

stituted to subsequent Councils, and it was charged with the most important duty of framing the Rules and Regulations which the nurses would have to obey. The College of Nursing had a different arrangement. It proposed to appoint certain persons to form a Provisional Council, and that they should forthwith prepare and present to the Privy Council the Rules to be made for setting up the General Nursing Council. The Central Committee thought that would be done in too much of a hurry. The Electorate in that case would be formed of members of the College. There should be a longer time from the setting up of the First Council for the formation of the Register.

In regard to Supplementary Registers the Central Committee only provided for those of male and mental nurses. How many the College proposed to set up was not known. But the provision in the College Bill in regard to such registers was a blow against the one-portal system, which was the chief point of the Central Committee's Bill. Supplementary Registers opened back doors and side doors to the nursing profession. (Applause.)

These were points which would very seriously affect the working of the Act. The Central Committee wanted the registered nurses to have control of their own affairs.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Mrs. Bedford Fenwick to address the meeting.

#### MRS. FENWICK'S EIGHT POINTS.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said Colonel Goodall suggested that she should refer to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the College of Nursing, Ltd.

Briefly in 1905 a scheme for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses was launched by the officials of Guy's Hospital, and an application made for its incorporation by the Board of Trade without the word "Limited." This scheme included clauses for the registration of nurses, and was opposed by the British Medical Association, and the Royal British Nurses' Association, and the Society for State Registration (which had Nurses' Registration Bills before Parliament), and other organized societies of nurses in England, Scotland, and Ireland. Indeed, when the objectors appeared before the Board of Trade the pile of documents in opposition were over a foot high.

The application was not granted, but its consideration deferred "until the Bills now before Parliament for the Registration of Nurses have been disposed of." No more was heard of the project until 1915, when the scheme for the promotion of the College of Nursing, Ltd., was proposed by the Chairman of the Red Cross Society, upon the suggestion of the same people, notably Sir Cooper Perry, Medical Superintendent, and Miss Swift, late Matron Guy's Hospital. Comparison of the two Constitutions showed that they were almost identical.

This scheme in 1915 for the control of the nursing profession was not addressed to it, but to the Chairmen and Governors of hospitals, and to Poor Law Guardians, and one of its proposals was the formation of a Consultative Board, representa-

tive of the interests of employers, which, if everyone invited had responded to the invitation, might have consisted of some 2,000 lay persons.

The proposition was that Registration of Nurses should be carried out by a voluntary body, and it was astounding that such a recommendation, substituting a voluntary scheme for legal status, should have been supported by professional men and women. During the many years in which independent trained nurses had been advocating and working for State Registration in this country, many of our overseas Dominion Governments had effected such legislation, and by 1915 forty-two States in America had passed Nurses' Registration Acts. We in this country had been working and paying for this reform for twenty years, and it was an outrage to the intelligence of the trained nurses in this country to attempt to offer them a voluntary instead of a legal system of registration.

When, however, the promoters of the College found that they would get little support unless they advocated State Registration, they adopted that principle, and had these anti-registrationists been really converted to the principle, and desirous of supporting self-government for nurses, they would have approached the Central Committee, which had already drafted a Bill, upon which much conscientious expert thought had been expended, but they did no such thing, but themselves drafted a Bill—a mere skeleton of legislation, an action lacking both in courtesy and consideration towards the organized members of the nursing profession; since which time there had been seven successive drafts of that ineffective Bill, in which principles of good government inserted in one had been eliminated from the next!

There were certain fundamental principles for which the Central Committee stood firm throughout subsequent negotiations, and which we still demanded should be incorporated in any Bill to which we could give our support.

#### THE EIGHT POINTS.

Mrs. Fenwick said we had heard a great deal lately of the fourteen points. There were eight points in connection with the differences in the two Bills drafted by the Central Committee and the College, to which she wished to briefly allude.

#### AN INDEPENDENT GOVERNING BODY.

1. The incorporation of a lay Company (the College of Nursing), as proposed in its Bill. Independence of outside influence, in any Statutory Authority set up by Parliament to govern the nursing profession, was essential. The medical colleges were not incorporated in the Medical Acts which provided for the Registration of members of the medical profession, nor did these Colleges attempt to enforce discipline, or define educational standards, throughout the medical profession. That was the function of the General Medical Council—an independent Governing Body. Again the great public voice of the medical profession was expressed through the British Medical Association. The nurses could not do better than follow the policy of the inter-dependent profession

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)