

STATE REGISTRATION AND THE NURSING COLLEGE.

DISCUSSION.

We publish below a full report of the Discussion which took place at the Conference between the Hon. Arthur Stanley and his advisers and the representatives of the Central Committee for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, at the Royal Automobile Club on March 2nd.

The Chairman said he presumed it was intended to take the Memorandum as the basis of discussion.

Dr. Goodall said that when Mr. Stanley was good enough to see him recently he had said that he would like to put off the present interview until the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Nursing College were drafted. The Central Committee had put its case before him in its Memorandum, and its representatives would be glad if he could give them a more detailed account of his scheme than was contained in his Circular Letter and in Miss Haughton's Paper. Such details, in fact, as would be put into the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

HON. ARTHUR STANLEY'S REPLY.

Mr. Stanley, replying, said he would take up some of the points in the Memorandum presented. His own Memorandum and Articles of Association were now being got out and were not yet in their final form, which might, indeed, depend a good deal upon what happened at that meeting.

They would take in as wide powers as possible so as to be able to do anything which might be required hereafter. The important point was the appointment of the first Council. It was necessary that it should be nominated, as there would be no members of the College in existence to elect it. Afterwards it would be elected by the nurses themselves and the few other people whom they chose to put on the Consultative Board, and who were members of the College. Then one-third of the Council would retire annually.

As to the question of whether or not this was the right time for action, his feeling and that of those who advised him, was that it was essentially the right time. At the end of the War, a large body of untrained women, members of Voluntary Aid Detachments and others, would come back and compete with trained nurses. The feeling about trained nurses was very strong and the appreciation of their work high at this moment, and nurses themselves were much more inclined to sink minor differences and unite in working for a common end. In the document read by Dr. Goodall, the whole argument was for State Recognition. With that he and his advisers were in utter agreement. The whole point between them was how that recognition was to be secured.

The Memorandum had referred to the majority on the division on the first reading of the Nurses' Registration Bill. He did not wish to raise controversial questions, but he did not think that constituted a very strong argument for the

Bill. Nine-tenths or more of the Bills introduced into the House of Commons did not have a division at all on the first reading, which was purely formal.* The fact that a division was taken proved that the opposition was strong, and that rather emphasised the point he wished to make. He did not see that in the objects of the promoters of the College Scheme and of the Societies represented, there was any difference. Where they differed was as to the best methods of obtaining those objects. If they proceeded by way of the Bill, all the difficulties as to setting up the Council, who was to be included in the Register and the penal clauses, would have to be discussed on the Bill. In his view, those points should be discussed and agreed upon before they went to Parliament to obtain a short and simple Bill like that of 1888, by which the Incorporated Law Society was enabled to keep the Roll of the Society. They first formed their Roll, and then took it to Parliament and asked it to acknowledge it.

There should be no difficulty as to agreement about a Bill, because the question had been thoroughly discussed, and they could take the existing Bill as a basis. They could eliminate from the Bill the Council which was to govern the Nursing Profession and the method by which the Register was to be formed.

The reference in the Memorandum to the fact that the College Scheme included amongst its supporters some of those who had been hostile to registration of nurses was, he thought, rather an argument in favour of his action, because he had already been able to interest some of those who formerly had not worked for State Registration.

With regard to the last paragraph of the Memorandum, he was entirely in favour of an agreed Bill. If the Matrons were agreeable, he believed that even at the present time, they could get a short and simple Bill enabling the College of Nursing to keep a Roll of Nurses. He thought there was quite a possibility of getting it passed as the Scottish Midwives Bill had been passed. He thought the Government realized that something was necessary, and that the country would be pleased to see anything done for the profession to which they owed so much.

PROFESSOR GLAISTER (Association for Promoting the State Registration of Nurses in Scotland), said that he came on a mission of enquiry, not to commit himself to any definite line of action. In the first place, the original document had been sent to the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow; they had read it through, and they thought they would wait. He, therefore, held a watching brief for that institution.

He would not be there with any appearance of doing away with the Bill for the State Registration of Nurses. He saw in the room several of its protagonists present at former Conferences. He did not desire to retire from the position taken up then.

* [The Nurses' Registration Bill in 1914 was introduced under the ten minutes rule.—ED.]

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