

DR. CHAPPLE: We might win some of them over to our side but the vested interests we shall never win over. He pointed out that there was an overwhelming consensus of opinion in favour of Registration of Nurses; Mr. McKenna was attaching importance to influential names. Was he going to consider individual opposition? The same course might have been adopted in relation to Home Rule, and Welsh Disestablishment.

MR. MCKENNA: So far I agree. But we had influential names against us in relation to Home Rule and Welsh Disestablishment, and look what trouble they have cost us. He added, you do not expect us to do anything now within a fortnight of the close of the Session?

DR. CHAPPLE replied in the negative, and said that the deputation hoped for consideration of the question next Session.

In conclusion the Home Secretary made two very important pronouncements. He said:—

1. You have entirely satisfied me on one point. Your claim to registration relates to something quite different from the objections put forward.

2. You have quite converted me, if I needed any conversion, on the subject of an Official Directory.

CONCLUSIONS.

To sum up:—

No one could have taken part in the deputation without being sensible of the courtesy and kindness of the Home Secretary, and of his personal sympathy with our claim. We feel that if it had been expedient he would gladly have given the deputation all they asked.

Further, he acknowledged the catholicity of the demand for State Registration of Nurses. Indeed it was illustrated in the composition of the deputation which he received, which represented the medical profession, the organized Matrons and nurses of various groups, the diverse interests of many thousands of women represented in the National Union of Women Workers, the women interested in civic matters through the Women's Local Government Society, the interests of women in industrial life through the Women's Industrial Council—no class of the community suffer more from lack of nursing standards than the working classes, and this is well recognised by working women—and the stratum of the under world incarcerated in prisons through the Penal Reform League, which realizes how much need there is for the services of trained nurses in connection with this sad section of the community. Mr. McKenna therefore frankly admitted that the opposition to the proposal is nothing like so numerically strong as the support which can be brought forward in its favour, that it was not comparable to the support which could be advanced, but, on the question of expediency, he stated that to introduce the Nurses' Registration Bill as a Government measure, in view of the undoubted volume of opposition, would be a sacrifice by the Government of indispensable time which very few Governments would care to undertake.

But the main question is not what is expedient, but what is for the benefit of the community, and the nursing profession. It is certain that in the interests of both the public and the nurses the definition of a standard of nursing education under legal safeguards is urgently necessary. For the public, because not only do they suffer from the dangerous ignorance of many nurses, whose knowledge is quite unstandardized, but because there is a great shortage of well-educated, intelligent women whose preventive work in the various departments of health is of the highest importance. To the nurses because they are entitled to a guarantee that the education they receive will be efficient, and because they are the only class of workers in hospitals and infirmaries, from the medical staff to the laundry-maids, whose work is not regulated and protected by the State, with the result that their profession cannot develop to the fullest extent upon natural lines, to meet the requirements of the associated profession of medicine.

The hospital committees, whose members are not only philanthropists, but keen financiers, whose duty it is to manage these institutions on business lines, and to whom cheap nursing labour is a financial asset of considerable value, are thus the only privileged class of employers; the nurses the only unprotected class of women workers. In our opinion no Government has the right to say that time is too valuable to devote to redressing this wrong.

The circumscribed opposition comes mainly from the Central Hospital Council for London, and from the committees and members of the medical staffs of the associated hospitals, from some of the more unprogressive Matrons, from the timorous who fear any change, from committees of small hospitals which fear that registration of nurses may make it more difficult for them to obtain nurses for their hospitals, from those who maintain inadequate standards, and from those who exploit nurses for gain. It is not an opposition which should weigh in the balance when the public good is under consideration.

We found that men who, through educational facilities, and as members of a well-organised profession, had been able to attain great worldly success and honour, had again, led by the President of the College of Physicians, by signing the anti-registration Protest most ungenerously denied to trained nurses facilities to attain high skill, and honourable professional status. How is it that learning is so often jealous of sharing its advantages with others? Many nurses will echo the protest made in this connection by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, and share her indignation that members of the medical profession who owe so deep a debt to the devoted drudgery of the nurses working so arduously for them should receive so ungenerous a return, and that their work should be held in contempt by those whose own success has, in the past, owed so much to it.

The points gained by the deputation were that the Home Secretary evidently (1) realised their

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