

In drafting the Bill, those responsible for it had tried to make it a just measure, and, first and foremost, had asked that a General Council of Nursing Education and Registration of the United Kingdom should be authorised by the State. This Council was to be composed of medical practitioners, Matrons and nurses, a very few *elect* members, and a large majority of *direct representatives*. Thus it provided for one portal into the profession of nursing, and gave a large amount of self-government to those concerned, the registered nurses, which, of course, included the Matrons also.

This Council was to have power to frame rules regulating the issue of certificates and the conditions of admission to the Register of trained nurses, regulating the course of training and the conduct of examinations and the remuneration of the examiners, regulating the admission to the Register of persons already in practice as trained nurses at the commencement of the Act, regulating, supervising, and restricting within due limits the practice of registered nurses, and defining the particulars required to be given in any notice under the Act.

To appoint examiners.

To decide upon the places where, and the times when, the examinations should be held.

To issue and cancel certificates.

To publish annually a register of trained nurses, containing the names, addresses, and qualifications of nurses who had been duly certified under the Act.

To decide upon the suspension or removal from the Register of the name of any trained nurse for any breach of the rules and regulations from time to time laid down under the Act by the Council, or for conduct disgraceful in a professional respect, and also to decide upon the restoration to the Register of the name of any trained nurse so suspended or removed.

And generally to do any other act necessary for the due and proper carrying out of the provisions of the Act.

Thus the Bill provided for the organisation of nursing, the only means by which a general standard of education and a definite system of professional control could be obtained.

No voluntary system of Registration was of any use; it had been tried, and had failed owing to the opposition of those who objected to the trained nurse having *any legal status*, or power to help herself by co-operation. Nurses must have the power of the law behind them if they were to effect the reforms so urgently needed. All professions composed of men had required such protection from the State, and what was necessary for enfranchised men was equally, if not more, necessary for un-enfranchised women.

Those opposing State regulation of nursing had brought forward many contradictory reasons against it. To well-certificated London-trained nurses it

was stated that Registration would reduce their qualifications to one monotonous level, with inferior qualifications; they must resist registration, therefore. To those nurses holding less imposing certificates, it was argued that because they did not possess a certificate from a leading school they would not be registered, and would be penalised, therefore they must resist registration, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Now none of these suggestions were true, and those who studied the Bill must either be exceedingly stupid or perverse if they honestly gathered such conclusions. The registrationists aimed at elevating the profession as a whole by instituting a desirable standard of knowledge to which in the future all nurses, wherever trained, must attain; but no injustice to existing nurses was advocated; nor would Parliament ever permit legislation to be retrospective, and thus injure honest workers.

Thus the Bill specially provided for a term of grace under a clause making "Provision for Existing Nurses," which direct that "any person who within two years from the commencement of this Act claims to be certified thereunder shall be so certified; provided such person is at least twenty-one years of age, produces evidence of training satisfactory to the Council, has been for at least three years in *bona-fide* practice as a nurse, and is of good character."

No injustice would be done to any nurse, as her qualifications, whatever they were, would be plainly set forth in the Register.

Then another cry was that Registration would have the effect of depriving the poor of good nurses, as cottage nurses would not be registered. Had the poor good nurses now? They had in such localities as were attended by the Queen's Nurses—women thoroughly trained for their responsible duties—all of whom would be eligible for registration. But were the majority of "cottage nurses" working in rural districts "trained" nurses? Mrs. Fenwick did not think they could claim to be so, as the majority had received no "training" in a general hospital; but no injustice would be done these workers if they held, as so many of them did, maternity and midwifery qualifications, as they could be registered by the Central Midwives' Board, and thus appear on that Roll, for which they were qualified, and not assume to be "trained" nurses, which they were not.

But the registrationists had carefully inserted a clause in the Bill, which left the public perfect liberty of action in engaging attendants on the sick. "This Act shall not be construed to affect or apply to the gratuitous nursing of the sick by friends or members of a family, and, also, it shall not apply to any person attending the sick for hire, but who does not in any way assume to be a registered nurse."

All that was claimed for the thoroughly-trained woman was the protection of the title "Registered

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