

NO NURSES' REGISTRATION BILL.

QUESTION IN THE HOUSE.

On Wednesday, November 1st, Major Chapple asked the Prime Minister "Whether, in view of the increasing urgency of enabling those in need of nurses to distinguish those who are fully trained from those who are not, and in recognition of the national work performed by nurses in the care of the sick and wounded, he would bring in a Bill on similar lines to the one submitted to him by the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses?"

To which the Prime Minister made a written reply: "This is a highly controversial proposal, as my hon. friend is aware, and I cannot at the present time undertake to introduce it."

The question, therefore, of the passage of a Nurses' Registration Bill is disposed of, we presume, for the period of the war, and the reply of the Prime Minister is just what might have been expected. No one knows better than Mr. Asquith the true significance of this controversy. It is a simple fight—and always has been—between employer and employed, and Mr. Asquith has no disposition to take a strong lead and settle this economic controversy between Hospital Governors on the one hand and the Nursing Profession on the other.

We are inclined to think that during the War any hasty legislation on this question might result in penalising the nurses. There is no doubt that the professional nurse has suffered grave depreciation owing to autocratic military and social control—and this spirit is apparently rampant at the present time.

Two Bills have now been drafted: (1) That known as the Nurses' Bill, drafted by the Central Committee and supported by the British Medical Association and the self-governing Nurses' organizations; and (2) the College of Nursing Bill—now known as the Employers' Bill—which denies direct representation *in the Bill* to the self-governing Nurses' organizations on the First Council, which is to have power to make the Rules which registered nurses will have to obey. This principle of direct representation is the fundamental principle of good government, and the registrationists prefer no Bill to one which will deprive them of liberty of conscience, action and self-respect.

They opposed and defeated the Nurses' Directory Bill in the House of Lords for this reason; and intend to oppose any Bill which secures the control of the nursing profession to hospital committees and other lay employers—so that if better counsels do not prevail on the Council of the Nursing College, State Registration will remain "a highly controversial proposal" until the Government of the day has the courage to grant the same protection to trained nurses as has been granted to the medical and teaching professions.

We workers are all looking forward to progressive social legislation after the War, including

the Parliamentary franchise; and as we have been kept waiting for State Registration for a quarter of a century, we have learned patience. What is vital is that legislation should be just to the workers.

In the meantime, let us organize.

WHY WOMEN NEED THE VOTE.

It is rumoured that at least three members of the Cabinet "have pledged themselves" that no Nurses' Registration Bill shall be brought in by the Government. It would be interesting to know to whom the pledge has been made. Of course, no one can possibly guess!

THE TEST OF CONVICTION.

In forwarding a most generous donation of £10 to the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, Miss B. Kent writes:—"The appeal of Miss Hawkins in the journal this week for £100 in support of State Registration, is one which surely no nurse will be able to resist. Gratitude for your willing voluntary work for the nursing profession will certainly induce nurses to contribute what they can, and feel it a privilege to do so. This is a time for plain, direct, and sincere speech, and Miss Hawkins has uttered it. I endorse every word she says. The manner of response to her appeal at this time, when the nursing profession may be said to be in the crucible, will be the 'test of conviction' of all those who read it, and I feel very, very hopeful of the result."

WEDDING BELLS.

The engagement is announced of Sir William James Thomas, the Welsh coalowner and philanthropist, to Miss Maud Mary Cooper, Assistant Matron at the King Edward VII Hospital, Cardiff.

Sir William is a generous friend of the hospital, and he recently gave £100,000 to establish a Welsh National Medical School. Miss Cooper is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. G. Cooper, Hessele House, Bexhill.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING offers good wishes for a happy future. Let us hope the bride will help to forward the interests of the fine profession to which she belongs.

ILLNESS OF MISS HAUGHTON.

The news of the very serious illness of Miss L. V. Haughton, Matron of Guy's Hospital, will be received with sincere regret throughout the nursing world. The last accounts are, we are glad to say, slightly better.

THE PASSING BELL.

We record with much regret the death of Miss Edith Shepherd, who passed away on October 22nd, after a long and painful illness. She was trained at the Mill Road Infirmary, Liverpool, and for the past nine years has been district nurse for Shotton and Queensferry. She was laid to rest at Hawarden on October 26th.

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