

The Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses.

The Annual Meeting of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses was held at 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W., on Friday, May 26th, at 3 p.m. In the absence of the President, Miss Louisa Stevenson, the chair was taken by the senior Vice-President, Miss Isla Stewart.

The Minutes of the previous meeting having been read and confirmed, the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, read the following letter from the President:—

13, Randolph Crescent, Edinburgh.

May 21st, 1905.

DEAR MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK,—I deeply regret that it is quite out of my power to be present at the Annual Meeting of our Society to be held in London on the 26th inst., and I must ask you to make my apologies. I feel sure that, in spite of all the opposition, we have made much progress during the past year. I have read the evidence given to the Select Committee of the House of Commons with great interest, and much of it should tell in our favour, even when given by the opponents of Registration. It is a disappointment to me that I shall not have the pleasure of hearing Mr. Munro Ferguson's address. We owe him much for his kindness in introducing the Bill.—Believe me, yours very sincerely,

LOUISA STEVENSON.

Mrs. Fenwick also reported other letters of regret, and the following telegram just received from Lady Victoria Campbell, a Vice-President:—

"Regret my enforced absence—deep interest—sympathy in Scotland.—VICTORIA CAMPBELL."

OPENING REMARKS OF CHAIRMAN.

The Chairman then said that since the formation of the Society three years ago over 1,500 members had joined it, in addition to the Vice-Presidents. The history of the Society was one of extraordinary encouragement and progress. The subscription list was, however, not so encouraging. The donations outbalanced the subscriptions, for a certain proportion of the members had given generously to meet special needs. A shilling subscription was a small sum and easily forgotten, but she would like to impress on the members that the business of the Society could not be carried on without funds, and therefore if there were any present who had not paid their subscriptions, she hoped they would do so now.

She would not detain the meeting with a long speech, but she would like to mention the formation of a new Association of lay persons, with Lady Londonderry as President, which had for its object the promotion of the State Registration of Nurses. It was not connected with their own Society, but was practically the outcome of its work.

The Hon. Secretary then read the Annual Report,* which was adopted on the proposition of Miss Kingsford, seconded by Miss Jenkins.

The Executive Committee for the ensuing year

[* We propose to publish this in a future issue.—ED.]

was then appointed, the present members all being re-elected, the new members being Miss J. A. Smith, President of the Kingston Infirmary Nurses' League, and Miss H. L. Pearse, Matron of the Great Northern Central Hospital.

ADDRESS BY MR. MUNRO FERGUSON, M.P.

Mr. Munro Ferguson, M.P., then addressed the meeting on Parliamentary Procedure in relation to the passage of Bills into Law. He said not long since he had not known much of the subject of State Registration of Trained Nurses. He had, however, for a short time been in the hands of Dr. Cantlie, who was an ardent registrationist, and he had had a trained nurse from whom he had learnt much on the subject, so when he was invited to introduce the Bill he was quite ready to do so.

The chances of a Bill, which he had been asked to describe, were as follows:—

Parliamentary Procedure in the House of Commons seemed to be directed towards preventing rather than accelerating the passage of a Bill.

A Bill might be introduced in three ways:—(1) By a private member in the House of Commons; (2) in the House of Lords; (3) as a Government measure.

He could only hope that after the evidence submitted to the Select Committee on Nursing of the House of Commons that the time might not be far distant when the Government might see its way to take up the measure. The evidence given was of a character which ought to give every ground for hope to those interested in the Registration question.

If the Government deals with a Bill and means to pass it, there is usually no difficulty. Otherwise in the Commons, unless a Bill obtains one of the first three or four places in the ballot, it has a small chance of a second reading, and that place the Bill in which the meeting was interested had not got. This was not to be regretted, however, for it would have been difficult to take the second reading while the inquiry was proceeding.

There was very little chance of a private member's Bill being taken after Whitsuntide, as there were only two Friday afternoons after Whitsuntide allotted to such Bills.

If a member were successful in the ballot, and the Bill in which he was interested survived all the other troubles, it was sent to a Committee of the House or to a Standing Committee, the next stage being the Report stage.

The difficulties of private Bills were, however, almost insuperable, and until the business of the House of Commons was reorganised and divided amongst committees they would remain.

The opposition to the Bill was, the speaker said, centred in London, and came chiefly from the London Hospitals. There was very little out of London, and none in Scotland, the support of the country might therefore be counted upon.

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