

I may do so without presumption, I should like to suggest some of the special reasons which have occurred to us when we thought our request might not be altogether unwelcome to you.

It seemed to us you might like to add to the legislative achievements of the Ministry over which you preside a measure which must undoubtedly be classified as one of social reform. Secondly, it seemed to us, for reasons upon which it is perhaps unnecessary for me to dwell, that it might appear desirable to you to do something to mitigate the very prevalent complaint that women are unable to obtain the passage of legislation which particularly concerns them. Thirdly, it occurred to us, from a humane point of view, you might regard it as pleasant, in your position of immense authority and power, to help those who for so long have tried hard to help themselves. Again, it occurred to us it might not be unwelcome to the Prime Minister to remedy the uneven working of the Parliamentary system—if I may venture so to speak of the system which prevails in the House of Commons—and give a chance to a Private Member's Bill. Then again, we thought you might welcome an opportunity of redressing a grievance—a very real grievance—which exists between the nurses who cannot get Registration and the midwives who have that advantage, before the grievance becomes prominently emphasised in the full operation of the Midwives' Act, which will very shortly come about. And finally, we hoped you would be glad of the opportunity of giving encouragement to the nursing profession, a profession which, I am sure you will agree, is one of singular nobility.

I think that this country can claim to have started the profession of nurses—(Hear, hear)—and consequently it ought to be a matter of national pride to raise the standard of nursing in this country, and continue to set an example to other countries. (Hear, hear.)

Those briefly are the reasons why we ventured to hope that you might be inclined to give us such facilities as may be in your power for introducing a Bill into the House of Commons this Session.

SIR VICTOR HORSLEY VOICES MEDICAL OPINION.

SIR VICTOR HORSLEY: Sir, I appear as representing the British Medical Association, an Association which, Lord Amthill has already informed you, has, on repeated occasions, passed resolutions practically unanimously approving of the principle of the Registration of Nurses.

THE PRIME MINISTER: I do not think there is anything like unanimity in the medical profession.

SIR VICTOR HORSLEY: Very nearly.

THE PRIME MINISTER: Do you say that?

SIR VICTOR HORSLEY: Yes, certainly; because I had the honour of being in the chair at several of the meetings of the British Medical Association.

THE PRIME MINISTER: You say that represents the medical profession?

SIR VICTOR HORSLEY: I say the British Medical Association is the only body that can represent the profession. The medical profession has no other machinery whereby its views can be represented, and the British Medical Association numbers 20,000 practitioners, who send elected delegates

to represent them, and therefore I think is entitled to speak certainly as the voice of the profession. (Hear, hear.)

But even if we admit, for the sake of argument, that the British Medical Association is not representative of the medical profession, the least I would say is that it is the only body in the medical profession that has taken the trouble to refer a Bill of this kind to a Committee and thoroughly to exhaust the subject. Of the three Bills before us, it is the principle involved in Bills 1 and 2 that the British Medical Association recommends. It is this: That the qualification of a nurse should no longer be at the mercy of private individuals or private institutions. (Hear, hear.) The Association feels very strongly that the time has now come when it is in the interests of the public, as well as of the medical profession, as well as of the nurses themselves, that a guarantee should be given. The Scotch Bill has no such provision. It leaves the question of guarantee on qualification practically to the teacher alone. The British Medical Association feel that that guarantee ought to be furnished by a Statutory Council, with the control and proper examination.

That is provided for in Clause 10, and it would gain the protection of the profession of nurses. We submit this is a form of protection that you might sympathise with, because, from our point of view, as members of the profession which consists of medical practitioners, it is most essential.

The public are to gain by the fact of the nurse having a State guarantee that she alone is fit to nurse.

From the point of view of the interest of the profession itself, that is exactly the same as that of the public. We wish to have the nurses properly equipped in nursing knowledge, and we wish that to be certified by State guarantee. But we want more; we want the ethical status of nurses, and the discipline of the nursing profession, to be secured, and from our own experience of the working of the General Medical Council you can only obtain that by having a Statutory constituted or like Council, in whose hands you place the governing of the nursing profession, and I believe it is only by establishing a Council of that sort that you will put an end to the undoubted existing evil of unqualified medical practice by nurses, and the consequent danger to the public, and also the scandal within the ranks of the profession.

I wish to add that the British Medical Association also sympathise very much with the nurses in promoting their own interests. It feels that after three years a nurse has had a satisfactory course of education, and if she has passed an examination she is entitled to receive from the State a guarantee that she is fully qualified. As regards the constitution of the Council, we also feel that the nurses should have an even voice in the election of those who are to govern them. With those remarks I beg to support the Deputation.

DR. BEDFORD FENWICK PROVES HOW DEFENCELESS ARE THE PUBLIC.

DR. BEDFORD FENWICK: Sir, one of the most difficult points in connection with this subject is :

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