

all worked when it was proposed to exclude Irish nurses from the benefits of the Act, which we now most earnestly beg you will do all in your power to forward without delay.

MR. WILLIAM FIELD CONSIDERS REGISTRATION A MATTER OF NATIONAL NECESSITY.

MR. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P.: Sir, there are a great number of physicians practising in Dublin, and an enormous number of nurses, and what the lady has told us is absolutely true. It is rather a peculiar circumstance, but we are agreed.

I think this is a matter of national necessity, and some steps should be taken. If I may say so, it is a non-contentious subject, and if you will throw your influence and power into it, and give facilities for a Bill to be introduced, I take it there really will be practically no opposition, and no long debate on the subject. Of course, there are always a few sore heads in the community—(laughter)—but the vast majority of the members of the House of Commons will support the Bill.

I have nothing further to say, but to express the hope that the Government will do all they can to pass a Nurses' Registration Bill, particularly in view of the fact that England, Ireland, and Scotland are at your back in this matter.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S REPLY.

The PRIME MINISTER, who, on rising to reply, was received with cheers, said: Lord Ampthill, ladies, and gentlemen: I am very pleased to have the opportunity of receiving you here this afternoon, and listening to the views of so important and representative a deputation, on a subject on which I confess I have not myself much previous, or at any rate first-hand, familiarity. I understand that the object of the legislation which you are promoting is to provide, by means of a representative Council, the machinery for the examination of persons taking up the nursing profession, to set up a register on which only the names of those persons shall be inscribed who satisfy the examination test, and to provide that thereafter no one shall claim or assume to practise as a registered nurse who has not satisfied the test and been put on the register.

That would not, of course, in the least prevent, as I understand the proposal, other persons who have not complied with the test from pursuing the profession of nursing. (Hear, hear.) When Sir Victor Horsley said, a few moments ago, in his very able speech, that the recognised nurse—that is to say, the nurse recognised by the State—is the only person fit to engage in nursing, that would not be the necessary effect of this legislation. The free lance, if I may so describe her, would still be in a position to pursue her profession as much as she does now, and secure her clients in the same way as before.

SIR VICTOR HORSLEY: The public would take her at their own risk.

The PRIME MINISTER: They would take her at their own risk, and she would not be entitled, subject to a penalty, to describe herself directly or indirectly as a Registered Nurse. (Hear, hear.)

In regard to that, we are all agreed as to the growing importance and dignity of this great profession, and as to the magnificent services, the in-

dispensable services, which it renders to the medical profession and to the cause of humanity in the country; and I am certain there is not a man or woman who does not wish to see it kept up to the highest standard of efficiency, both as regards skill and care. And every step that can be taken in that direction will, I am sure, command the sympathy, not only of all parties in the State, but of every British or Irish citizen who cares for the interests of his country.

But here we have to consider whether the machinery is best adapted to that end. When Mr. Field tells me that in Ireland they are all united on the subject, and that we should not only have Ireland, but England and Scotland behind us, with the exception of a few sore heads, I am bound to have regard to the representations that come to me from other quarters.

What have I found on this question of unanimity? I have a list of representative persons whose opinion is entitled to the highest respect, who are altogether opposed to this proposed Registration. I am not going to quote names, but they include the Chairman of the Westminster Hospital, the Vice-President of the Royal Free Hospital, the Chairman of the Middlesex Hospital, the Chairman and Treasurer of the London Hospital, the Chairman of St. Mary's Hospital, the Chairman of the Hospital for Sick Children, the Chairman and Treasurer of University College Hospital, the Chairman of the West-End Hospital for Diseases of the Nervous System, the Chairman of the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-on-Tyne, the Chairman of King's College Hospital, the Treasurer of St. Thomas's Hospital, the Treasurer of St. George's Hospital, and a number of others.

MR. FIELD, M.P.: None from Ireland, Sir.

The PRIME MINISTER: I am not talking of Ireland. When I am told there is complete unanimity, and that we should have all the authorities in our favour, I think the enumeration of those names is enough to show that that is not the case.

Sir Victor Horsley said he represented the British Medical Association, which I agree is a representative body. There again I must point out that I have here a list of the names of 100 members of the medical profession of London, and they include some of the most eminent members of the profession in many departments, and particularly in the department of Obstetrics; 100 well-known members of the medical profession in London, and 120 gentlemen of the highest distinction in the provinces, who are entirely opposed to legislation of this kind.

Then, when I come to another equally important body, the Matrons of hospitals in London and the provinces, I have here the names of 50—or 49 to be accurate—Matrons in London hospitals, and no less than 109 Matrons of provincial hospitals, who are entirely opposed to this legislation.

I think you will agree with me when I say it is a matter which, for the time being, is highly controversial.

THE PRIME MINISTER ADMITS THE ARGUMENTS LAID BEFORE HIM ARE VERY COGENT.

In those circumstances I do not think you can expect me to do more than promise to give most

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