

THE NURSING PROFESSION AND THE BOARD OF TRADE.

THE CITY FINANCIERS AND THE NURSES.

In our last issue we gave a short résumé of the application of the Royal British Nurses' Association made in 1891 to the Board of Trade for incorporation without the word "Limited" and the unconstitutional manner in which the application was refused by the then President of the Board of Trade in best High Tory style. The Privy Council was then applied to for a Royal Charter, which, after a battle royal, was granted to the Association in 1892, and which gives powers to organise nursing education with much greater prestige than any system can do under the Companies Acts—by the Board of Trade—even if the word "Limited" be omitted. That the Royal British Nurses Association never made full use of its privileges is now an oft-told story, to which we need not here refer. What interests us is the fact that in 1905 the Nursing World was astounded to find (then as now) that a few hospital managers and Matrons had privately associated themselves together in support of a Scheme calling itself "The Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses," which emanated primarily from Miss S. A. Swift, the then Matron of Guy's Hospital; the Memorandum and Articles of Association were signed by Lords Rothschild and Revelstoke, and Messrs. E. A. Hambro, S. Hope Morley, C. H. Goschen, Hugh C. Smith, and H. Cosmo O. Bonsor, the Treasurer of Guy's Hospital. These wealthy hospital Governors applied to the Board of Trade for the most absolute power over the Nursing Profession, their professional education, training, examination, discipline, and control, to place the names of nurses on and off a register, conduct a nursing newspaper, calendar, and other publications, accept gifts, acquire property, and raise money, and when thought advisable promote a Royal Charter or Act of Parliament for the purposes of the Society, and do all such lawful things as seemed good in their own judgment.

As can be imagined, this bomb startled the nursing profession into instant action. Telegrams flashed north, south, east and west, meetings were hurriedly summoned and resolutions of indignant protest unanimously passed. Lord Rothschild was inundated with letters of a like nature. He, good man, had been informed the scheme was calculated to benefit the nursing profession—to save it, indeed, from wicked democratic disintegration. He had a very rude awakening. Later came the turn of the President of the Board of Trade. Showers of protests crammed his post-bag daily, and finally, when the Comptroller of the Companies Department received the antagonists in battle array at the office of the Board of Trade, Mr. Cosmo Bonsor was the only signatory present!

We reprint the Report of the proceedings in full as the majority of the arguments advanced are apposite to the Stanley Scheme, as projected in

the Circular Letter and might well be used in opposing it.

MEETING AT THE BOARD OF TRADE.

On Friday, May 5th, 1905, the Board of Trade afforded those who had opposed the application of the City Financiers for the Licence of the Board to incorporate as "The Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education of Nurses" an opportunity of stating their objections.

The Societies represented were:—

The British Medical Association, represented by Sir Victor Horsley, Chairman of the Representative Meetings; Mr. Andrew Clark, President of the Council; Dr. Galton, Dr. Langley Browne, and Mr. Whitaker, Medical Secretary.

The British Gynæcological Society, represented by Dr. Bedford Fenwick.

The Midland Medical Society, represented by Dr. Langley Browne.

The Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland, represented by Mr. Swanzy.

The Royal British Nurses' Association, represented by Sir James Crichton Browne, Mr. John Langton, Dr. Bezly Thorne, Dr. Godson, Dr. Comyns Berkeley, and Mrs. Coster, the Nurse Hon. Secretary.

The Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, represented by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick and Miss Mollett.

The Matrons' Council, represented by Miss Isla Stewart, President, and Miss M. Breay, Hon. Secretary.

The League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses, also represented by Miss Isla Stewart, President.

The Scottish Committee for Promoting the State Registration of Trained Nurses, represented by Miss K. Burleigh.

The Irish Nurses' Association, represented by Miss Huxley.

The Registered Nurses' Society, represented by Miss E. J. Hurlston, Miss Calderwood, and Miss Macpherson.

Miss E. C. Barton, Matron Chelsea Infirmary (Metropolitan Infirmary Matrons).

The Central Hospital Council for London, represented by the Hon. Sydney Holland and Mr. Charles Burt.

Miss Mackintosh, Assistant Matron, and another member of the London Hospital Nursing Staff were also present.

Mr. Barnes, Comptroller of the Companies' Department, presided. Mr. Cosmo Bonsor, Treasurer of Guy's, was the only signatory present; and the following promoters: Miss Swift, Matron of Guy's, Miss C. J. Wood, and Sir Henry Burdett.

In opening the proceedings, the Chairman stated that an immense number of objections had been received to the scheme—a pile of these, about a foot high, was on the table at his side—and the President of the Board of Trade thought it only just and right that these objections which appeared so important to those who advanced them

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