

question. Other speakers were Sir James Crichton Browne, Dr. Bedford Fenwick, Dr. Langley Browne, Miss M. Mollett (Vice-President of the Matrons' Council), Miss S. E. Hampson (then President of the Irish Nurses' Association), Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, and Mr. Charles Hobhouse, M.P.

The Lord President of the Council made a most satisfactory and encouraging reply, in which he stated (1) That the question of the Registration of Trained Nurses by the State was a matter of national importance; (2) That on the Central Body set up under a Registration Act nursing should be represented to a very considerable extent; (3) That it could not be long before the subject occupied the serious attention of Parliament; and (4) That as the Government already had a very full programme he could not hold out a hope that they would initiate legislation on this subject during the present Session, but that if the Bill were introduced into the House of Lords it would receive the benevolent attention of the Government.

ANTI-REGISTRATIONISTS.

On June 14th, a deputation representing the views of employers of nurses were received by the Lord President. The deputation was introduced by Mr. H. A. Harben, Chairman of the Central Hospital Council for London, which has been active in opposing the efforts of nurses for organisation. Other speakers were the Hon. Sydney Holland, Chairman of the London Hospital, an institution which has been the *fons et origo* of the anti-registration campaign, and Sir Thomas Barlow.

Mr. Harben, speaking on behalf of the Central Hospital Council, admitted that as the Select Committee of the House of Commons had reported in favour of State Registration of Nurses it was not sufficient to state the objections of the Council to Registration, and they had come prepared with an alternative policy for the publication of an Official Directory as apart from a State Register.

In his reply, referring to the difference of opinion which existed on the subject of Registration of Nurses, the Lord President said he was sure those present would not dispute that on the opposite side there were those whose opinions could not be ignored, that the Report of the Select Committee must have due weight, and that he supposed everyone would admit, as a purely abstract proposition, that if a system of Registration could be devised which would afford a guarantee to the public, and not inflict injury upon nurses, it would be very desirable.

He was bound to say Mr. Harben was scarcely fair to the advocates of Registration

when he declared that such a system would mean an absolute guarantee to everyone who employed a nurse, that that nurse was efficient. In his recollection of the evidence offered to the Select Committee, so broad a proposition as that was hardly laid down. What was hoped was that Registration would lead institutions to adopt improved methods of nursing education, but its advocates did not claim that it would dispense with inquiry in the case of individual nurses.

It is worthy of note that although experienced Matrons came forward to express to the Lord President the views of nurses who are asking for registration, not one spoke in support of the views of the Central Hospital Council for London.

Another point must be mentioned in this connection. It is now over ten years ago since the representatives of the large London Training schools met at St. Thomas' Hospital (on January 10th, 1896) and passed a resolution stating that they "re-affirm the position they have hitherto taken that the Registration of Nurses would be injurious and mischievous to the nurses and of doubtful public benefit. They decline to enter into any further consideration of the subject."

That they have been compelled to consider the subject the appearance of the deputation of the Central Hospital Council before the Lord President of the Council afforded striking proof. Moreover, Mr. Harben's statement that the opposing hospitals had considered it necessary to be prepared with an alternative policy, involved an admission of complete retreat from the position they have hitherto taken up, and was a practical acknowledgment of their failure to carry out their anti-registration programme.

Their "alternative scheme" for an "Official Directory of Nurses, kept by an Official Registrar," as embodied in the Memorandum presented to the Lord President, was evidently hastily prepared and ill-considered.

In the words of its promoters, "*it does not guarantee anything* more than that the entries of the nurse's training and subsequent appointments have been verified," and would thus be a public danger, both because it would give official status to qualifications which might be quite inadequate, and because it would deprive the nurses of any degree of self-government, and would place them under the domination of an autocrat who might at his discretion remove their names from this "Official Directory," a proceeding which would, of course, ruin them professionally. Those who remember the threat of the officials of the Royal

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