

Bournemouth were in favour of it. In reply to questions, the witness said that the meeting was convened by Matrons of nursing institutions in Bournemouth. In regard to the fee to be paid by registered nurses, he considered that £2 2s. to £3 3s. should suffice to cover the expense of Registration. He was not sure if it would cover that of examination. He thought that in a matter of such public importance the State might fairly be asked for a draft.

Asked if he would exclude the unregistered from nursing, the witness said he did not consider it would be justifiable to take legal proceedings against them unless they called themselves registered nurses. In regard to effect of registration upon the salaries of nurses, he did not consider these would necessarily be increased.

In regard to the registration of nursing institutions instead of the registration of nurses, the witness did not consider this would meet the case; what was needed was the registration of the individual. He would not accept the registration of institutions as a substitute, as he did not think it would be of use. There was no security of the value of registration unless the individual were registered.

Asked if in regard to a nurse's training it would be practicable to recognise the work done on a district as a substitute for the first year's training in hospital, the witness said he would be against that. He was of opinion that the probationary period should be passed entirely in hospital.

Questioned as to how he would engage a nurse working on her own account, the witness said he would ask to see her testimonials. He pointed out that there was very considerable doubt as to whether these were always genuine. He had found a nurse absolutely incompetent who asserted that she held, and apparently did hold, the certificate of a good training-school. He always endeavoured to obtain his nurses from institutions. Under pressure of circumstances he had sometimes been driven in the past to employ unattached nurses, but he had had such lamentable examples that he never did so now.

Asked if inefficient nurses would not lose their business, the witness replied that in process of time they might do so, but they would do considerable harm first.

He was in favour of the one portal system. He considered inefficient nursing was a great danger to the poor. He did not gainsay the fact that women with a little knowledge might be useful in some instances, but it would be better for them to be thoroughly trained and supervised by the State.

Asked if this would be his view if he were in practice in hamlets instead of in a town, the witness said he would most emphatically welcome the highly-trained nurse. He was of opinion that she would not interfere with his practice. He considered that if a partially-trained woman were employed, the public should know that she did not come up to the standard considered necessary for a trained nurse.

Asked if he would make it penal for any woman to practise as a nurse for gain, the witness was doubtful; told that this was what was involved in the demand for compulsory Registration of Nurses, he said that if this were the case, sooner than let the present system continue he would vote for such Registration. At present the danger to life from inefficient nursing was so great he would support it.

Asked if he would prefer to see the poor of a district

go absolutely without nursing if a registered nurse could not be obtained, the witness believed the supply of trained nurses would be found. The questioner asked if the nurses would be found by Providence.

Asked if a system by which two classes of nurses were recognised would be feasible, the witness replied it would introduce an element of uncertainty which would be most undesirable.

Asked if a high-class nurse would settle down in a village and clean up cottages, the witness saw no reason why she should not do everything which affected the care of the patient.

In relation to the constitution of the governing body, the witness considered that the professional (medical and nursing) element should be in excess of the lay element.

Asked if he maintained this opinion in view of the fact that the whole movement was started for the protection of the public, the witness said that an object of Registration was certainly to improve the education of nurses; it was also a movement for the protection of the public.

Asked to develop this a little more, the witness said the Registration question could be approached from three standpoints, that of the public, the trained nurse, and the medical practitioner. In regard to their relative importance, as a professional man he regarded it of the first importance that when he sent for a properly-trained nurse he could be sure of obtaining one.

SIR HENRY BURDETT'S EVIDENCE.

Sir Henry Burdett, who was the next witness called, offered evidence from statistics which he had prepared as to the probable number of nurses to be registered, which he put at not more than 30,000.

He said that the pseudo-trained nurse sprang from the initiative of individuals, from those who failed to complete their term of hospital training, or to pass the requisite examination. These constituted the "born nurses."

Nurses were supplied to the public by various agencies—the hospital, the nursing home, the co-operation, the private adventure home, and the private adventure co-operation. Large profits were made by these homes, and it was they who made the pseudo-nurse possible. Such institutions should be registered and inspected. They were so profitable that there was a great temptation to the proprietors of these homes to put a woman into uniform and send her out to nurse private cases paying her probably at the rate of £30 per annum, and retaining the balance of her earnings, which averaged £96 in London and £70 in the country. The will of the owner of one of these private adventure homes had been proved at under £27,000.

The witness described the organisation of the Nurses' Co-operation where the expenses of management amount in the case of the earlier members of the staff to 5 per cent., and in that of more recently joined members to 7½ per cent. on their earnings, the nurses receiving the whole of their fees less this amount. In regard to the present position of the training-schools, in the larger hospitals the training was satisfactory and the three years' standard almost universally adopted. In his opinion no hospital should be allowed to use probationers for their own convenience without regard to the efficient training of the nurse. Thus a probationer in training should not spend six or twelve months in the linen room; moreover, if a probationer

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)