

a Register would afford no better test than a Directory. It is necessary to understand their case, which is that the necessary qualifications for a nurse cannot be tested by examination, and that the effect of registration would be not to care what the character of a nurse is, provided that skill and knowledge are assured.

(Dr. Chapple here interposed that there would be training, under supervision, preparatory to registration, so that good conduct, for registration, would be guaranteed.)

Mr. McKenna replied, the case of the opponents is that the public will look to a Register as a guide whether it is safe or unsafe to employ a particular nurse, and that it is not an adequate guarantee. They have not such a good case against a Register as you have against a Directory. That case is not arguable.

The opposition includes the names of 74 matrons in London, including those of some of the best known hospitals, and 237 in the provinces, therefore even if a Register is established the nurses may not go on it. Registered nurses will be employed in the main by the rich, as, for the poor, there are district nurses, and the question is not one which touches the very poor. If you get this opposition from all the leading London hospitals you might find such a considerable number of nurses would stand out, and others would not be registered, because they could not, that the Register might fail in its effect if some of the best nurses refused to go upon it.

Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK.—We will risk it.

The Home Secretary, continuing, said: I think we are entitled to press on you to deal with the opposition. Some of it is very bitter and can never be converted, but some might be influenced.

CONVERSATIONS.

Holding up a type-written list of the opponents, Mr. McKenna enumerated some of the Matrons whose names were contained in it, specially mentioning the Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

Miss Cox DAVIES, Matron of the Royal Free Hospital, who represented the National Council of Trained Nurses to which the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses is affiliated, here pointed out that the Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital spoke for herself alone, and that the League, comprising some 800 trained and certificated nurses, had, in general meetings, over and over again passed Resolutions in favour of State Registration.

Mr. McKenna: That is what I have said, the opposition is not comparable to the support which can be advanced, but still, it is formidable. Therefore it is difficult at the present stage to go beyond the position taken up by the Prime Minister when he received a deputation last year, that, until the medical and nursing professions have arrived at something more nearly approaching unanimity than at present, that the Government could not undertake to give facilities for the consideration of the Bill in Government time.

To introduce the Bill as a Government measure in view of the undoubted volume of opposition would be a sacrifice by the Government of indispensable time and one which very few Governments would care to undertake. If it were clear that registration would be for the benefit of the sick poor that would be a different matter.

Miss H. L. PEARSE, President of the School Nurses' League, here pointed out that the question is one affecting the poor. That the Government employs a large number of nurses, in schools and elsewhere, that many more will be needed in connection with the working of the National Insurance Act. She had to deal with the qualifications of a large number of nurses, and it was most difficult to discriminate concerning them. She believed it would be found almost impossible to get the nurses who were wanted.

In regard to the opposition of the Matrons to registration, the nurses had the position in their own hands. If they desired to register, the hospitals would be obliged to meet their demands.

Dr. GOODALL said that he knew of hospitals for the poor which could not open wards because it was impossible to obtain nurses for them.

Mr. McKenna: I am not expressing the slightest opposition to your proposal, but I appeal to you before the subject comes up again for discussion in Parliament to bring over by a fair appreciation of the nature and character of the arguments of the opposition, or to endeavour to bring over some of the opponents, so that the Bill may be regarded as more uncontroversial than it is at present. In regard to the claim that a Register is akin to a Nursing Directory, I feel as strongly as you do, and you have to convince people that there is no relation between the two.

Dr. CHAPPLE said that the case of the deputation was a strong one as to the security of the public as a whole, and not as to the reputation of selected hospitals.

Mrs. STABB emphasised the fact that the opposition to State Registration of Nurses came from the employers, not from the workers, and that was the reason the promoters of the Bill could never convert the opposition.

Mr. McKenna: I wouldn't use that argument if I were you. I wouldn't really.

Dr. CHAPPLE, in thanking the Home Secretary for receiving the Deputation said that he had propounded to them an absolutely impossible proposition. The strength of the opposition was in the vested interests at which registration would strike. He asked Mr. McKenna to appreciate the position of registrationists.

Mr. McKenna: I do not think that is so. I have here some of the leading doctors in the profession. I have Sir Thomas Barlow here.

Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK: Then he ought to be ashamed of himself.

Mr. McKenna: That is not an argument that is going to convince Sir Thomas Barlow. I have also the names of Sir Francis Champneys, Sir John Broadbent and Sir Lauder Brunton.

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