

We trained nurses, however, are determined to try what we can do for ourselves, until the public is aroused, and sees eye to eye with us.

We must not let the words "Class Legislation" deter us in trying to get a legal status for ourselves.

That cannot fairly be described as "Class Legislation" which aims at benefitting:—

(1) That huge number of sick persons, whether those who employ private nurses, or who are nursed in institutions or hospitals.

(2) That large number of medical men who are thoroughly dissatisfied with the state of affairs at present.

(3) And that number of devoted women, which, we hope, may soon be fairly described as "large" who are working (perhaps I might almost say fighting) against every obstacle and difficulty to obtain for themselves and others as trained nurses, that undoubted right to have their names enrolled on, and their profession recognised by a State Register—that right which has been gained by the exercise of their intellect, the spending of their bodily strength, and often at the expense of their health.

Before closing my remarks, I must express my firm conviction that we shall live to see a midwifery training, and a system of central examination made compulsory on those wishing to practise the profession of nursing for gain, together with the establishment of a Central Board, endowed with the powers necessary to remove mischievous persons from our noble profession.

Miss MARY BURR, Hon. Secretary of the League of St. John's House Nurses, said that this League was the only one which had, so far, definitely adopted State Registration as one of its objects. Unity was necessary if we were to obtain what we wanted.

As a body of women, voteless, and therefore without Parliamentary power, we were setting ourselves to obtain an Act of Parliament providing for our registration, it was only by unity that we should accomplish this. We must further look at the question, not from the personal, but from the professional standpoint, the question was not, what will registration do for me, personally, but what will it do for the profession. Therefore, setting aside all personal questions, we must go on striving to obtain our object until we were heard by those outside our own profession. We were working not for ourselves alone, but for the protection of the public. Our motto must be "United we stand, united we are going to win."

Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK, President of the International Council of Nurses, said that although they had the very best substitute, she was deeply disappointed that Miss Stevenson was unable to be present and take the chair, because Miss Stevenson had proved that an intelligent laywoman could grasp the significance of the educational as apart from the philanthropic side of nurses' work, and sympathise with the professional aspirations of trained nurses. They wanted more of the public, especially those interested in hospital management and nurse training schools, to grasp the importance of encouraging self-respect and personal responsibility in nurses, rather than encouraging a sentimental environment. At present, both in and out of hospital, nurses found themselves "done for," the greatest kindness which could be done them as a class, was to teach them "to do" for themselves.

All great reforms had been made by the few, not

the many. How many nurses wanted legislative reform? Had the majority of the trained nurses of the country ever even been permitted to consider the question? In the course of the last 35 years we had lived through several phases. Many years ago the late Sir Henry Acland advocated Registration of Trained Nurses. Then came a meeting in London in 1887, the outcome of which was the organisation which resulted in the granting of a Royal Charter.

At this stage the majority of the Committees of the large hospitals, together with the members of the Medical Staffs, and Matrons, combined to oppose the granting of this charter, and the nurses themselves were not consulted. These persons probably thought they were protecting the nurses' interests, in reality they were affirming their belief that nurses were not capable of managing their own affairs. These persons voted *en bloc* against registration, but it must be realized that the whole opposition emanated from the employers of labour, not from the nurses themselves, and was therefore not grounded on a disinterested basis.

The opposition was so strong that, had trained nurses not been animated by conscientious conviction in their demand for registration, they would have given in before now; but they realized that the question was a national one, and that it involved the protection of all classes of the sick, both rich and poor.

In such a campaign it was not numbers which counted so much as individual conviction, individual brain power. If the 461 nurses who had that morning associated themselves together were morally convinced of the rectitude of their cause, then they would go out and inspire their near environment, convincing both their friends and fellow nurses of its justice.

It was important that the conscience of the public should be aroused, because the question involved was not a sentimental or philanthropic, but an industrial one. Nurses were often not free agents. Committees of hospitals, and of private nursing institutions were often in full industrial control of them. Independence needed a banking account at its back, and most trained nurses had to earn their own living.

It was necessary to impress upon the training schools and committees of hospitals that nurses did not exist only for their benefit; but that they were entitled to human rights, and to have the power of self-government. It was time that hospital committees realised that they not only had duties to the nurses during their term of training, but also to the public after these nurses were beyond the control of the training schools. She longed to see hospital committees widening out their sphere of influence and taking into their consideration the care of the sick outside the hospitals.

The duty of the nurses who had that day formed themselves into an association was by individual effort, and quiet determination to overcome opposition. The opposition was great, the ignorance on the question dense. It was difficult for women to impress the public. They needed to cultivate more strength, more spirit, more determination, and with a righteous cause they would win in the end.

To come down to a practical solution of the question, Mrs. Fenwick continued:—

I would suggest a measure in broad outline, which would, I imagine, be easily adaptable, and with variation of details equally applicable, to every country.

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