

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 921.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1905.

Vol. XXXV.

Editorial.

THE MEDICAL ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

The Bill for the Amendment of the Medical Acts is especially instructive to nurses at the present time, for their profession is so closely allied to that of medicine that in framing machinery for their own government they are wise to study the Medical Acts, and to profit by the experience of the great profession of medicine which, in organisation, is centuries in advance of their own.

Acting on the instruction of the Representative Meeting of the British Medical Association, its Medico-Political Committee has drafted a list of questions for the assistance and guidance of officers of Divisions, which it is suggested should be brought before the notice of Parliamentary candidates in every constituency. The first three are as follows:—

Would you support in Parliament a Bill for the amendment of the Medical Acts based upon the following general principles?

1. That at least half the members of the General Medical Council should be directly elected by the general body of medical and dental practitioners in the country, instead of the large majority, as at present, being appointed by the universities or corporations, bodies financially interested in the examining and licensing of students and practitioners.

2. That the General Medical Council should have complete control over the registration and education of medical and dental students, including fixing the standard of preliminary general education requisite for admission to medical study.

3. That there be a "one-portal" system for admission to medical and dental practice—namely, through a State Examination

conducted by the General Medical Council under the supervision of the Privy Council.

It will thus be seen that after fifty years' trial of the system of governing the Medical Profession by the nominees of universities and corporations, the great representative medical society in the United Kingdom reports against it, and desires that the balance of power should be placed in the hands of the general body of practitioners through their directly-elected representatives.

The direct representation of registered nurses has, from the first, been incorporated in the Nurses' Registration Bill, and is regarded by its supporters as a most essential feature. They fully realise that trained nurses are alone able to give expert advice to the definition of the educational curriculum for nurses which is one of the first questions with which a General Nursing Council will be called upon to deal. It should be clearly understood that the Council to be created under a Nursing Act will be first and foremost an educational body dealing with a very special and intricate branch of education.

The fact that the medical profession, after years of experience of some twenty portals to their profession, are now strenuously working for the establishment of the "one-portal" system, is a lesson of which the importance must not be minimised. It should be further noted that if there is not one portal for nurses there must be at least 500.

It will be observed that nurses, in drafting their Bill, have recognised all the principles which the medical profession have, by experience, learnt to desire in regard to their own government. In the light of the present action of the British Medical Association, we should be extremely unwise to retract from the position

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)