

IRISH NURSES AND THE COLLEGE OF NURSING.

A meeting of members of the medical and nursing professions was held in the Royal College of Physicians, Dublin, in the afternoon of the 27th ult., to hear an explanation of the project of the Royal British Nursing College. Dr. Joseph O'Carroll, President R.C.P., occupied the chair. There was a crowded attendance, and much interest was manifested in the subject.

Miss R. Cox-Davies, R.R.C., and Miss M. S. Rundle, R.R.C., Secretary of the College, addressed the meeting.

The Chairman stated that the object of the meeting was that those present might learn about the proposed Royal British Nursing College and to discuss whether it would be advisable for Irish Nurses to join the organisation or not, but it was not intended that any resolutions should be passed or that they should arrive at any conclusion.

Miss Cox-Davies said that she had been a keen registrationist all through her nursing career, and therefore took a great interest in the Nursing College, as she believed that it was through it Nurses would get State Registration. She was sure there were many in the room who had not yet made up their minds as to whether or not this College would be of good service to the profession, but asked all those present to work it out with an unbiassed mind remembering that a great change had taken place since 1914, and asked them to think of the educational value of such a College.

It was impossible to speak of the founding of the College without thinking of the leaders in the movement for State Registration. Those standing out remarkably were Miss Isla Stewart, who went to her rest before seeing the fruits of her work, and Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. It was hardly necessary to speak of the work of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick to Irish Nurses and of all Nurses owed to her in the movement for State Registration, but she was sorry to say some of the leaders did not see quite eye to eye with those connected with the present scheme, but whenever or however they got registration, they would always owe a great debt of gratitude to those leaders who worked for it as few women have ever worked.

The College originated in a desire on the part of the Red Cross to give certificates to the V.A.D. nursing members.

The danger after the war to trained nurses from the V.A.D.'s she believed to be non-existent, as large numbers would return to civil life, and the others would recognise that they should take out a full training. Mr. Stanley thought that the scheme of the College was the one solution of the difficulty, and that some great educational body should be started which would gain the support of those who were against the Nurses' Registration Bill, and that a voluntary register should be kept by the College. When Mr. Stanley found there was a demand for State Registration, he put State Registration as the first thing the College

should strive for. One of the greatest difficulties was that if the training schools did not forward the movement, no Bill for State Registration would stand a good chance of being carried through the House of Commons.

At a meeting held in London on the 18th ult. the College of Nursing, Ltd., amalgamated with the Royal British Nurses' Association, and the name of the College became "The Royal British College of Nursing." The word "Ltd." had been dropped and the reason why it was ever used was because Mr. Stanley thought that Registration was the one thing to be fought for, and that incorporating the College under the Board of Trade would be the shortest way to get it. Unity in the Nursing Profession was the most important point towards getting registration. The obtaining of the Royal Charter was owing to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's untiring work, and the College hoped the time would come when it would be able to work with her instead of leaving her behind.* Miss Cox-Davies went on to say that the College was established whether the nurses wanted it or not, and hoped its register, which was growing by leaps and bounds, would become a State Register. When the Bill went to Parliament depended largely on when it received the support of the whole of the Nursing Profession. Scotland had already formed its local board and what was now needed was for Ireland to decide whether she wanted to be included in the College.

There were problems in Ireland as well as in Scotland and England which needed solving, and it would be better for Ireland to have its own representatives sitting on the Council of the College from the start. Miss Cox-Davies asked the Nurses as well as the Matrons and Superintendents who were present to decide whether they did or did not wish to be represented on the Council of the College of Nursing. She and Miss Rundle had come over from England for the purpose of answering questions. The one way in which Irish Nurses could help was by building up the register and so strengthening the hands of those going to Parliament with the Bill.

Miss Rundle then addressed the meeting and explained that the Council realized that there were questions in Ireland and Scotland which English Nurses could not solve, so the representatives of the local boards would come to London and help to settle these questions. Scotland had already formed its local board and had its representatives on the Council. There were still six places left unfilled, and she hoped those six would be filled

* It is certainly a matter for sincere congratulation that, after a quarter of a century in the rear, the promoters of the College have at last caught up with Mrs. Bedford Fenwick on the State Registration question, and are also prepared to make use of the Royal Charter, the grant of which they so strenuously opposed. If they "step lively," eyes front, they may be able to avail themselves of further privileges won by the progressives, who may be out of sight but not "behind." Joking apart, when the College is prepared to agree to a just Bill, there will be a united professional demand for it.

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