

## THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TRAINED NURSES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

### ORGANISED NURSES STAND FIRM FOR STATE REGISTRATION.

By the courtesy of the Royal Society of Medicine, a General Meeting of members of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland was held in the Lecture Hall of the Society, No. 1, Wimpole Street, London, W., on Saturday, February 12th, at 4 p.m. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick (President) was in the chair.

The meeting was summoned to consider a Circular Letter, sent by the Hon. Arthur Stanley, M.P., Chairman of the Joint War Committee, to the Chairmen of Committees of Hospitals, proposing to establish a College of Nursing on a voluntary basis, governed by a Council of Management nominated by the Chairmen and Governors of leading hospitals, physicians and surgeons lecturing to nurses, the Principals of Nurse Training Schools, and other persons interested in the education of women.

An explanatory note on the agenda stated that the scheme provides that the Governing Body for the Nursing Profession (the Council of Management) shall be nominated and not elected, and that an Examining Board shall be nominated, a Scheme of Examinations defined, and a Certificate of Proficiency in Nursing be granted by the College. If favourably received the promoters of the scheme propose to apply to the Board of Trade for incorporation without the word "Limited."

The interest in the question was early evident by the way Matrons, Sisters, and Nurses, both civil and military, crowded into the room. It had required some faith to secure a room, which seats 450 people, at a time when the nursing profession is so fully engaged, but that faith in the professional conscience of the members of the National Council, and the belief that they would make every effort to attend a meeting, involving a question of such grave importance, was abundantly justified. Not only from London, but from the provinces, they came in hundreds, members of the various important Leagues and Societies affiliated to the National Council, to testify once more their emphatic support of the Bill for the State Registration of Nurses, and that any other method of organizing the Nursing Profession is useless. For more than twenty-five years nurses have assembled over and over again to affirm the

same thing, and it says much for their tenacity of purpose that once more, in a time of the greatest stress and strain, they responded to the call, and demonstrated their earnestness and unshaken conviction in the justice of their cause.

Supporting the President on the platform were Miss M. Heather-Bigg, President of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland; Miss E. M. Musson, R.R.C., President of the General Hospital Birmingham Nurses' League; Mrs. Porter, ex-President of the Irish Nurses' Association; Miss Pell-Smith, Vice-President of the Royal Infirmary Leicester Nurses' League; Miss Beatrice Kent, Society for State Registration of Trained Nurses; Miss Amy B. Curtis, President Victoria and Bournemouth Nurses' League, and Miss H. Hawkins, Society for State Registration.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH.

After the notice convening the meeting had been read by the Hon. Sec., Miss B. Cutler, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said:—I have to apologise for calling a General Meeting of the National Council of Nurses to consider their own affairs at this inopportune moment, but constituent societies urged that it should be done. We women do not generally agree with the "wait and see" policy, but when the Premier decided that no private member's Bill of a contentious nature should be considered in the last Parliament, the registration party, patriots all, dropped agitation in favour of the Nurses' Registration Bill, realising that every hour of time, and every iota of energy, were urgently required in the performance of professional duty, and that our Bill, though primarily drafted for the benefit of the community, must await consideration until we nurses had helped to win the war; and how loyally and devotedly our trained nurses have played their part is even now a matter of history. They have served the State with an absolute abnegation of self which has not wavered in the face of death; and we shall have some fine mottoes to hand down to our successors, of which the exclamation during shipwreck, "Fighting men first," stands out as a stupendous evidence of heroism, which has never been excelled in any great cause.

When, therefore, it became known that, in spite of the registration truce, a small number of Matrons of large London hospitals, and others, were quietly meeting together at the office of the Joint War Committee, to consider the organization of the nursing profession, we registrationists considered their action very ill-timed.

On December 30th last, the result of these

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