

State Registration of Trained Nurses, by Dr. Goodall, Hon. Medical Secretary:—

THE MEMORANDUM.

The Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses, in which the various Medical and Nursing Societies interested in the organization of trained nurses are co-ordinated, welcome this opportunity of stating what has already been accomplished in this direction, and the considered opinion of this representative body as to the lines upon which organization should proceed. We submit further that the issues involved in such organization are far-reaching and varied, demanding the most careful consideration and adjustment, and that adequate attention cannot for the first time be given to these problems when the Empire is involved in a world-wide war which absorbs the entire interest and energy of the Medical and Nursing Professions.

Moreover, the Prime Minister, at the beginning of last Session, debarred the introduction, by private members, of contested Bills into the House of Commons, on subjects unconnected with the war.

The registrationists have loyally accepted this decision, and, if they once more enter the arena, it is because they have been placed on guard in defence of the liberties of trained nurses, by the promotion of the Scheme for the organization of the nursing profession through a Voluntary College of Nursing.

Reference is made, in the Circular Letter announcing the Scheme, to the agitation, extending over a quarter of a century, in favour of the Registration of Trained Nurses.

The Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses represents by delegation the British Medical Association, the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, the Royal British Nurses' Association, the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, the Fever Nurses' Association, the Association for Promoting the Registration of Nurses in Scotland, the Scottish Nurses' Association, and the Irish Nurses' Association. It therefore voices the opinion of some 40,000 medical practitioners and certificated Matrons and Nurses, and is a force which cannot be ignored by the promoters of any Scheme for the organization of the nursing profession. It was constituted, with Lord Ampthill as Chairman, at a Conference of delegates of the affiliated Societies on January 25th, 1910, "for the purpose of securing united action in regard to State Registration, until a satisfactory law has been passed by Parliament."

The need for united action was occasioned by the fact that no less than three Bills for the Registration of Trained Nurses had been before Parliament in the previous session, and it was felt that if a conjoint Bill could be drafted the position of the movement would be strengthened.

This was achieved after the special points incorporated in the three Bills had been exhaustively considered, with an honest desire on the part

of the delegates and their constituent societies to arrive at an agreed Bill, and the result is the Bill in charge of Major Chapple in the House of Commons.

Before this stage had been reached, weighty opinion as to the advisability of Registration had been pronounced by both Houses of Parliament.

In 1905 a Select Committee of the House of Commons, after an exhaustive enquiry into the question extending over two Sessions, presented to Parliament a unanimous Report stating that they were agreed that "it is desirable that a Register of Trained Nurses should be kept by a Central Body appointed by the State."

In this connection we have the opinion of the Lord President of the Council (then the Earl of Crewe), who subsequently received a Deputation from the opponents of Registration, that "it was impossible to ignore the conclusions of the Select Committee which considered the question. Its Report must have due weight."

In 1908 the House of Lords considered, and rejected, the Nurses' Directory Bill, which embodied the dangerous principle of the government of the profession without consent, as it was recognised that a Directory was useless and dangerous unless based on a legal Register.

The Nurses' Registration Bill was then introduced in the same Session, by Lord Ampthill, and passed without a division having been taken at any stage, and with the support of the Government and of the Leader of the Opposition.

In 1914 when a division was challenged in the House of Commons, on the first reading of the Nurses' Registration Bill, introduced by Major Chapple on behalf of the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses under the ten minutes rule, the House, by a majority of 228, voted for leave to bring in the Bill. The majority was composed of Members of every party in the House, and included four Cabinet Ministers, and 23 Members of Parliament holding official posts of responsibility in Government Departments.

Yet, in spite of these facts, we have the anomaly of a Voluntary Scheme put forward without consultation with the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses, and are asked seriously to accept it in substitution for legal registration, under a Bill carefully drafted, debated, amended and accepted by medical and nursing associations, which have been considering the problems concerned in registration for the last quarter of a century.

It will be within the knowledge of most of those interested in the organization of nursing that the present application, if made, will be the third received by the Board of Trade within the last quarter of a century, for leave for groups of persons to become incorporated without the word "Limited," in order to obtain power to organize the Nursing Profession.

The first was made by the Royal British Nurses' Association in 1891, and was refused. The applicants then petitioned Her Majesty the Queen

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)