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Editorial.

THE GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL AND THE NURSES' REGISTRATION BILL.

The discussion by the General Medical Council of the Nurses' Registration Bill during its recent Session brought out, very clearly, that there are members of the Council who have not read the Bill, and who do not understand its aim. The discussion arose first on an announcement by the President, Sir Donald MacAlister, that he had received a letter from the Privy Council, calling attention to Clause 4 (1) (c) of the Nurses' Registration Bill, which provides for the appointment, by the General Medical Council, of a representative on the General Council for the Registration of Nurses in the United Kingdom, proposed to be established by the Bill. The President explained that the Nurses' Bill differed from the Midwives' Act inasmuch as direct representation on the Governing Body was given to the General Medical Council in the Nurses' Registration Bill, which also did not provide, as in the Midwives' Act, that the rules framed by the Privy Council should be submitted to the General Medical Council before their approval by the Privy Council; it had been thought by the promoters of the Bill that direct representation would be a more efficient way of proceeding.

Sir John Moore, representative of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, then moved a motion standing in his name, as follows:—

"That it is expedient that the General Medical Council should stand in the same relation to the proposed General Council for the Registration of Nurses in the United Kingdom as the said General Medical Council does to the Central Midwives' Board under Sections 3 and 16 of the Midwives' Act, 1902."

In proposing the resolution, Sir John Moore said that one of the duties of the Nursing Council was to frame rules, regulating its own procedure, defining the course of training, etc. It was most essential that the medical profession should see that those rules did not countenance the practice of medicine and surgery in the least degree, by registered nurses, and the only way to prevent that was to have the

rules submitted to a medical body such as the General Medical Council.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Henry Morris, representative, and President, of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

Dr. Norman Moore, representative of the Royal College of Physicians of London, feared the establishment of an inferior, but very powerful, order of practitioners throughout the country. He asserted that nurses were already consulted by families instead of medical practitioners, and the Bill would tend in that direction.

Sir Christopher Nixon, representative of the Royal University of Ireland, feared the establishment of a new order of practitioners.

Dr. McVail, a nominee of the Privy Council, asserted that the Bill practically proposed to create an inferior department of the medical profession, and that nurses would soon begin to do medical work and surgery; and Dr. Mackay, representative of the University of St. Andrew's, said that the proposal was one of the most important, so far as the profession was concerned, which had been before Parliament since the Medical Act of 1858. He considered that it meant practically the creation of an inferior department of the medical profession.

NURSES NOT INFERIOR MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS.

There is nothing in the Bill to support the suggestion that it will create an inferior order of medical practitioners. On the contrary, the promoters, with a view to preventing any misapprehension on this point, have inserted in each Bill introduced into the House of Commons (in 1904 and since) a provision that

"Nothing contained in this Act shall be considered as conferring any authority to practise medicine or to undertake the treatment or cure of disease."

The Bill as introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Ampthill contained this provision, but it was deleted by the Privy Council, in amending the Bill, we understand for the reason that it was superfluous, because nothing in the Bill confers any authority to practise medicine.

No one who realises the place of nursing in relation to the healing of the sick can confuse it with that occupied by the profession of medi-

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