

MR. CHARLES HOBHOUSE, M.P.

Mr. Charles Hobhouse, M.P., said that he hoped that in any Nursing Act which might be framed the restrictions under the Midwives Act would not be applied to Cottage Nurses who were working in rural districts. They were not fully trained, no one pretended they were, but they were doing useful work. He hoped they would be considered in any Registration scheme.

Mr. Tennant here referred to paragraphs 11 and 21 in the Select Committee's Report, which have reference to Cottage Nurses.

LADY HELEN MUNRO FERGUSON.

Lady Helen Munro Ferguson said that as a member of the public she corroborated what had been said by previous speakers as to the desirability of State Registration of Trained Nurses. Nursing had now become so technical that it should not be undertaken by anyone. At present nurses were undoubtedly sent to cases which they were not fitted to nurse. It was requisite for the protection of the public that they should give evidence of professional skill, that the fully trained should be distinguished from the partially trained. There was really no difficulty in regard to Cottage Nurses, because the Register would only deal with the fully trained; there was no intention of prohibiting partially-trained persons from nursing. In regard to skilled nursing of the poor a standard has been established by the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute. It was necessary that standards should be established in the case of other nurses.

DR. BEDFORD FENWICK.

Dr. Fenwick said that so many points had been touched upon that little was left for him to say. But he would like to add to what Dr. Langley Browne had said about the views of the medical profession that in 1889 the General Medical Council, the governing body of the profession, had passed a unanimous Resolution that "it would be much to the advantage of the public and of much convenience to practitioners of medicine and surgery that facilities should be given by Act of Parliament for the authoritative certification of competent trained nurses, who should be subject to common rules of discipline." In fact, the degree of unanimity in the medical profession on the need for nursing legislation was remarkable and most significant. Doctors demanded that the nurses to whom were entrusted most responsible duties should be educated to carry out those duties efficiently, and that they should be of irreproachable character. At the present moment, they had no guarantee that the nurses who were

sent to them, perhaps where life or death was at stake, were efficient and trustworthy. He would only illustrate this fact by one case, which was tried in the criminal courts recently, that of a woman called Prebble. It was proved that she had frequently been imprisoned for serious offences, but that again and again, as soon as she came out of prison, she at once obtained work as a nurse and admission into private houses in that most trusted capacity. That unfortunately was typical of many other well-known cases. It was impossible to exaggerate the danger to the public and the discredit to trained nurses involved in such a fact. But it must be accepted as an incontrovertible proof of the need for legislation to protect both the public and the nursing profession.

Dr. Fenwick desired to endorse as strongly as he could the opinions expressed by Dr. Langley Browne that nurses should largely compose the central body entrusted with the government and discipline of nurses, and, moreover, that the Registered Nurses should directly elect the majority at least of those who governed them. In these days such a principle could scarcely be questioned, except by those who were utterly unaware of the trend of public opinion. He also felt very strongly that the Central Board must be sufficiently large to enable it to perform the immense and most difficult and complicated work which would devolve upon such a Board.

The Matrons and Sisters in hospitals, not the medical staff, now trained the nurses in their practical duties, and they were, therefore, well qualified to deal with the subject of nursing education, and when it came to questions of discipline all experience showed that it was infinitely better to leave the control of women workers in the hands of women.

Dr. Fenwick said he had devoted considerable attention to the financial aspects of nursing legislation, and was quite convinced that nurses must pay a fee of at least two guineas for Registration if the scheme was to be self-supporting. He was sure that they could pay that fee, and would rather do so and be independent of any demand for State or Rate aid to their Governing Body.

Finally, he wished to point out that there was no suggestion of compulsory Registration, but that doctors and the public, for the first time, should be able to distinguish the trained nurse from the untrained.

MISS S. E. HAMPSON.

Miss S. E. Hampson said that as President of the Irish Nurses' Association, consisting of nearly 400 members employed as Matrons, Sisters, Staff Nurses, and Probationers in

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