

publication of an Official Directory, which proposed that every nurse, wherever and however she was trained, should be entitled to have her name placed in this Directory. It was a most dangerous suggestion, because it is evident that the value of any professional Register is dependent not on the fact of registration, but on the supervision of the training of pupils, the enforcement of educational standards by an expert Board—of which the majority should consist of members of the profession—and the maintenance of discipline in the ranks of those registered, by the same authority. To place the control of the highly trained nurses throughout the Kingdom, with the power to remove their names from the Directory, in the hands of one official (as was proposed in the scheme suggested) would be to place professional women in a most defenceless and dangerous position, and would be of no advantage to the public, who would not be in a position to discriminate between the relative value of the training and experience entered.

This scheme of the Central Hospital Council for London was incorporated in a Bill, without consulting those for whom it was proposed to legislate, and introduced into the House of Lords by the Lord Balfour of Burleigh, K.T., in 1908, but owing to the determined opposition of the nurses on its Second Reading its rejection was moved by the Lord Ampthill, G.C.S.I., and, on a division, the Bill was rejected.

I venture, Sir, to remind you of these facts as we learn that a further attempt may be made, to thrust this useless substitute upon the public, and the nursing community, and to which we should be compelled to offer uncompromising opposition.

I feel sure that you, Sir, will sympathise with the conscientious convictions which have prompted us to invite your kind consideration to our petition, that facilities may be granted in the House of Commons for the second reading of the Nurses Registration Bill—a plea which springs not from any wish for material benefit, but from the desire of the nurses of this kingdom to care for sick and suffering people to the very best of their ability.

We have worked earnestly and long to convince those who frame our laws that we have a just claim to consideration, and trained nurses all over the kingdom sincerely hope that you may use your great influence to further the interests of the Nurses Registration Bill, which, if it became law, would, they believe, be one of the most beneficent measures of modern times.

LADY STRACHEY SPEAKS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE PUBLIC.

Lady Strachey said:

SIR.—The question of State Registration of Trained Nurses is one in which the public is vitally concerned. It is hardly necessary to dwell upon the importance of the issues involved, for there is no one who does not know, or who will not at some

time know, what it is to depend upon the care and skill of a nurse for relief in illness, or for his very life, or the lives of those dear to him.

In these days of amazing feats of medicine and surgery the importance of the efficiency of trained nurses cannot be over-estimated.

A few days ago Lord Knutsford wrote to *The Times* pointing out the danger of untrained anaesthetists, and urging the extreme importance of registering them. If doctors, chemists, and anaesthetists are all registered, surely those who carry out their orders should be registered too? Otherwise the position is analogous to that of the captain of a ship who lays out a course and then leaves the steering and other essential details to be carried out by unskilled seamen.

It is not necessary to urge the question of State Registration of Nurses upon the public because they have got beyond that stage, and are convinced of its necessity, but on behalf of the public, and especially of those who are poor and helpless, I venture to urge this reform, and to hope that the Government will bring to a practical conclusion the movement for State Registration of Nurses by giving facilities for the second reading of the Nurses Registration Bill in the House of Commons.

THE HOME SECRETARY'S REPLY.

In reply Mr. McKenna said: "I am deeply indebted to you for bringing the case for Registration of Nurses so forcibly and clearly before me as you have done this morning. There is no question that if the case were limited to the aspect of it which you have developed it would be unanswerable.

The Prime Minister on two occasions has received deputations on the subject, and on each the difficulty which presented itself to him was that the opposition was of such force in the medical and nursing professions that he could not feel justified in bringing in a Government Bill.

The opposition to the proposal is nothing like so numerically great as the support which you can bring forward in its favour, but it is nevertheless very serious, and without attempting to discuss the proposal upon its merits, if the opposition continues as powerful as at the present time, even if you secure a Bill you will run a grave danger of its failing in its effect.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick was a little indignant in referring to the counter proposal to establish an Official Directory of Nurses. I fully appreciate her reasons that it would tend to mislead the public, who are utterly ignorant of the relative merits of the various training schools. The fact that a nurse's name appeared in an Official Directory would certainly have this effect, and I would never be a party to the proposal.

I want you to realise that your opponents look upon the Register of Nurses much as you regard the Official Directory, to enter into their mind and appreciate their argument.

Dr. Goodall said that the public would look to the Register as a guide as to the safety of a particular nurse, but your opponents think that

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