

Registration of Nurses Discussed by the General Medical Council.

In our editorial remarks this week we refer at length to the important discussion on the question of State Registration of Trained Nurses, which took place during the recent Session of the General Medical Council. We give below the full report from the *British Medical Journal*, with the addition in each instance of the constituency which the members who took part in the discussion represent.

REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

The President (Sir Donald MacAlister, University of Cambridge) stated 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 one representative on the General Medical Council for Registration of Nurses in the United Kingdom proposed to be established by the Bill. The letter from the Privy Council concluded by stating that the Bill was not one for which his Majesty's Government was responsible.

The President said that the Bill differed from the Midwives Bill in that, first, the General Medical Council was given direct representation on the Governing Body, and, secondly, that the rules were not to be submitted to the General Medical Council before their approval by the Privy Council.

Sir John Moore (Royal College of Physicians, of Ireland) moved:

"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."

He accepted the statement that this was not a Government Bill, but the fact that it was introduced into the House of Lords, backed by Lord Amptill, and finally accepted by the Earl of Crewe, showed that the Government approved it even if it was not its own. Considering the very close relationship between the nurse's calling and the medical profession, it was most desirable that so influential a body as the General Medical Council should have a say in the rules which were to be adopted by the proposed Nurses' Council. It was most important that the medical profession should see that those rules should not in any way countenance the practice of medicine or surgery, even in the smallest phase, by the nurses who were to be admitted to the *Nurses' Register*; and the only way of doing that was to have the rules submitted to the approval of such a body as the Council. He was quite aware that representation was given to the General Medical Council on the proposed Nurses' Council, but he very much preferred that the Council should be placed in the same relation to nurses' registration that it had been placed in with regard to midwives' registration.

Dr. Norman Moore (Royal College of Physicians of London) thought the Bill raised very serious consideration. It was highly desirable that its working should be brought to some extent into relation with the Council, as the motion proposed. One effect of the Bill might be to establish an inferior but very powerful order of practitioners throughout the country. He had had very large opportunities of seeing something of nurses, and he believed that would be the main effect of the Bill. There were at the present time, as most of those in general practice were aware, nurses who were consulted by families instead of the medical practitioner, and the Bill would tend in that direction. Therefore it ought to be very carefully watched by such a body as the General Medical Council, which was in charge of the *Medical Register*.

Mr. Henry Morris (Royal College of Surgeons of England) thought it most desirable that the Council should have the opportunity of making direct representation to the Privy Council before the regulations were adopted. This was found to be a distinct advantage in respect of the Midwives' Bill, and it was most desirable in connection with nurses' registration.

Dr. Langley Browne (Direct Representative) considered that some answer must be sent to the Privy Council with regard to this matter. He never knew a subject on which the medical profession were so unanimous as with regard to the registration of nurses. It had not only been approved by the members of the British Medical Association at its Annual Meeting, but it had been sent to every Branch, and he believed in only one case had anything like objection been shown towards it. It was a measure desired by the general body of the profession, and was considered to be an enormous advance in the right direction.

Sir Christopher Nixon (Royal University of Ireland) had no doubt it would be a great advance to the nurses, but would it be an advance to the general practitioner? The Council was asked to take action on a Bill as to which it did not have an opportunity of considering how it would affect the profession generally. It would establish a new order of practitioners, who would seriously interfere with general practitioners, and why they supported it he could not understand. He submitted that an important measure such as this should have been discussed fully.

Dr. Lindsay Steven (Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow) was, on the whole, opposed to the registration of nurses, which would take place upon the lines of the registration of medical men. He cordially supported the motion of Sir John Moore that a clause should be inserted in the Bill giving the Council direct control. He would like to oppose the Bill altogether; but, if that was not possible, he feared the Council was not in a position at so late a period of the session to consider it.

The President took a show of hands as to whether the Council generally objected to have the nomination of a representative on the Central Board for Nurses' Registration, and said it was clear that the majority of the Council would rather have it. If

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