

dressed by an intelligent Government in the future, and they petitioned that they might be enabled to qualify themselves more efficiently for the benefit of the community, through the establishment of a carefully drafted Nurses' Registration Act.

LIEUT.-COLONEL E. W. GOODALL.

Lieut.-Colonel Goodall said that he was very glad to hear, on the authority of the President of the Local Government Board in a recent speech, that, in the proposals for the establishment of a Ministry of Health, the Nursing aspect would be considered.

How was the question to be considered, however, if no standard of nursing education existed? This question of standardisation would have to be tackled. Emphasising his knowledge of the need, through personal experience, Colonel Goodall said that he had been engaged in the administration of hospitals for many years past, and it had been left to him almost entirely, or to the matron with whom he was associated, to decide on the qualifications of the nurses he engaged; there was no standard of efficiency which a nurse was required to attain, and there was no standard as to the efficiency of a nurse training school.

If, on the other hand, the application of a medical man for an appointment was under consideration, he knew that he had attained the standard laid down by the General Medical Council.

Every medical man must be interested in nursing matters, for the nursing profession was the handmaid of the medical profession, and every professional nurse worked under a doctor. The British Medical Association, the largest Association of medical practitioners, had always very keenly supported the establishment of a State Register of Nurses. If the Ministry of Health took up the Nursing Question this would involve the definition of what was a trained nurse, and what was a Training School for nurses. The reason why the State Registration of Trained Nurses had not hitherto been enforced in this country was on account of the opposition of vested interests.

Between thirteen and fourteen years ago a Select Committee of the House of Commons had unanimously reported to Parliament in favour of the State Registration of Nurses. A Bill presented by Lord Ampthill on behalf of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses had actually passed through the House of Lords in 1908, and was the basis of the Bill at present promoted by the Central Committee.

Concluding, Colonel Goodall said that he strongly supported the Nursing Profession in its endeavour to get a Bill passed, for the safety of medical men and the public.

If a medical man required a nurse he usually had to obtain one through an institution, and unless he knew the Superintendent, and could trust her selection, he might find a very inefficient nurse sent to him. Again, women were palmed

off on the public who were not trained nurses. It was very important to the public, the nursing profession, and the medical profession, that an Act for the State Registration of Trained Nurses should be passed without delay.

MISS FLORENCE WISE.

Miss Florence Wise pointed out that the method in use in recent years in filling up the ranks of Infant Welfare Workers, from people possessing low grade professional qualifications, was little calculated to secure satisfactory results.

At the present time the proposed entrance of demobilised members of the Voluntary Aid Detachments into this field of work called for grave consideration. She gave full credit for their services during the war, but pointed out that having helped to nurse soldiers did not render them competent to teach and advise mothers, and that the great responsibility of those entrusted with the care of infant life was not to be lightly undertaken by the kind-hearted, the well-meaning, or the enthusiasts, unless, possessing these admirable qualities, they also had thorough and comprehensive training, wide knowledge of disease, and the power, based on a large experience of life, to impart knowledge, and give advice, in such a manner, and with such discretion, that it might be readily assimilated and accepted.

Miss Wise maintained, though some people asserted that those whose training had been in the care of the sick were not the best fitted for this work, that symptoms of disease, were more quickly and accurately recognised by those who had practical knowledge of disease than by those whose information had been culled from text books, and that it could not be too strongly emphasised that a slight and quickly acquired acquaintance with any subject was a positive hindrance to the establishment of a firm, solid and lasting basis of the work. The mere superficial dealing with details would not strike at the vital question, but would be rather calculated to weaken and injure the cause.

As Superintendent of a large Infant Welfare Centre, she had invariably found that the partly trained worker had not the power to exercise judgment based on thorough knowledge. Health visiting must be something more than a kindly chat, or a conscientious pointing out of defects. A profound knowledge of human nature was needed, and a highly trained power of influence, in order to call forth the active and intelligent co-operation of the mothers, without which the work must fail to attain its objects of the reduction of infant mortality, the prevention of disease, and the education of the people in the laws of health and hygiene.

If Infant Welfare work were to safeguard the lives of England's potential citizens, the three years' hospital training, followed by training in sanitary science, and in social science was not too long; rather, it was essential to fit any one, however enthusiastic she might be, for such an important branch of State work.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)