

of nurses should be instituted, kept by an official registrar who should act either on his own authority or under a Department. The Directory would guarantee no more than that the information which it contained had been verified.

THE HONOURABLE SYDNEY HOLLAND, CHAIRMAN THE LONDON HOSPITAL.

Mr. Sydney Holland said that the Deputation was not sanguine enough to hope for any decided expression of opinion on the part of the Lord President. If he gave one, his life, or at any rate his leisure, would not be worth much.

As one of the Trustees of the Nightingale Fund, they came, he said, to Lord Crewe with great pleasure. They could wish that he would consult Miss Nightingale on the subject of State Registration of Nurses. In 1893 she signed a protest against it, and he had reason to believe that she still held the same views. He noted with satisfaction that in receiving a former Deputation the Lord President had emphasised the need of general concurrence between nurses, the medical profession, and the public. The present Deputation showed that that day was far removed. It would have been easy to increase its size, but it would be difficult to get one more representative.* The Lord President had said that the preponderance of evidence offered to the Select Committee had been in favour of Registration. Numerically that might be so, but if there were any way of weighing the evidence instead of counting the number of witnesses he thought this would not be the case.

To set up a State Register and not to admit to it any but the fully-qualified would be to cast a slur upon those who were doing excellent work amongst the poor. Moreover the heads of the nursing profession, such as the Matrons of the London and of St. Bartholomew's and even Miss Florence Nightingale herself would not be entitled to be put upon such a Register as was suggested.**

Registers were not always a success and he had noticed recently with joy that in connection with the Teachers' Register the Board of Education had returned the fees and the Register had come to an end.

If a State Register of Nurses were set up it followed that the State must guarantee the nurses upon it, and a Central Board would have to be established. Who on earth was there to put on such a Board?*** The Matrons of Hospitals were far too busy, neither could nurses do the work. Further there was no constituency to elect the nurses to sit on that Board. Nurses in one part of the country did not know those in another, and the time had not

*Representative of persons employing nurses, but not of the nurses themselves, as Matrons employed by opposing Committees can hardly be considered unbiassed.

**Mr. Holland must either have made this statement in great ignorance or of malice prepense. The Bill provides for a two years term of grace.

*** How about the Army Nursing Board?

come, thank goodness for those who had retired from nursing to go about the country like exploded volcanos addressing meetings of nurses. Every year those who had retired would get more and more out of date, and consequently more dangerous.

Then, as to the question of three years' training. Three years might be the generally accepted term, but the length of service was not everything. It would, for instance, take 20 or 100 years to train a probationer in a hospital of two beds. The Central Board must know what was taught in the hospitals, what lectures were given and examinations held, must inspect the hospitals, and register the nurses after careful inspection of the work done.*

Then, subsequently, anyone who had to do with a private nursing institution knew the difficulty of getting doctors to report honestly on the work of nurses. They were much more inclined to shield them. Therefore, on the Register there would be a lot of second rate nurses, and the best objected very much to being placed on the same Register. Again, the payment of the fee of £5 5s. suggested was a luxury nurses would hardly enjoy. A Directory would have none of these disadvantages, and by its means a doctor would be able to satisfy himself as to the experience a nurse had had. If a Register with its cumbrous machinery were set up it would not then do away with the evil of women posing as having received training which they had not had, whereas a Directory would do this. The effect of a Directory would be to stimulate the public to enquire into a nurse's training, that of a Register to lead them to believe no further training was necessary.

He submitted that the proper way for the public to protect itself against bad nurses was to go to a well-known hospital or institution for them, or get their medical men to select them and also make enquiries into the nurse's character themselves. A Register would be misleading because it cannot guarantee efficiency or take cognisance of even serious faults, and it would be dangerous because it would give a continuing guarantee of a nurse's efficiency.

Moreover, it would set up a minimum standard of efficiency, and slothful institutions would soon be satisfied with that minimum, thus Registration would stereotype mediocrity.

SIR THOMAS BARLOW.

Sir Thomas Barlow said he was in warm sympathy with the views of the Deputation. If registration of nurses was carried out it would be a momentous step, and he feared would dislocate the relations between nurses and medical men, as well as the public. He was convinced that if a poll were taken the chief complaints of medical men would not be against inefficiency, though there was that sometimes, but on points of discipline. A nurse was obliging and smooth tongued to the doctor, but it was at night that tyranny and cruelty came into play. Therefore it was important to keep the nurses in active relationship with the great training schools, and that they

*This is what should be done.

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