

extraneous duties may be a greater danger to the patient than the disease from which he is suffering.

It is not desired to hinder any one from obtaining the type of nursing care he requires, but to ensure that all may be able to obtain the nurses suited to their necessities.

THE PRIME MINISTER here enquired whether Lady Helen agreed with the previous speaker that deterioration was going on. She replied that she could not speak with the intimate knowledge of the Matron who had expressed that view.

DR. D. J. MACKINTOSH: Sir, I desire to point out that there is no opposition to the demand for State Registration of Nurses in Scotland. It is supported both by the medical profession and the nurses themselves.

DR. J. MCGREGOR ROBERTSON: Sir, since you received a former deputation, the nurses in Scotland have organised, as they never had done before, and they have done so because they recognise the importance of united action in reference to their State Registration. I am sent by a large body of Scottish nurses, of many grades, and there has never been the shadow of a doubt in the minds of any of them that the Nurses Registration Bill is in their high interests, and in those of the public. As far as our organisation goes, it is unanimously supported.

MISS M. HUXLEY SPEAKS FOR IRISH NURSES.

MISS MARGARET HUXLEY: Sir, a few years ago when I had the honour of speaking to you on this subject I then mentioned the chaotic state of the Nursing Profession, the want of a standard of Nursing, the need of State Examination and State Registration which would enable the public to know that the person engaged to attend their sick was really qualified to do so. In the intervening years these faulty conditions have in no way improved. There are still institutions which send out under-trained women, charging the same fees for their work as those institutions which give their nurses a much fuller and complete education. At present every Training School is a law unto itself, and will remain so until the State recognises us, and appoints a Central Governing Body as suggested in the Nurses' Registration Bill, whose duty shall be to fix amongst other nursing affairs a minimum standard of education. It is generally admitted that less well-educated women offer themselves for training than formerly, although the advance made by the Science of Medicine and Surgery demands more intelligent and accurate work from the nurse. It is suggested that the want of Professional Status, the natural consequence of a definite standard, is the cause of this regrettable change. Our Profession needs quality as well as quantity if it is to continue really helpful to the Science of Medicine and Surgery, and to the Public.

THE PRIME MINISTER then asked Dr. Chapple what he wanted him to do.

DR. CHAPPLE replied that the Deputation asked

for his sympathy, and for facilities for the Nurses Registration Bill in the House of Commons.

MR. ASQUITH said that that meant a Government measure; nothing else would be of any use to them. Had they got a second reading? Dr. Chapple replied in the negative, but said that there was greater unanimity amongst medical men and nurses than ever before, and they hoped that the Bill would have an easier passage through the House than formerly.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S SYMPATHETIC REPLY.

MR. ASQUITH, addressing the Deputation, said: I am very glad to receive you here to-day. I do not profess to have a special knowledge of the subject under discussion, which raises important issues for the community at large, to which I am not indifferent. It is not only not an unimportant question, but it is a question of growing importance that our nursing system should be recruited from the best possible sources, and should be carried on by persons who are more and more qualified for what all now regard as very responsible and difficult duties. We have all either as subjects, or as spectators, been interested in the operations of nurses, and realise that they need a well adjusted combination of head, heart and hand. In regard to the machinery which it is suggested to set up, I am far from saying that I am not impressed by the arguments which have been put forward. I am very much impressed, and recognise the representative and authoritative character of a Deputation such as this.

I think, however, that Dr. Chapple takes too sanguine a view if he thinks that the opposition has diminished. The list of opponents to which I referred four years ago has now been brought up to date, and is a more menacing and formidable array than it was then. It includes 91 chairmen of hospitals, who I suppose have attained that position by free election on the part of the subscribers.

SIR VICTOR HORSLEY: They are bureaucrats, not speaking on behalf of the management of the hospitals.

MR. ASQUITH: Exactly the same thing might be said of myself. These gentlemen may be bureaucrats, as Sir Victor Horsley has said, but they obtained their position in very much the same way as I did mine, by a more or less formal process of election. There are 66 Matrons of London Hospitals, and 178 Matrons of provincial hospitals.

SIR VICTOR HORSLEY: They are not speaking in the name of the nurses.

MR. ASQUITH: They are Matrons, and I presume persons of experience. There are also 1,332 nurses and 340 doctors. I am not saying you are not right. I do not say that my sympathies are not with you rather than with them. But in view of these figures and facts it is certain that a measure of this kind would encounter vigorous opposition in the House of Commons, and it is impossible to say that there is practical unanimity amongst

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