

Registration of Nurses.

THE PAMPHLET OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE REGISTRATION OF NURSES IN SCOTLAND.

(Continued from page 380.)

OBJECTIONS TO LORD AMPHILL'S BILL.

We read that "The conception of a register embodied in Lord Ampthill's Bill is somewhat elementary . . . hospital authorities generally, and the Scottish administrators in particular, affirm that a registration scheme of this kind will do no good, and may even do positive harm. . . . To those hospital administrators who have taken a legitimate pride in their work, comes an alien, and to some extent hostile, Registration Council, dictates the manner in which nurses shall be trained, prescribes the subjects and the amount of teaching, the period and the books of study, and then—with little regard to the views of the training school—says to the nurse: If you pass our examination we shall register you and turn you loose on the world as a fully trained nurse."

There is no justification for this highly-coloured and beaureaucratic pronouncement on the part of Lord Inverclyde's Association, but it indicates the real objection of the Medical Superintendents and administrators of Scottish hospitals to the Nurses' Registration Bill. It is intolerable in the opinion of these men, that the registered nurses should have any voice in determining the educational courses for their own profession, or that the close corporations, the large hospitals, should be subjected to any public supervision whatever.

They are going through the same phases that the authorities of the richer and more autocratic hospitals in London have already passed through.

1889.—Hospital authorities in London opposed the enrolment of nurses in a common register by the British Nurses' Association.

1896.—Re-affirmed their position that the Registration of Nurses would be injurious, and declined to enter on any further consideration of the subject.

1904.—The Central Hospital Council for London, through its Chairman, Mr. Charles Burt, communicated to the Select Committee on Registration of Nurses "That this Council is opposed to any State Registration of Nurses, and that steps be taken on behalf of the Council to oppose any Bill in Parliament having such registration for its object."

1906.—Mr. H. A. Harben, then Chairman of the Central Hospital Council for London, after

the Select Committee had reported unanimously in favour of State Registration of Nurses, informed the Earl of Crewe, then Lord President of the Council, that his Council "recognise as legitimate the desire that there should be a record of the experiences of nurses available."

The outcome of this change of front, consequent upon the unanimous Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons in favour of State Registration, was the introduction into the House of Lords in 1908 of the Official Directory of Nurses' Bill, on behalf of the Central Hospital Council for London, drawn up secretly, without the knowledge of the nursing profession, concerning which the Marquess of Lansdowne said: "I venture to submit to the House that this is a Registration Bill, and that you must consider whether it is, or is not, a good Registration Bill." The answer of the House to that challenge was to reject it on the second reading by 53 votes to 20.

It was thus plainly demonstrated that the Central Hospital Council for London objected to a Bill giving nurses any powers of self-government, but not to a Bill in which the control of the nursing profession was in the hands of the training schools; and the Scottish hospital authorities appear to be at present of the same opinion. The root of their opposition to Lord Ampthill's Bill is their objection to a General Nursing Council having any control over nursing education, or to what has been termed "State interference" with the irresponsible autocracy of the hospitals, where nurses are concerned.

So the pamphlet proceeds to state that the Scottish Committee "recognise that it would be an impertinence on the part of a Registration Council composed like that in Lord Ampthill's Bill, to introduce itself into the affairs of a hospital and to prescribe the methods of training." It states further that "no hospital is bound to train nurses," and that "if a hospital, annoyed by the dictation of a hostile Registration Council, resolves to be less generous in the education of probationers, then the nurses will suffer."

(1) Do hospital administrators regard the General Medical Council as an "alien" and "hostile" body, because it deals with medical education?

(2) Do the midwifery training schools similarly regard the Central Midwives' Board? We know they do not.

The training schools for nurses are at present not under the control of educational bodies, but of financiers and philanthropists, associated together to provide for the efficient care of the

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