

their programme. I have indicated a source from which 100,000 guineas can reasonably be expected to come in the first year of the operation of the Act, and year by year, as other nurses come forward, there will be a fund for keeping up the register, while the examination fees will provide money for the proper payment of examiners and the holding of the examinations. People say that nurses will not pay as much as five guineas for professional training and registration. Midwives pay between £20 and £30 for their training and registration, and I do not think any nurse or her people will object to paying two guineas once for all for the privilege of registration, and an examination fee at the highest of three guineas, making five guineas in all.

#### A BOGEY ABOUT FINANCE.

I think this is a bogey about finance. It is circulated by people who say that they have already £40,000 in hand. They have raised £40,000 largely by charity entertainments, dances, and so on. But we do not want to raise our money in that way. We think that on the face of the Bill nursing can become a self-supporting profession, registration can be provided for, training can be provided, and examinations can be provided. We have now got returning to this country large numbers of trained nurses, who during the past three or four years have been rendering splendid service in nursing our wounded soldiers at the front. I suggest to this House that no higher tribute could be paid to those nurses now returning to this country than to raise their vocation into the dignity and the status and the importance of a profession. That is what I ask the House to do by giving a Second Reading to this Bill. There is opposition to it of sorts. There is the opposition, I believe, of some who are against the principle of State registration altogether. In view of the fact that the principle has already been affirmed by this House, I am not going to weary the House with arguments on the advantages of State registration. I believe that there are people of apparently average intelligence who think that the world is flat, but it is not necessary at this hour of the day to argue publicly that the world is not flat, and similarly I propose to leave those who think that State Registration of nurses is undesirable to vote, if they like, against this Bill in the Division Lobby, because I do not think it is necessary to try and convince them by argument; but there are others who think that, whilst State registration is desirable, there is some other Bill, not before the House, which would provide a better method. To those hon. Members I make my appeal, and I say that now we have a unique opportunity of establishing the principle of State registration. If we get our Second Reading to-day, I hope we shall be given facilities to put this measure on the Statute Book. A measure like it in all essentials has already been passed in another place some years ago, and there-

fore I anticipate that if we obtain the Second Reading to-day the hopes of State registration becoming a reality will be very strongly reinforced. I appeal to every Member of this House who is in favour of the principle, whether or not he thinks this is the perfect embodiment of the principle, to vote for the Second Reading, and to raise upstairs in Committee any objections that he may have on points of detail."

#### POINTS FROM THE SPEECHES.

MR. F. BRIANT (Lambeth, N.): "I have been placed in close contact with the nursing profession, and, if I may add a personal note, I feel that I owe my own life to the efficiency of nursing on more than one occasion. I have been connected for some years with an association—if I may say so, a quasi-official association—which met at the Local Government Board and held an enquiry into district nursing for the whole of London. In addition, I have been chairman of a board of guardians which has at its disposal 1,000 beds and employs 130 nurses and probationers. And most of my life having been spent amongst those to whom nursing is of vital and first importance, I am more and more convinced that, unless some step be taken to give nurses the status which they have a right to demand, and which they have deserved, then in the future, when nurses will be required more than ever before, we shall find there is a scarcity. Yesterday, as the House probably knows, the Bill for the establishment of the Ministry of Health passed through Committee. . . . But I am sure of this, that the Ministry of Health will never carry out its work as efficiently as it desires to do unless it has a far larger supply of nurses in the future. And unless the nursing profession has some security that it will have a definite status in the nation, and be protected from being possibly misunderstood and misrepresented as belonging to that large class of people who pose as nurses without any efficiency and without any real training, then we shall lose that better class of nurse which is so important and indeed essential for the health of the nation."

Mr. Briant then urged that the House should pass the Second Reading of the Bill, leaving criticism and amendment, which he considered required on some points, to the Committee stage. He pointed out that increased avenues of employment are open to women, and that unless the position of the nurse is improved, by legal status and conditions of service and pay, women of the class required will be diverted to other occupations, and the health of the country will suffer. From his knowledge of the working of the Midwives' Act, as a member for some years of the Midwives Committee of the L.C.C., he emphasised the danger of incompetent attendance from the point of view of the safety of the public, and also referred to the misuse of nurses' uniform, and concluded by expressing the hope that "the House will pass this Bill to give nurses that position and status which they long have deserved."

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