

for the public that they are getting what they ask for, and that when they ask for a registered nurse it will mean a nurse with a certain standard of training and efficiency. (Hear, hear.) It will also help the medical profession, because they will be able to rely on the qualification not given by merely one hospital, as is the case usually now, but a general qualification which has been set up by the body representing the whole of the nursing profession and the medical profession.

NO STANDARD AT PRESENT.

It seems to me that as things stand at present there is really no standard. Every hospital is a law unto itself, and there may be a very much better system of training in one hospital than in another. Here you get standardisation which would be to the interests of the hospitals, and especially the smaller hospitals which at present have to look to the great hospitals for their trained nurses. The smaller hospitals under this Bill, if they satisfy the General Council of Nursing as to their training, will in many cases be able to train their own nurses.

QUALIFICATION TO BE STIFFENED UP AFTER THREE YEARS.

After the period of three years no one can be registered except those who satisfy the requirements, which are that the person who claims to be registered shall be a British subject of at least twenty-one years of age and of good character and has gone through the curriculum laid down by the Council of Nursing, which will include an examination. In other words, the qualification will be somewhat stiffened up after the three years. There is a similar provision in the Midwives Bill, and when you are dealing with a vocation which already exists you must facilitate people getting on to the register who are fairly competent and who have been carrying on the duties up to the present. But the idea of this Bill is to set up at the end of that three years perhaps a little higher standard than some of those nurses have attained who will come on the register now. There will be a higher standard set up and maintained. Clause 16 provides for the register, and that register is to be a general register of women nurses registered under this Act.

SUPPLEMENTARY REGISTERS.

There is to be a supplementary register of male nurses, and a further supplementary register of mental nurses, and the House will see that both of those supplementary registers are of a type of nurses who are really not sick nurses at all. Male nurses and mental or psychological nurses have a different training altogether, and must be put on a supplementary register. A question will, no doubt, be raised in Committee, if the Bill secures its Second Reading, whether there ought not to be further supplementary registers for the enrolment of children's nurses, for instance. I do not wish to shut the door to any class of nurses who are

carrying on the profession at present, but the feeling of those responsible for this Bill is that, just as in the medical profession a general qualification is asked for before a man specialises, so in nursing a general qualification would be a very good start for a woman who wished to become a children's nurse or to specialise in any other branch. Probably some system of reciprocal training will be possible, in which the nurses in children's hospitals would serve for a time in a general hospital.

FINANCE.

I come to a point on which there has been a good deal of criticism of this Bill, and it is that of finance. A document has been circulated to hon. Members which endeavours to riddle this Bill with criticism on the ground that we do not provide proper financial means for carrying out its provisions. In the first place, we are not making any demands upon the public purse, and I am sure it must be a change to hon. and right hon. Members to have a Bill in their hands without those fatal italics which mean another raid on the Treasury.

NURSES WISH TO BE A SELF-SUPPORTING AND SELF-RESPECTING PROFESSION.

The nurses are not asking for any public money, but neither are they asking for charity. They do not want to carry on their organisation by means of side shows like bazaars, concerts, and dances. They want to be a self-supporting and a self-respecting profession. (Hear, hear.) At the present time it is believed there are 80,000 practising nurses in the United Kingdom, and it is estimated that if this Bill goes on the Statute Book 50,000 nurses will register in the first year at a fee that is not prescribed yet, but which is suggested at two guineas. That will give 100,000 guineas, which, invested in the direction which my right hon. Friend (Mr. Eonar Law) can indicate, will give 5,000 guineas of annual income with absolute safety. That will be quite sufficient, with the new fees coming in, and the new nurses registering in each year, and with the examination fees, which it is suggested should be something from one to three guineas—and I favour the higher figure—to carry out all the purposes of this Act. It is suggested in the leaflet that has been circulated that our Bill fails entirely to provide any financial basis adequate to sustain the expenses of conducting examinations, of publishing annually the register, of erecting or running buildings suitable for central offices, of paying examiners, travelling expenses, &c., &c.

SUPPORTERS NOT SUFFERING FROM MEGALOMANIA.

I will say at once that those who are responsible for the preparation of this Bill are not suffering from megalomania. They have no desire to spend large sums of money in bricks and mortar, to erect enormous offices where the business of this General Council of Nursing shall be carried on. That is not

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