

A STATEMENT

ISSUED BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR THE STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

The following Statement has been prepared on the instruction of the Central Committee, by its Executive Committee, concerning the negotiations which, unfortunately, have not resulted in agreement, between the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses, and the College of Nursing, Limited, negotiations entered into with the object of drafting a conjoint Nurses' Registration Bill.

The question of the State Registration of Trained Nurses has been before the public for the past quarter of a century, and, upon the initiation of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, a Bill was drafted which was introduced into Parliament in 1904, and in every subsequent session up to 1909.

In 1909 there were three Bills for this reform before Parliament, promoted respectively by the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, the Royal British Nurses' Association, and the Association for Promoting the Registration of Nurses in Scotland.

In January, 1910, upon the suggestion of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, a Conference was held in London with the object of drafting a Bill which would be acceptable to the three bodies which, at that time, had Bills before Parliament, and to a number of Societies interested in the subject of State Registration of Nurses.

At this Conference, the Bill promoted by the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, which Lord Ampthill had carried through the House of Lords in 1908, was taken as a basis of negotiations. Lord Ampthill presided, and the following societies were represented:—The Royal British Nurses' Association, the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, the Fever Nurses' Association, the Association for Promoting the Registration of Nurses in Scotland, the Scottish Nurses' Association, the Irish Nurses' Association, and the British Medical Association.

At this Conference a permanent Committee—the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses—consisting of five delegates from each of the above-mentioned societies was formed—to which the National Union of Trained Nurses has since been affiliated—for the purpose of securing united action in regard to State Registration until a satisfactory law was passed by Parliament.

As a result of the Conference a Bill was agreed upon which received the support of all the Societies represented.

The Nurses' Registration Bill, above referred to, was introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. (now Sir Ronald) Munro Ferguson in 1910,

and at every subsequent session of the House until 1914.

As it was persistently blocked, and the Government did not allot time for its consideration, it did not reach a second reading.

In March, 1914, the Bill was introduced by Dr. Chapple under the ten minutes' rule, and, upon a division being demanded, leave to bring in the Bill was given by a majority of 229.

When war broke out, the Prime Minister debarred the introduction by private members of contested Bills into the House of Commons on subjects unconnected with the war, and the Bill of the Central Committee was therefore not introduced in 1915. The Committee realised also that the care of the sick and wounded would engage the attention and energy of the medical and nursing professions to the almost total exclusion of other subjects.

But on December 30th, 1915, the Honourable Arthur Stanley, M.P., Chairman of the Joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society, and the Order of St. John, addressed a letter to the Chairmen of the Committees of Management of the principal hospitals and infirmaries in the United Kingdom, in which he advocated the establishment of a College of Nursing.

In this letter, Mr. Stanley stated that "there is no unanimous feeling, either amongst those responsible for the training of nurses, or amongst the nurses themselves, in favour of any system of State Registration," and that his own view was "that, for the time, at least, we must rely upon a voluntary scheme of co-operation amongst the Nurse Training Schools throughout the country."

In appealing to the Chairmen and Governors of leading hospitals, physicians and surgeons lecturing to nurses, the Principals of Nurse-Training Schools, and of Nursing Associations, and other persons interested in the education of women to promote the College, Mr. Stanley failed to approach the Central Committee, or any of the self-governing associations of nurses.

His proposition was that the College was to be registered with its Memorandum and Articles of Association, at the Board of Trade, and that application should be made to the Board for its approval to omit the word "Limited" from the title of the Association. Notice was given, however, to the Board of Trade that certain trained nurses' associations intended to oppose the application, in the event of its being made, as they had successfully opposed, in 1905, a practically identical scheme which had been promoted under the title of "The Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses" primarily by some of the persons who were now promoting the College of Nursing.

The promoters of the College, therefore, decided to register with the Board of Trade as a "Company Limited by Guarantee, and not having a share capital." The medical and nursing professions had, therefore, no opportunity of repre-

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