

Miss Margaret Breay, Hon. Secretary of the Matrons' Council, said that she rose with great pleasure to second the resolution—firstly, because it was a definite step towards attaining the object of the Society in which they were associated, and, secondly, because she believed heart and soul, with those present, that it was a right step. When nurses set down in black and white what they wanted, they would show the public that what they asked for was perfectly reasonable, and for the public benefit as well as their own. They would also give those who opposed the principle of Registration—and a great deal of the opposition was based on misconception—an opportunity of coming out into the open and saying what they objected to. Therefore let the Bill be thrown into the arena for everyone to worry at. It seemed such a simple and obvious thing to do that she only wondered it had not been done long ago. When the Bill had been read for the first time they would feel they had made real progress.

Dr. Bedford Fenwick, who was cordially received, said: Madam,—Before this resolution is put to the meeting I should be glad to say a few words in its support. It has afforded me much pleasure and interest to be present at this meeting, to hear the various speeches made, and to see that the question of Registration has now approached a definite point in its progress; because I think I may claim that I have taken some interest in this matter for a good many years, and that, indeed, I was one of the first to assist in bringing the question into the field of practical politics. It seems to me that the right note has been struck this afternoon in pointing out to you that if you desire to obtain Registration by Act of Parliament, if you desire to obtain recognition for yourselves by the State, as well as protection for the public against untrained and untrustworthy women who term themselves nurses, it depends entirely upon yourselves whether, and when, you will get those benefits. I would remind you that the medical profession has expressed its opinion on this question in a very definite manner. In July, 1895, at the largest meeting of medical practitioners ever held in this country, namely, the annual meeting of the British Medical Association, which was held in London, I proposed a resolution\* in favour of State Registration.

That resolution was carried unanimously, and it stands on the records of the British Medical Association to this day. No more definite pronouncement could have been made as to the opinion of medical practitioners upon this question. The Council of the Association referred this matter to all the chief nursing bodies in the country, and invited them to a conference on the subject. At this meeting only eleven representatives attended, six of whom voted for a resolution against Registra-

\* This resolution appears on page 388.

tion and five of them in favour of Registration. Naturally enough, with such a division of opinion amongst nurses themselves, the British Medical Association dropped the question; and, therefore, as I said before, it is a matter for nurses to take up and carry through. If you will do so—and your leaders are strenuously pointing out to the public the grave dangers to which they are exposed in consequence of the present most unsatisfactory condition of affairs—you will, I am confident, have the public with you—that is to say, Parliament will pass your Bill. I was sorry to hear one of the speakers this afternoon express the somewhat timorous view that opposition to the reform must cease before you could hope to succeed. I cannot but think that is a great mistake. Everything that is good in the way of reform is sure to be opposed; and in the whole history of the world every reform has always been opposed; and if reformers had waited until all opposition ceased they would never have done anything in the past; and if you wait until everyone is convinced of the necessity for Registration the millennium will come before you get your Bill. I remember very well when we applied for our Royal Charter for the Royal British Nurses' Association that we were told that this great person and that great hospital would fight to the very end to prevent us getting it; and that it was hopeless to attempt to do anything in the face of such opposition. However, a few of us were not frightened and we went on, and when it came to the fight the other side had really nothing to say, and we got our Royal Charter comparatively easily. So there is a great advantage in your decision to draft a Bill. Show exactly what you want, and be prepared to prove why you want it, and then you can challenge your opponents to advance their reasons for opposition, and the public will be the judges of the cause. I am confident that those who oppose Registration cannot prove any valid objections to the measure, excepting only that it will touch the pockets of those who now can deceive the sick, and so do not desire the public to be protected against ignorant and untrained nurses. It may fairly be said to nurses—"Your cause is a right and a just one; you are not only seeking to protect the public, but you are seeking to do what every other profession is required to do—to provide for the proper education of its members and for the due control and government of the calling." Then take your courage in both hands, show definitely what you desire your Nursing Act to be, and go forward to the success which I firmly believe you not only deserve to obtain, but which you will obtain. There is only one point more that I would urge. The one important matter in the Nursing Act will be the constitution of the General Nursing Council, the body which is to be entrusted with the education and government of the nursing profession of the future. On that body you must by law have

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