

(f) That the Parliaments of several British Dominions and other Countries have passed such Acts for the efficient education and organisation of nurses, and for the safety and welfare of the sick, which have proved to be of the utmost benefit to the community.

Therefore similar legislation is, in the opinion of this Meeting, a matter of urgent and national importance.

Miss Musson said in part :—

Madam President, and fellow members of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland,

It was with feelings of the greatest diffidence that I consented to propose this resolution, not that my mind is not fully made up on the subject of State Registration of Nurses, but because I am leading a most strenuous life at the present time, and have no leisure in which to collect, or adequately to express my thoughts on this subject.

The last public effort on the part of State Registrationists was the attendance of a deputation on Mr. McKenna, the Home Secretary, in the last week of July, 1914.

The kind and sympathetic attention which our deputation received on that occasion encouraged us to persevere in our efforts to obtain Registration by Act of Parliament. Plans for an energetic campaign to be carried out, after much-needed holidays were over, were already half formed, but, alas! the same afternoon the first ominous news of our strained relations with Germany appeared on the placards in the streets, and within a week the declaration of war stopped all thought of holidays or of political agitation, and there was but one thought in the minds of the nursing profession—how best we might serve our beloved country.

Political work on our part has been in abeyance. We accepted loyally the decision of the Prime Minister that no private members' Bill to which there was opposition should be considered during the Session, which was devoted to war legislation. It is not the avowed State Registrationists who have broken the truce. The matter has been opened once more owing to the letter from the Hon. A. Stanley, which has been privately circulated among a few hospital Chairmen and Matrons.

All Matrons to whom this letter was sent (as a matter of interest, I suppose, since it was addressed to Chairmen of Hospitals) received also a letter stating that the scheme was outlined (shadowed shall I say—for it does not appear to be regularly formulated) at an informal meeting of a few Matrons, who felt that "it was time that Matrons took steps to protect their trained nurses." That is to say, it owes its origin to the fact that a few Matrons suddenly awoke to the menace of the untrained nurse which has become more acute since the enormous increase of hospital accommodation, and the necessity for the "dilution" of labour in military hospitals.

The need of protection for "our trained nurses" has been very much in the minds of many of us for some years past, and we should cordially welcome the addition of more Matrons to any of the Societies formed for the advancement of the profession.

The fact that some of these Matrons have hitherto been opposed to State Registration need not discourage us. On the contrary, it seems to be a good sign that they are beginning seriously to consider the necessity for organisation and protection. I, for one, sincerely hope that a conference between the promoters of this scheme and the Central Committee for State Registration may shortly take place, with the honest wish to advance the profession on both sides, and that a "rapprochement" may be the result, and end in the strengthening of the Registration cause.

At the same time it seems strange that these "few Matrons" should not have consulted some of the established associations of Matrons. Besides the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, there are the Poor Law Matrons' Association, the Irish Matrons' Association, the Scottish Matrons' Association, and even a humble little Association of some fifty Matrons in the Midlands. The opinion of several hundred Matrons might have been obtained had these societies been consulted.

We are all agreed with Mr. Stanley on the need for organisation, and most of us would welcome with delight the foundation of a "College of Nursing" as an educational centre for the profession.

In addition to such a College, however, we require the legal status which can only be assured to us by Registration by Act of Parliament. Mr. Stanley refers in his letter to the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, but no mention is made of the fact that every member of the medical profession must be registered, whether he be a Fellow of the College or not, before he can legally practise medicine.

As to organisation, disorganised we are as a profession, but we are not, as stated in the letter, suffering from a *total* lack of organisation. Beginnings have been made, some time ago, and it is not our fault that matters have not progressed more speedily. Still, the National Council of Trained Nurses alone represents a very large number of certificated nurses banded together in self-governing societies or leagues.

There are many points in the proposed scheme which require to be made clear before we can unite with its promoters. The most important is the election of the governing body. We are tired, beyond measure, of lay interference and mismanagement, and we want no nominated or self-elected body put in a position of supreme authority. The medical and other professions mentioned in Mr. Stanley's letter are governed by their own members, elected by the vote of the members concerned.

That is the principle behind the Bill for the State Registration of Nurses which has repeatedly

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