

Official Directory of Nurses Bill.

The second reading of Lord Balfour of Burleigh's Official Directory of Nurses' Bill in the Lords has been provisionally put down for Wednesday, May 6th. Lord Amptill is to move its rejection.

It is probable, therefore, that there will be an illuminating debate on the question of State Registration of Trained Nurses on that date, and those who for twenty years have been working to the end that "Trained Nurse" may be defined, will no doubt do all in their power to have their expert opinions presented. The hope of the promoters of the Official Directory of Nurses Bill, that its appearance in the Lords would arouse neither discussion nor opposition will, therefore, be frustrated.

The House of Lords claims that its greatest usefulness as part of the British Constitution consists in its power of impersonal deliberation, so that hasty and ill-considered legislation cannot be thrust upon the community at large.

We hope the Lords will make good this contention on the 6th of May, and that they will be instructed that this Bill secretly drafted by 35 metropolitan gentlemen *employers all of the class they intend to submerge*—affects the service contract, the educational curriculum, the remuneration, and the professional status of at least 60,000 women working in every part of the United Kingdom. And that moreover many of these women after years of experience as skilled nurses have helped to draft a Registration Bill, now before the House of Commons, and that they are quite capable of forming the very best opinion on what is required for the organisation and improvement of the profession which they have worked arduously to raise from the very dregs of labour.

It is little over thirty years ago that, having received their weekly wage in the steward's office at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, ward nurses walked straight to Henry the VIII.'s Gate, and handed it over to the women who cared for their illegitimate children, and who, babe in arms, eagerly awaited the weekly dole! These poor mothers, and others even more depraved, were the women gradually superseded by the forceful women of culture who, under almost indescribably insanitary conditions worked in the hospitals with them side by side, fed, and slept with them, and succeeded in raising nursing to its present honour-

able conditions. The well-trained, and therefore well disciplined nurse of the twentieth century is one of the greatest factors in its civilisation. She is a component part of the science of Health, the biggest asset a nation can possess.

And it is the women who have for a quarter of a century taken an active part in this stupendous social reform who consider that should the Official Directory of Nurses' Bill become law, the just reward of their labour will be filched from them, and the coping stone of State Registration, granting to the nurses just State protection, and the public a guarantee of their efficiency will be withheld for years. We hope the House of Lords will, therefore, not permit itself to be utilised by Sir Henry Burdett, Mr. Sydney Holland, and their friends to do a grave injustice to trained nurses and the public.

WOMEN'S INDUSTRIAL COUNCIL AND REGISTRATION.

At a quarterly meeting of the Women's Industrial Council, held on April 1st, Mrs. Ramsay Macdonald proposed the following resolution:—

'That this Council considers that it is desirable both in the interests of the professional status of the nurses and of the public who use their services that provision should be made for their registration by the State; such registration to be under the supervision of a Central Board upon which nurses shall have adequate representation.'

After the resolution had been seconded, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick was invited to speak.

Mrs. Fenwick gave a short resumé of the State Registration question, and explained the salient points of difference in the Nurses' Registration Bill now before the House of Commons, and the Nurses' Directory Bill before the House of Lords, the latter—drafted without consulting the 60,000 working women who would be affected by it—in the opinion of Mrs. Fenwick calculated to place trained nurses in a very dependent position, and industrially absolutely in the power of hospital governors, who were themselves quite irresponsible employers of labour.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

DEPUTATION TO LORD AMPHILL.

Lord Amptill received a deputation of nurses on Wednesday afternoon, representing various societies, and gave a courteous hearing to their expression of opinion on the question of Nursing Organisation.

The Official Directory of Nurses Bill may be obtained from Wyman and Sons, Ltd., Fetter Lane, E.C., price 1d., or through any bookseller.

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