

### THE PREMIER PROMISES CONSIDERATION FOR THE NURSES' BILL.

On February 5th Mr. Athelstan Rendall asked the Prime Minister in the House of Commons whether he was aware that a Bill to provide for Nurses' Registration was passed through the House of Lords in 1908 with the assent of both parties; that this Bill has been for nine years introduced into the House of Commons, and supported there by Members of all parties; that within the past twenty years Acts for the Registration of Nurses have been passed in every British Colony and in thirty-four of the United States of America; whether, under these circumstances, he can hold out hope that during next Session facilities may be provided for the Bill now before Parliament?

The Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith) replied: I can make no promise for next Session, but the claims of this Bill will be considered.

We are satisfied with that reply so far. How much it means is for the professional conscience of the Nursing Profession to determine. Up and doing is our advice.

#### THE TIME IS RIPE.

A Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses will be held in London on Saturday, 22nd inst., as it is considered that the time is ripe for the consideration of the Nurses' Registration Bill by the House of Commons at the earliest possible moment. Those who have for so many years urged upon the Government the necessity for protecting the sick public from dangerously inefficient women acting as nurses, and of encouraging the admirable type of woman who is content to qualify herself thoroughly to care for the sick, know that the long delay of legislation on the nursing question has had very disastrous effects upon the nursing vocation as a whole. Conscientious, well-educated, responsible young women have little or no encouragement to enter hospitals for years of arduous training, when, having passed such a test satisfactorily, they pass out into the community with no protection for the standard of efficiency they have attained, and have to compete in the open market with every type of unsatisfactory attendant on the sick, who, without let or hindrance, assumes their title and their uniform, and exploits their fees.

Hospitals and infirmaries are beginning to feel the pinch. They need a constant supply of the best women, and the supply is far below the demand. The governors of these institutions have themselves to blame; their attitude as employers of nurses has been intolerant and

ungenerous in the extreme. We have the London Hospital denying a full term of three years' consecutive training, and sending out for gain their insufficiently trained two years' nurses to compete with those who have twice their experience. We have the governors of St. Bartholomew's Hospital actually denying freedom of speech to certificated nurses within its gates, concerning their own work and lives. Is it any wonder the best type of woman refuses to enter a profession where all that makes work worth while is denied to her by ignorant men, whose one aim apparently is to run their charities at the expense of women workers at the cheapest possible rates. No wonder the Old Guard grow impatient with delay, and are determined to be up and doing. The time is ripe. Our Government owes us appreciation and help; it is time it paid its debts, and with interest.

### MORE TRAINED NURSES FOR TURKISH SOLDIERS.

The work of Sisters Warriner and Obee, of the Registered Nurses Society, has been officially reported upon by the Director of the British Red Crescent Society in Turkey, as so valuable in nursing sick and wounded soldiers at San Stefano, that Mrs. Fenwick has been requested to select two more Sisters "of the same type." Thus, at twenty-four hours' notice, red crescents well to the fore, Sisters Emily J. Haswell and Lucy M. Park, of the R.N.S., left London on Friday, the 14th inst., for the front, with a hearty send-off from Judge Ameer Ali, Colonel Surtees, Mrs. Fenwick, Sister Cartwright and Miss Breay.

The shortage of efficiently trained women nurses during the War in the Near East, on both sides, has probably caused the loss of thousands of lives. After the first rush of the wounded after battle, it was nursing—real scientific, first-class, devoted nursing—which was the great need; and to our everlasting disgrace the British people—whilst contributing £40,000 for the care of the sick and wounded—are too ignorant of the true value of scientific nursing to insist that our British Red Cross Society should be compelled to provide it. When the war is over this is a question which should be well probed into, in spite of medical bureaucracy, supported by society futility and high social patronage and interference. No country has more capable nurses willing to serve than Great Britain and Ireland, and that our services have only been available by dribbles—through individual charity—proves once more how all important it is that the Nursing Profession should possess the power of legal status. Its position in the body politic to-day is a most contemptible one—and it is so because as a whole it is devoid of a professional conscience, *esprit de corps*, and self-respect.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)