

## Progress of State Registration.

SUPPORTED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF  
WOMEN WORKERS OF GREAT BRITAIN  
AND IRELAND.

All the self-governing Nurses' Associations throughout the world have voted in favour of State Registration of Nurses, and in Great Britain and Ireland the most representative medical associations have done likewise.

It remained, however, for our National Council of Women, composed of several hundred delegates, representing societies of women workers in every sphere of activity, professional, industrial, social, and political, to consider this important question, and on Wednesday, the 14th October, in session at its annual meeting, at Aberdeen, the National Council of Women voted without dissent for a resolution in support of registration of trained nurses, moved for the Society for the State Registration of Nurses, of which she is a Vice-President, by Lady Helen Munro-Ferguson, and seconded by Miss A. W. Gill, R.R.C., Superintendent of Nurses, Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh. This vote has been recorded with no undue haste, but comes in time to assure the supporters of our Bill in Parliament that the nurses have the sympathy and support of a great majority of the most thoughtful and useful women workers in the Kingdom. We heartily congratulate both the National Council of Women and the Nursing Profession.

Lady Helen Munro-Ferguson moved:—

"That it is desirable, both in the interests of the professional status of trained nurses and of the public who use their services, that provision should be made for their registration by the State, such registration to be under the supervision of a central board upon which nurses should have direct and adequate representation."

She said she spoke with authority on behalf of the nurses of the country. At present anyone might claim to be a nurse. The object of the resolution was to enable fully-trained nurses to receive such recognition as would distinguish them from those nurses who had received only a partial or incomplete training or no training at all. It was easy for any hospital failure to get a nice bonnet and apron and a nurse's cloak and attach herself to one of those nursing associations which were run as commercial undertakings, and scrutinised the ledger account rather than the nurses' qualifications. (Hear, hear.) At the same time it was not suggested that unregistered nurses should be prohibited from nursing; but

that they should not be allowed to use the title of "registered nurses." (Hear, hear.) It was frequently argued that, in nursing, technical skill is not so important as character. They all admitted that. The same thing might be said of teachers, but for all that they insisted on their teachers receiving a thorough professional training. And it might also be said that the success of the argument depended very much on the character of the patient. What they did want in their hour of trial were skill and capacity. (Applause.)

Miss A. W. Gill, R.R.C., in seconding the motion, said she spoke as one from within the ranks of the profession, and in her opinion State registration would give nurses a professional status which they had not at present, and would distinguish between those who had training and those who had not. It was only fair to nurses as a class of workers that there should be State registration. It would tend to raise the education and efficiency of the nursing profession as a whole, and there would be a definite standard to which nurses should attain. It was chiefly in this way that the public would benefit. Of course there would need to be some central authority, and nurses would have to be adequately represented on the central board. The authorities must be in close touch with the nursing conditions of the day. (Applause.) Registration would not turn nursing into a trade, which many people were afraid of. They had the traditions of the founders of modern nursing to act as an inspiration. They wanted to preserve nursing as a ministry, but there was no reason why they should not make it an efficient ministry.

Miss Henry, of the Women's Local Government Society, asked if they were to understand as trained nurses those nurses who at present worked under the Poor Law. They discussed this matter at the Poor Law Conference in London, and it was not accepted because it was understood that the nurses must be trained in outside hospitals, whereas those of them who were Guardians thought their trained nurses in the infirmaries were as thoroughly and often more thoroughly trained than in another institution.\*

Lady Helen Munro-Ferguson replied that the only nurses registered at all in Scotland were poor law nurses. (Applause.) They were certainly intended to be included in the Bill that would affect England.

\*Why, before voting on this question, did not the members of the Poor Law Conference acquaint themselves with the provisions of the Bill?—Ed.]

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)