded by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. The representation given to the nurses was not, she considered, adequate. There would soon be 100,000 nurses on the Register, and they would not for any length of time be content with the meagre representation proposed. The electoral areas should be as wide as possible, not cut up into sections. Thus, the English representatives should be elected by all the registered nurses in England and Wales. One nurse each for Scotland and Ireland was insufficient representation for those countries. Dr. Stoker having subsequently incorporated in his amendment that the first direct representatives should be elected by the nurses on the "Register" of the Royal British Nurses' Association, Mrs. Fenwick said she did not second that.

She proposed, as an amendment, that the direct representatives of the nurses should be increased to ten—six for England and Wales, two for Scotland, and two for Ireland. This was seconded by Miss Ambler Jones. Dr. Berkeley strongly opposed the increase, as he said the whole object in changing the constitution of the Board had been to reduce its numbers. On being put to the meeting the amendment was lost, very few nurses voting either way. A proposition by Dr. Biernacki that a fever nurse should be added to the direct representatives was carried.

In relation to the duties of the Central Board, it was pointed out that power was taken to frame the rules regulating the whole business of the Board in relation to the education, examination, and supervision of nurses, by the elected lay and medical representatives. Mrs. Fenwick deprecated these duties being carried out without the assistance of the direct representatives of the nurses, who

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