

level. He did not regard the nursing profession as a subordinate, but as a kindred profession. He had long believed in the equality of men and women and in women's franchise, and so he did not find himself in the humiliating position of those who argued that before the war women were not capable of voting, so they ought to have no rights, no privileges; but they had been very handy in the war, so now the franchise should be extended to them. He considered it an insult to take up that position.

Every argument in favour of giving women the vote was an argument in favour of registration of nurses, and if, during the last ten years, women had been enfranchised, State Registration of Nurses would have been an accomplished fact.

Politicians deferred to those who had votes, and if we were to wait until women obtained the franchise before a Nurses' Registration Bill were passed he (Major Chapple) predicted that he would have rivals in the House of Commons wanting to introduce Nurses' Registration Bills, and the reptile Press reporting his speeches.

Legislation would be in the interests of nurse training. He saw no reason why a girl should do so much scrubbing and cleaning as a probationer any more than that a student should be set to groom the doctor's horse in his first year. One of the first things that would happen would be that the whole curriculum of training would be altered, and hospitals giving an approved training would be scheduled. There would be rivalry as to which was the best school, and probationers would be started with a professional training and not asked to do charing. They would not get girls to do domestic service and charing because it was an economical method of getting this work done, nor would nurses consent to receive 11s. 6d. a week at the end of their second year when a hospital received £2 2s. for their services as private nurses.

The iniquity there was twofold. The nurse was imposed upon because she was deprived of her third year's training in hospital, and the patient was prevented from having a trained nurse and was not being given his two guineas' worth. It was further robbing the nurse. If she was worth £2 2s., why pay her 11s. 6d.?

With better training nurses would have a better status in the community, and nursing would attract better educated girls. He was not speaking in the interest of any section of the class, but the better educated the girl the better the nurse she was going to make. State Registration of Nurses, and the consequent reforms, were inevitable.

He believed that a new era was opening for women, in status, in influence, and in public service. They had demonstrated anew their physical capacity to take their place beside men in all the risks and hardships and feats of endurance, incidental to a great war. They had demonstrated anew their intellectual capacity to see with unerring vision the great moral issues of a world war of unparalleled complexity.

It was not our women (though there were more broken hearts amongst them than there were

broken bodies on the battlefield), it was not our women who opposed this war of right over wrong, of civilisation over barbarism, of Christ over paganism, or who cry "Peace! Peace!" when there can be no peace. The story of woman's service and especially of their nursing service, in this war, their loyalty to our high tradition, their courage in every danger, their endurance in every hardship, their acceptance of the war as a lesser evil than national dishonour would be written in History to the credit of our time and the glory of our race.

RESOLUTIONS.

Miss M. F. Rimmer, Hon. Secretary of the National Union of Trained Nurses, then moved the first resolution, and in so doing, asked leave to make one or two slight alterations in the wording. She then proposed it in the following form:—

I.

"That the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, in Annual Meeting assembled, desires (1) to endorse the action of the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses in insisting on the direct representation of the organised Societies of Nurses, on the Provisional Governing Body defined by the Nurses' Registration Bill; and (2) to thank the Central Committee for keeping faith with the members of these Societies, in regard to this essential principle, in its negotiations with the College of Nursing, Ltd."

Miss Rimmer said that she felt the proposals of the College of Nursing were an insult to women. She did not think they would ever have been made to men. Had it not been for Dr. Chapple, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, and Dr. Goodall, the real effect of these proposals which were drafted with a good deal of skill, might not have been grasped at once. It was marvellous how they saw the dangers, and coped with them.

Miss H. L. Pearse, in seconding the Resolution, said that the nursing profession owed a debt of gratitude to the Central Committee, which never grudged time or trouble where the registration of nurses was concerned. The proposals of the College of Nursing were drafted in a very clever way, and it was only when they came to be discussed, that their effect was apparent. In regard to the second part of the resolution, she would like very especially to thank the Central Committee. If the importance of the direct representation of the Nurses' Societies on the Provisional Council had not been recognised, it would have taken years for the Nursing Profession to attain real self-government, if ever they did so. She thought the nurses' interests were safe with the Central Committee.

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

The next Resolution was proposed by Miss E. B. Kingsford as follows:—

II.

"This meeting is of opinion that it is most anomalous that Societies or Hon. Officers that have ceased to support, or who are even actively working against the principles defined and adopted

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)