

## The Deputation to the Prime Minister in Support of State Registration.

In his private room at the House of Commons on Thursday, 13th inst., the Prime Minister, who was accompanied by Mr. Herbert Samuel, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary for Home Affairs, received an influential deputation from the Society for the State Registration of Nurses, who urged that facilities should be given by the Government for the introduction of a Bill establishing a Statutory Council for the examination of trained nurses.

The RIGHT HON. THE LORD AMPHILL introduced the deputation, which was composed as follows:—

*Members of Parliament.*—Mr. R. C. Munro-Ferguson, Lord Morpeth, The Hon. Geoffrey Howard, Sir Luke White, Sir Charles MacLaren, Sir Henry Norman, Dr. Rutherford, Dr. Rainy, Mr. C. D. Rose, Mr. Butcher, Mr. Arthur Fell, Mr. Remnant, Mr. Smeaton, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. W. Crooks, and Mr. Field.

*Medical Practitioners.*—Sir Victor Horsley and Mr. J. S. Whitaker, the Medical Secretary, representing the British Medical Association, Dr. Bedford Fenwick, and Sir William Macewen, of Glasgow.

*Nurse Representatives.*—Miss Isla Stewart, Matron and Superintendent of Nursing, St. Bartholomew's Hospital; Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President, National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland; Miss Sidney Browne, R.R.C., late Matron-in-Chief, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service; Miss Huxley, late President, Irish Nurses' Association; Miss Barton, Matron, Chelsea Infirmary; Miss H. L. Pearse, Superintendent, London County Council School Nurses.

*Women's Organisations.*—Mrs. Alfred Emmott, Vice President, National Union of Women Workers; Lady Strachey, President, Women's Local Government Society; Miss E. S. Kerrison, Women's Labour League.

### LORD AMPHILL INTRODUCES THE DEPUTATION.

LORD AMPHILL: Sir, will you allow me to introduce the Deputation by handing you this list, from which you will see who are present, and in what capacity? May I also be permitted to thank you, as we do most sincerely, for your great kindness in receiving us. We fully appreciate the sacrifice of time that it has involved, and we are accordingly grateful, and we shall endeavour not to trespass upon your kindness by taking up too much of your time.

I do not know whether you are acquainted with the main facts of the history of this movement, but perhaps you will be so good as to stop me in case I am saying anything which is not entirely familiar to you.

The movement in favour of the State Registration of Nurses has been in progress for the past twenty years, and, as you are aware, a Bill with this object has been introduced into the House of Commons for six years past. That Bill, during the last

Session, was considered with more than usual care by the House of Lords, and eventually it passed through every stage without a division, after having been twice in Committee, and in the form in which it finally emerged from the House of Lords it was amended in accordance with the views of several departments of the Government who were concerned with the Parliamentary history of the movement.

But previous to that, the movement received very striking support from the professional bodies mainly concerned. In 1889 the General Medical Council, the governing body of the medical profession, passed an unanimous resolution that such legislation was desirable. Then again, in 1895, 1904, and 1906, the British Medical Association, which, I believe, contains more than 20,000 out of 30,000 medical practitioners, passed resolutions, unanimously practically, in favour of legislation. On the last occasion, 90 out of 93 delegates, all elected by constituencies in which the question had been considered, supported the resolution. After that, in 1904-5, a Select Committee of the House of Commons inquired into the whole subject, and reported unanimously that it was desirable that a Register of Nurses should be kept by a central body appointed by the State. Further, the position of the movement was considered before a Committee of the Privy Council in 1892, and on that occasion, as well as before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, the arguments against Registration failed to influence the judgment of the authorities who had to decide. That briefly is the history of the movement.

Now, the movement is primarily an educational one, and its object, as you know, is to ensure that the community may have a guarantee that the trained nurses whom they employ are skilled in their professional duties. That is not the case at present. There is no standard, there is no means of discriminating between the value of the very different kinds of certificates which are issued by the public hospitals and training concerns. The public can discern no difference between the certificate given by a small private hospital after a few months' experience and one given by the training school of the great general hospitals after a long and varied experience.

This condition of affairs is, of course, unfair to the nurses as well as to the public at large, for the nurses who have taken the trouble to qualify in their profession after a long period of training and considerable sacrifice are in the same position as one who has had very much less training and experience. What we are aiming at is to have nurses put on the same footing as members of other professions, who stand in a somewhat analogous relation to the public—the medical profession for instance, or dentists, druggists, and what is even more to the point in this instance, the profession of midwives. The midwife, as you know, sir, who only requires a training of three months, and belongs to a less educated and lower social order, has the advantage of State Registration; has, in fact, just that which we are seeking to obtain for nurses.

If you will permit me a few minutes more, and

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