

training or instruction can term herself a trained nurse and obtain work in that capacity to the discomfort and danger of the sick, and that owing to the lack of professional control certificates have, in many instances been forged, and, when released from jail criminals have been employed as nurses both in hospitals and private houses.

That the General Medical Council, the Governing Body of the Medical Profession, in 1889 declared its opinion that an Act of Parliament providing for the authoritative certification of competent trained nurses, who, when certified, should be subject to common rules of discipline, would be of much advantage to the public, and particularly of much convenience to the practitioners of medicine and surgery.

That the British Medical Association, composed of close upon 20,000 medical practitioners, has on three separate occasions—in 1896, in 1904, and in 1906—resolved that Parliamentary action is essential to provide for the efficient education and professional control of trained nurses.

That a Select Committee of the House of Commons, after an exhaustive enquiry into the whole question for two Sessions, unanimously reported in 1905 that "it is desirable that a Register of Nurses should be kept by a Central Body appointed by the State."

That the Lord President of the Privy Council, replying to an influential deputation which he received in favour of Registration of Trained Nurses, in March of this year, stated that the subject was one of national importance, that from a study of the evidence given before the Select Committee it was apparent that while absolute agreement was not reached there was a strong preponderance of opinion in favour of the scheme, and that it could not be long before the subject engaged the serious attention of Parliament.

That wherever nurses are organised there is a widespread demand for legislation. Thus, in the British Colonies of Cape Colony and Natal in South Africa, and in New Zealand, Acts for the Registration of Trained Nurses came into force in 1891, 1899, and 1901. That such Acts are in force in the United States of America, in the States of New York, North Carolina, New Jersey, Virginia, Maryland, Indiana, California, Colorado, and Connecticut. That a Bill for the State Examination of Trained Nurses for the whole of the German Empire passed the Bundesrath in 1906, and that in the Dominion of Canada, in Australasia, in various British Colonies, and in a great number of the American States, the trained nurses are organised to obtain such legislation.

THE NURSES' BILL.

A Bill drafted by the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses has been before the House of Commons for three years, but, as a private member's Bill, has had no opportunity of reaching its second reading, and it is evident that the best hope for nursing legislation in the near future is for the Government to undertake and carry through a measure for the State Registration of Trained Nurses. What is therefore required at the present time is a strong expression of public opinion, and with this object in view the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses is organising a Petition on the lines indicated

above, which it is proposed to present to the Prime Minister early in the new year.

It is hoped that members of the public will assist the Society by obtaining forms for signature and help forward the legislation which is so essential in the public interest.

THE OPPOSITION.

A word as to the inevitable opposition, which comes principally from the Lay Managers of Hospitals, who object to State supervision of nursing education, and from other employers of nurses.

It must be remembered in this connection that the arguments of hospital authorities against Nursing Legislation were laid before the Privy Council in 1893 and before the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1904 and 1905, and on each occasion failed to influence the judgment finally expressed.

There is also opposition from Cottage Nursing Associations, founded we believe on misapprehension, for the greater part of the nursing undertaken by these Associations is the care of the lying-in woman. The majority of Cottage Nurses should be registered or eligible for registration under the Midwives' Act from which midwives obtain the protection and status at present denied to the highly-trained nurse.

THINGS TO KNOW.

In view of the facts placed before them, we appeal to all who read this article to study for themselves the question of State Registration. To do so they should obtain:—

1. The Blue Books (2) containing the Report of the Select Committee on the Registration of Nurses, and the evidence taken by it, No. 281, 1904 (price 1s.) and No. 170, 1905 (price 1s. 8d.), obtainable from Wyman & Sons, 109, Fetter Lane, Fleet Street, E.C.

2. The "Bill to regulate the qualifications of Trained Nurses and to provide for their Registration," introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Munro-Ferguson, M.P. (Bill 253), 1906. (Wyman, price 1½d.)

3. The Annual Report of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses (1906), obtainable from the Hon. Secretary, 431, Oxford Street, London, W., price 2d. post free.

4. A Memorandum stating concisely why State Registration is desirable to Nurses, the Medical Profession and the Public, published by the Society for State Registration, price 7d. for 20 copies.

The BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, published at 11, Adam Street, Strand, W.C., price 1d. weekly, gives all the reliable and often exclusive information in relation to the State Registration movement.

MARGARET BREAY.

THE LAY NURSING PRESS.

Messrs Macmillan have not yet satisfied the justifiable demand upon the part of trained nurses as to the name of the mysterious editor of their lay nursing paper.

We are informed, on good authority, that Miss S. Bulen, a journalist of Swedish nationality, who is not a trained nurse, acts in this capacity. It may surprise British nurses, who, since the pioneer work of Florence Nightingale, have imagined that they were in the van of nursing progress, that they should be dictated to on professional affairs by a foreign lay woman. The whole situation is truly Gilbertian.

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