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Editorial.

JUSTICE TO NURSES.

Those who were present in the Deputation Room at the Board of Trade Office on Friday, May 5th, when arguments were heard for and against the granting of a licence of incorporation to the "Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses," could not fail to be impressed by the unanimity of feeling expressed on broad matters of principle.

One after another the representatives of the various associations, ignoring lesser issues, urged upon the Board the following points:—

The need of a well-considered system of State Registration for Trained Nurses.

The futility of any attempt to carry out State purposes by means of a private Society.

The injustice to trained nurses, and the danger to the public, from the present lack of any effective organisation in the profession of nursing.

The right of nurses, in common with members of other professions, to take part in their own government, and to administer the finances which they themselves provide.

The importance of the Governing Body of the Nursing Profession being largely composed of the direct representatives of the nurses themselves.

Members of the Medical Profession showed that in the case of their own profession the appointment to their Governing Body of the representatives of close corporations had been tried and found wanting. They showed also that nurses possessed the ability, and that it was a matter of justice to accord them the right, to control their own affairs.

Special emphasis was laid on the point of justice to nurses by Sir Victor Horsley, whose speech was a memorable one. Indeed, nurses owe a great debt of gratitude to all the officials of the British Medical Association, who gave up so much of their valuable time in order to impress upon the Board of Trade the fact that the nurses had right on their side in their

opposition to the scheme of the City Financiers for their control. Nurses will not readily forget the support they received on this occasion from the great Association of Medical Practitioners in this country.

The proposal of seven laymen to control the profession of nursing was characterised by Sir James Crichton Browne as "preposterous." With equal knowledge, and with equal modesty, they might, he said, attempt to examine electrical engineers!

Another point could not fail to be borne in upon those who have been working for nursing organisation for the last twenty years—viz., the extraordinary advance made all along the line.

Some of those who formerly opposed the nurses in their efforts to obtain a Royal Charter now cordially support them in their demand for Registration by the State, and it would appear that all those things for which we have contended long, and which were in the first instance so bitterly opposed, are now generally conceded to be reasonable demands, and in accordance with sound policy.

The lesson is plain. If we are actuated by principle, and if our principles are founded on what is right and just, if we are not influenced by every wind that blows, but firmly maintain what we believe to be right, sooner or later we shall convince others of the justice of our claim. We have only to stand firm. Those of us who are convinced of the great benefit which will result not only to trained nurses, but to the community at large, from their registration by the State, who hope and believe that it will not be a great while before Parliament accords to them this privilege, must realise that upon ourselves depends mainly the success of our cause. It was Charles Kingsley who said: "I don't want to possess a faith, I want a faith which will possess me." If we are possessed by the urgency and the justice of the Registration cause, then we shall be able to impress others with the importance of our claim. We must, therefore, take our courage in both hands.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)