

THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR THE STATE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

The Executive Committee met at 431, Oxford Street, London, W., on Saturday, the 22nd ult., to receive a letter from the Right Honourable R. C. Munro Ferguson, M.P., who is in charge of the Nurses' Registration Bill, in which he proposed that, before introducing the Bill next session, it would be of advantage to have a Memorandum attached to it explaining its object and provisions. A Draft Memorandum, drawn up by the Hon. Secretaries, having been submitted to the Secretaries of the constituent Societies, and approved by Mr. Ferguson, was considered, and, with a few verbal alterations, adopted as follows:—

MEMORANDUM TO NURSES' REGISTRATION BILL.

This Bill has been prepared on instructions of the Central Committee for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, which represents by delegation the British Medical Association, the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, the Royal British Nurses' Association, the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, the Fever Nurses' Association, the Association for the Promotion of the Registration of Nurses in Scotland, the Scottish Nurses' Association, and the Irish Nurses' Association; comprising not less than 30,000 medical practitioners and nurses. The Right Hon. the Lord Ampthill, G.C.I.E., is Chairman of the Committee.

The object of the Bill is to ensure that the community shall have a guarantee that the nurses they employ are skilled in their professional duties.

At the present time such a guarantee is non-existent. No minimum standard of knowledge for professional nurses has been defined or enforced. Each hospital grants its own certificate of efficiency after a variable length and amount of instruction and experience, and the public has no means of discriminating between nurses with no certificate, or one only awarded after a limited sojourn in a small and perhaps special hospital, with scanty or merely nominal facilities, and those who have earned a certificate after a training of three years in a well-organised and equipped training school attached to a hospital or infirmary of adequate size. The existing lack of standardisation and control is dangerous to the public, and unfair to those nurses who have qualified, in the best manner available, for their responsible duties.

The Bill establishes a "General Council for the Registration of Nurses in the United Kingdom" composed of persons appointed by the Privy Council, the Local Government Boards in the United Kingdom, associations of registered medical practitioners, and direct representatives

of the nursing profession. The duties and powers of this Council are defined in Clause 10 of the Bill. Amongst the most important of them are the standardisation of training and the examination and registration of nurses.

In 1905 a Select Committee of the House of Commons on Registration of Nurses which, under the Chairmanship of Mr. H. J. Tennant, M.P., took evidence during two Sessions, unanimously reported to the House of Commons that "Your Committee are agreed that it is desirable that a Register of Nurses should be kept by a Central Body appointed by the State."

On June 23rd, 1908, the Nurses' Registration Bill was presented by Lord Ampthill in the House of Lords on behalf of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and read a first time. After full discussion, and without a division having been taken at any stage, it was read a third time and passed on November 10th of the same year, when the Earl of Crewe, K.G., Leader of the House, stated that His Majesty's Government were fully prepared to support the third reading. It also had the support of the Marquess of Lansdowne, K.G., Leader of the Opposition.

The Registration of Trained Nurses is in force in Cape Colony, Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange River Colony in South Africa; in New Zealand; in the Province of Ontario in Canada; in the State of Queensland, Australia; and in the Bombay Presidency in India; in thirty-four of the United States of America; in the German Empire; and in Belgium.

In the United Kingdom, where the movement for the State Registration of Nurses was inaugurated, trained nurses have been working continuously since 1887 to secure this reform.

In India, throughout the Dominion of Canada, in Australasia, in various British Colonies, in a great number of the American States, and in several European countries, trained nurses are organised to obtain such legislation. So widespread a desire is indicative of a general recognition of the need for the protection of the public against untrained and semi-trained nurses who assume to be thoroughly trained.

A discussion then ensued as to the best practical method of advancing the cause of Nurses' Registration, and several suggestions were adopted.

REGISTRATION IN THE COLONIES.

We regret we must defer quotation from Miss Gretta Lyons' articles in *Una* on nursing as she saw it in England, but she states she left Victoria in favour of Registration, and returned to it an ardent advocate. We have also to thank a contributor for most interesting information on Registration in the Transvaal. Next week we shall find space to refer to both these subjects.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)