

hospitals, poor-law infirmaries, asylums, district and private work throughout Ireland, she was deputed to state that they were unanimous in desiring to have an Act of Parliament for the State Registration of Trained Nurses.

On any Governing Body that may be appointed they desired to have direct and adequate representation because they believed that representative government was the only way of securing justice for the people who are governed.

They desired the formation of a Central Examining Board to fix a minimum standard of training, and to examine the candidates who apply to be registered; this Board should be largely composed of Matrons and Trained Nurses who have a thorough knowledge of nursing.

They desired also that the nursing profession should be self-supporting, and that the fee for examination and Registration should be sufficient to cover the expenses thereof.

MR. H. J. TENNANT, M.P.

Mr. H. J. Tennant said that what the Deputation wished to ask the Lord President was whether the Government would undertake legislation in regard to the State Registration of Trained Nurses.

LORD CREWE'S REPLY.

The Lord President of the Privy Council said that he had listened with close attention and keen interest to the views expressed by this most representative Deputation.

*A Subject of National Importance.*

The subject was one of national importance. A very great advance had been made in the efficiency of the nursing profession during the last twenty or thirty years, and in an increasing degree of recent years. The question was one of special interest to him, as, with Lord Pembroke, he had been honoured by the request of Miss Florence Nightingale to act as a trustee of the Nightingale Fund. It was, as he had stated, of national importance that the efficiency of the nursing profession should be increased, and that its members should be of high character. A nurse's uniform carried with it a prestige only enjoyed in the case of the inferior sex by His Majesty's Navy, and it was important that its honour should be upheld.

*Compulsory Registration.*

The history of the demand for Registration showed that it was not seriously suggested that Registration of Nurses should be compulsory. It would be impossible, for instance, to make the giving of a glass of barley water a criminal offence.

It was important, if any legislation was to be effected, that there should be general concu-

rence between nurses, the medical profession, and the public.

From a study of the evidence given before the Select Committee it was apparent that while absolute agreement was not reached there was a strong preponderance of opinion in favour of the scheme.

The principle objection suggested by some general practitioners was that Registration by the State might add to the self-importance of nurses, leading them to interfere with the domain of the doctor—in other words, they might become "too big for their boots." There seemed to be no substance in this objection. Why, because nurses were registered as members of one profession, should this immediately make them want to pose as members of another?

The second objection was that though nurses were well trained when they obtained admission to the Register they might subsequently deteriorate, but would still be known as Registered Nurses. There might be something in that, but it should not be beyond the power of a Central Nursing Board to overcome this difficulty.

*INSPECTION OF NURSING HOMES.*

Another thing which was desirable was the certification and inspection of nursing homes. Some reached a standard as high as that of the very best hospitals; others were very queerly managed indeed.

*The Constitution of the Governing Body.*

There was general agreement that on the Central Body set up under a Registration Act, nursing should be represented to a very considerable extent.

It was important that the body should not be too large. If it was to get good work done it should be limited in extent.

It was presumable that such a body would exercise control over the training of nurses. The Lord President said he was not sure that the hospitals would be altogether pleased with this supervision.

He gathered that there was general agreement amongst those present as to the objects to be promoted.

*The Parliamentary Question.*

As to the Parliamentary Question, Lord Crewe said he was afraid he was not in a position to promise anything very handsome. The Government had a full programme of legislation, and he could not hold out a hope that they would take the matter up during the present Session. It might, however, be possible to secure discussion of the subject in the House of Commons.

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