

The Irish Nurses' Protest to the Financiers' Registration Scheme.

A largely attended meeting of the Irish Nurses' Association was held at the Association's Rooms, 86, Lower Leeson Street, Dublin, on Friday, February 24th, to protest against the incorporation by the Board of Trade of the proposed Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses.

The chair was taken by Miss S. E. Hampson, formerly Matron of the Rotunda Hospital, Lady Superintendent of Portobello House.

The first speaker was Miss Huxley, President of the Association, who proposed a Resolution that a Petition should be sent to the Board of Trade against the incorporation of the suggested Society.

Miss Huxley said she assumed that all present were aware of the reason for the meeting, and took it for granted that all had read the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING for February 11th as requested in the notice convening the meeting. The occasion was a serious one for nurses, and they must make up their minds and be prepared to act as seemed best for the true interests of nurses now and the future. There were reasons to believe that the proposed Society had been started to prevent nurses obtaining legal status by State Registration, and as they were already pledged to this reform, that alone seemed to be sufficient reason for opposing the incorporation of any such Society by the Board of Trade. But there were other weighty reasons, inasmuch as in the proposed Society it was *laymen* who were asking for powers to control nurses and their education, and the medical profession, with which their work was so intimately connected, were accorded only a secondary position; further, Irish nurses and doctors were in no wise consulted or even mentioned.

Before the Society could be incorporated the Board of Trade was bound to advertise its provisions, and to afford objectors an opportunity of protesting. She begged to read a Petition, which, if approved and authorised, could be signed by her as President, and sent to the Board of Trade, on behalf of the Irish Nurses' Association, whenever that Body advertised for objections.

Miss Huxley then read this Petition, and formally proposed that it be sent to the Board of Trade.

This was seconded by Miss Kelly, Matron of Dr. Steevens' Hospital, Dublin, and Lady Consul of the Royal British Nurses' Association for Ireland, who said that since she had heard of the scheme she had been trying to find out something about it. It was quite incomprehensible why it should have been started, and she could not help feeling that there must be some personal animus in the matter. It was a most unjust scheme, and she hoped it would be strongly opposed by the Irish Nurses' Association.

Midwives had already a legal status, and trained nurses also wanted State Registration by Act of Parliament, so that they would not have a secondary position to the Midwives. She had already addressed the Irish Nurses' Association on the importance of watching legislation affecting nurses, so that their rights might not be filched from them. When the Midwives' Act was before the House of Commons, they could have raised objections on points affecting Irish nurses if they had understood what was taking place. This would give them an idea of the importance of watching any Act or proposal dealing with the control and Registration of nurses.

The Chairman then inquired whether anyone present wished to say anything on the other side of the question. The invitation was met by silence. She then said it was very important for the Association to consider whether it intended to allow this Society to go forward without a protest. Society was somewhat a grand name. The signatories were rather applying for rights to be a trading company. Her opinion was that the proposed organisation was a company in the hands of a few people who wished to have entire control over nurses. They wished to govern, and seemed to think that they had divine right, and understood these professional questions. Did the Irish nurses wish to be controlled by a commercial company?

The Resolution was then put to the meeting and carried, with one dissentient.

Miss MacDonnell, R.R.C., Lady Superintendent of the Richmond Hospital, Dublin, then proposed that the Irish Nurses' Association petition the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, asking them to lodge objections with the Board of Trade against the proposed scheme.

Miss Ramsden, Matron of the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, seconded, and said that the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons had always shown the nurses every kindness in their power, and they might confidently look to them for help. She thought it was a very wise proceeding to lay the matter before them, as Miss MacDonnell proposed.

The Resolution was then carried.

Mrs. Kildare Treacy, Lady Superintendent of the City of Dublin Nursing Institution, then said that she wished to offer a Resolution that a letter which she would read be sent to the seven gentlemen who had taken upon themselves to improve the education of nurses. She had been very much struck by the autocratic spirit shown in their Memorandum. She thought Irish women would not consent to their issuing certificates and prescribing rules for the training of Irish nurses. Why they might decide that only English training-schools for nurses be approved, and if so, Irish women would be seriously handicapped if they wished to take positions in England.

She thought they should bend all their energies

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