

Progress of State Registration.

AS OTHERS SEE US.

Miss L. L. Dock, writing from this country to the *American Journal of Nursing* of the evidence taken by the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Registration of Nurses, says:—

A rare privilege has been that of attending three of the hearings on the nursing question before the Select Committee of the House of Commons. Readers of the *Journal* will remember that on the urgent appeal of the Society for Registration the Premier last May appointed a Committee to inquire into nursing conditions and to report upon the desirability of Registration. The Committee began its sittings promptly, and up to the present time has heard the evidence of eight witnesses—Dr. Bedford Fenwick, Miss Isla Stewart, Miss Huxley, Miss Hobbs (Secretary of the R.B.N.A.), Mr. Walshe (a male nurse and head of a large directory for men nurses), and Miss Amy Hughes, in favour of State examination, and Mr. Sydney Holland and Dr. Norman Moore against it.

The hearings are on the lines of those we have had from State legislative committees. Anyone desiring to give evidence may send his or her name to the Chairman, who notifies them of the day on which to appear. The sittings last for two hours, and one witness is sometimes in the chair for all of that time, so it may be imagined the occasion is serious.

The meetings are held—only imagine it!—in the House of Parliament. Who would ever have thought to see a flock of nurses entering that gloriously beautiful pile, under the towers and turrets and arches, and to meet the words "Nurses' Registration" on a card on the committee-room door? That of itself is a sign of big changes in the times, as important a sign as was the reception of equality-demanding women by the city officers in the stately Rathaus of Berlin.

These hearings have been so portentous, the surroundings so impressive, and the stir and excitement in the nursing and hospital world so great, that one could write pages about them if only space permitted. For the present, the most complete report is that of the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING*, and eventually the whole will appear in a "Blue Book." The hearings have now ceased with the vacation, but will be resumed next February.

The "pros" have given excellent evidence, full of facts drawn from life. I heard Mr. Walshe, Miss Hobbs, and Miss Hughes. The latter was especially firm under cross-examination (which, I may remark in passing, is enough to make one's hair rise).

The "antis" seemed to me to have a very weak position and to know that they have.

Mr. Sydney Holland, the Chairman of the London Hospital, is the standard-bearer of the

opposition. I heard him on a recall, and thought his manner and voice dispirited and half-hearted. He is most kind and excellent, and wrapped up in the London Hospital, yet his ideas are most erroneous. He evoked smiles by saying that nursing examinations were so childishly easy that it was ridiculous to think any woman could not pass one. He has conjured up a bogey of colossal size called "moral qualities and fitness cannot be registered," and totally ignores the contention that an educational basis could be protected against imposture. He would have no protection for the nurse and no standard for the public except the training-school.

Dr. Norman Moore was a more cheerful witness, his ideas so antiquated as to be positively laughable. He sees no necessity for protecting certain educational standards; holds that the door to nursing cannot be too wide open; would not require much general education; does not approve of a minimum training for all nurses; thinks six months enough to train for usefulness with the poor in the country (but not enough for his own); fears that nurses may become an inferior order of independent practitioners if registered; holds that no mistake will ever be made if the public would in all cases leave the choice of the nurse to the medical man; would have no standard or protection except the judgment of the medical man.

The Committee, on the whole, ask intelligent questions, though they sometimes wander and get lost, and several seem to have their own axes to grind. They are very serious over it, and take it all earnestly. The Chairman is admirable. His questions are penetrating, his manner quiet and reassuring.

It would be worth a trip across the water to come and hear the final inquiries.

A PLEA FOR REGISTRATION.

Dr. William H. Welch, of the Johns Hopkins University, addressing the Maryland State Association of Graduate Nurses on the subject of State Registration, gave some advice which may profitably be considered by those who are working for the legislation which their colleagues in Maryland have now happily attained. Dr. Welch said:—

In the more stable countries of Europe with longer-established civilisation it has been recognised for centuries that the mere title of doctor of medicine conferred by a teaching body should not carry with it the licence to practise medicine, the reason being manifestly that medical schools cannot be absolutely relied upon by the State to ensure the capability of the candidate as regards requisite training and knowledge. Therefore, in Germany, France, and England you will find that there exist boards appointed or recognised by the State which must examine the candidate before he is given the right to practise his profession. The degree of

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