

Germany State Registration of Nurses had been proved to do all that it claimed to do.

#### A MOST IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE.

DR. GOODALL pointed out that the proposed Nursing College could not be compared with the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons. How many laymen, he asked, would be found on the governing bodies of those colleges, or of the Incorporated Law Society? The Nursing College scheme included them. That was a most important difference.

#### DR. COX SPEAKS FOR THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

DR. COX (British Medical Association) said that his Association was very interested in this question and on many occasions, at its annual meeting of delegates, had expressed its approval of the principle of State Registration of Nurses, and would be satisfied with no less.

Mr. Stanley believed that his scheme would lead to State Registration, but what guarantee would there be that State Registration would not be side-tracked?

The medical profession had been through the mill, and had serious difficulties with vested interests. It recognised years ago the undesirability of having so many entrances to the profession, and reformers had urged a one-portal system. The chief obstacle to this was the vested interests of the various corporations, and nurses would be unwise if they allowed themselves to get into a similar position, when by the exercise of a little foresight and resolution they might prevent it. The British Medical Association therefore wished to get the shortest cut for the anclliary profession of nursing. The Association represented more than half of the medical practitioners in the country, and no other could pretend to represent the medical profession. He saw no recognition of the British Medical Association in Mr. Stanley's scheme, though they had been so keenly interested in the question. It had opposed very strenuously various private efforts in the past, and was, moreover, very suspicious that some of the people behind this would use it as a means of side-tracking registration. That would be strenuously resisted. In the Memorandum presented on behalf of the Central Committee the olive branch was held out. If Mr. Stanley and his advisers were convinced of the soundness of the principle of State Registration, why not go on the more direct plan. If this scheme were proceeded with they would have to fight. Why not join hands and fight for something worth fighting for—State Registration and the one-portal system? Why not combine on the Bill, and see if the promoters of the College could not say where they considered it deficient, and whether it could not take the place of the College.

#### THE BILL AS THE BASIS OF DISCUSSION.

MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK said she was very gratified that for the first time State Registra-

tionists were really in consultation with the Matrons of the opposing training schools. She wished to support the last Clause in the Memorandum, which asked that the Bill might be taken as the basis of discussion. If all were in earnest, and believed that State Registration was the only basis on which organization could take place, this should be possible.

She strongly disapproved of the substitution of a Nursing College for a Nurses' Registration Act, and she thought she had a right to an opinion as she had been working for nearly 30 years for the organization of the Nursing Profession and had also visited Canada, America, France, Germany, Holland and Scandinavia, to study what was being done and what were the aspirations and convictions of nurses, and found that the most intelligent nurses all over the world desired to build up their profession on the basis of legal status.

Since they had begun to discuss the scheme in 1887 in this country, the nurses of a number of countries and States had organized and obtained State registration, and 53 Nurses' Registration Acts were now in operation. Voluntary registration without the basis of legal status had been tried in this country, but it had not succeeded, because it was not good enough. An adequate form of legal status meant professional enfranchisement. That was what nurses were out for and meant to have. She believed in the direct road, not the most expedient.

The Voluntary College Scheme would not satisfy those women who had been working for so many years to organize the profession. There were hundreds who would not come in if they were not going to get legal status, or any economic protection.

If they could all confer, taking the Nurses' Registration Bill as a basis of discussion, there was no reason why they should not get an agreed Bill. She had come there representing societies which numbered 6,000 nurses to ask if it were not possible to have this conference.

Almost the whole of the professional opposition would be eliminated if those supporting the two schemes could arrive at an agreed Bill. She therefore urged most earnestly that Mr. Stanley and his advisers would agree to another Conference at which they could take the Nurses' Registration Bill clause by clause, and see if as reasonable people, all desiring the welfare of the nursing profession, they could not come to agreement. If they could not agree she was bound to say that the two Societies she represented intended to oppose the College Scheme, as they believed that State Registration would be side-tracked for so long that the majority of those who had made it their life's work would not live to see it. They had convinced the electorate that State Registration of Nurses was the right thing, they had convinced Members of Parliament as to the necessity for the organization of this

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)