

this principle as absolutely essential, both to the safety of the individual nurse and to the success of any scheme of professional government, and in the Nurses' Registration Bill promoted by the Society which I have the honour to represent, it will be observed that the General Nursing Council, or governing body, is largely composed of Direct Representatives, elected by the registered nurses themselves.

3. In connection with the maintenance of a Register of Nurses, the new Society seeks power "to remove from such Register the name or names of any person or persons as the Society may in its discretion think proper." It is submitted that such powers involving the professional ruin of a trained nurse should not be exercised at the sole discretion of any Society, but only after the person concerned has been *proved* guilty of serious misconduct, and has had an opportunity of being heard in her own defence, either personally or through her legal adviser, for which no provision is made in the Memorandum or Articles of Association. It is noteworthy that a quorum of three, or at an adjourned meeting of the Council, of two, could exercise this most arbitrary and dangerous power.

4. In the opinion of this Society the question of the organisation of Nursing by State Registration has passed out of the realm of experiment; voluntary measures have been tried and have failed, even under Royal patronage and high professional auspices. Organisation and Registration under State authority was recommended by the late Sir Henry Acland, Regius Professor of Medicine in the University of Oxford, as far back as the year 1874, and for twenty years trained nurses have been working to this end, and there is now a considerable force of medical, nursing, and public opinion in favour of an Act of Parliament to place nursing education on a definite and sound theoretical and practical basis, under the control of a representative Nursing Council. Two Bills with this object have been introduced into the House of Commons this Session, promoted respectively by this Society and the Royal British Nurses' Association. As the result of the interest aroused in this proposed legislation for nurses, a Select Committee on Nursing of the House of Commons was appointed by the Government last Session to consider and report on the whole matter, and is continuing its inquiry this Session. The whole question of the organisation of Nursing is thus *sub-judice*. It is, therefore, submitted that the application of the new Society for incorporation by the Board of Trade is most inopportune, and that it would cause great and needless confusion if legal authority were conferred on any body of unprofessional persons, empowering them to deal with the important questions which are now under the consideration of Parliament.

5. Acts of Parliament for the Registration of Nurses have already been passed in several British colonies—

1. Under the Medical and Pharmacy Acts, Cape of Good Hope, 1891.

2. Under the Medical and Pharmacy Acts, Natal, 1899.

3. Under Nurses' Registration Bill, New Zealand, 1901.

4. Several Acts providing for the Registration of Trained Nurses have been passed in the United States in—North Carolina, 1903; New York, 1903; New Jersey, 1903; Virginia, 1903; Maryland, 1904; California and Indiana, 1905.

The nurses in many other States are agitating for similar legislation. It is officially reported that State Registration of Nurses is proving, as anticipated, of great benefit to the public, to the medical profession, and to the nurses themselves.

6. We therefore submit that the interests involved in the organisation, control, and discipline of nurses, affecting as they do every class in the community, are too serious and complex to be effectively dealt with except by a Representative Board possessing authority conferred by Act of Parliament.

7. This Society of Matrons and nurses, therefore, most respectfully petitions the Board of Trade to refuse the application for Incorporation of the Signatories to the Memorandum of Association of "The Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses."

Mrs. Fenwick further said she would like to point out that the Central Hospital Council for London was composed of managers of the great hospitals, the nurses had no representation upon it. She entirely agreed with Sir James Crichton Browne as to the ulterior influence which must inevitably be exercised by the millionaire signatories if this scheme were sanctioned. It was quite preposterous to suppose that nurses could assume an independent position and stand out against it. Those interested were most generous supporters of hospitals; some of them had seats on the Central Hospital Council, the Council of the King's Fund, the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses, the Hospital Sunday Fund, and, no doubt, the Saturday Fund. If they pushed the scheme, was it possible for the nurses to take an independent position?

In regard to finance, the nurses were given no voice in the expenditure of the funds which they subscribed. Nurses desired to defray their own expenses and to control their own expenditure.

THE BRITISH GYNÆCOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Dr. Bedford Fenwick said that he had been requested by the Council of the British Gynæcological Society to represent it on this occasion. Much that he desired to say had been so excellently said by previous speakers that he would confine his remarks chiefly to the special points alluded to by the Chairman. He desired, then, to call attention to the fact that there existed a most important precedent with regard to this particular application for the licence of the Board of Trade. In February, 1891, the Royal British Nurses' Association applied to the Board for their licence, under the 23rd Section of the Companies

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)