

Scott, had charge of the Bill during its passage through the various stages in the House of Commons. Those who were privileged to be in the House of Commons during the debate on the Second Reading of the Bill on March 28th (and all the galleries to which women were admitted were crowded) would not soon forget their emotions, as, after Major Barnett had moved the Second Reading of the Bill, one Member after another rose in his place to support the principle of the Bill, representing all the Parties in the House, nor the generous terms in which one and all alluded to the value of skilled nursing.

The fight really came in Standing Committee E, to which the Bill was referred, when special pleaders for the College of Nursing, Ltd., endeavoured to secure the control of the nursing profession.

The policy of the College was to secure the substitution of their Governing Body for that defined in the Central Committee's Bill, and that their Register should be recognised as the State Register, whereas the Central Committee stood for an independent Governing Body and justice to every nurse after the Bill is passed, through a free Register. On those lines it would be possible to build up a self-governing nursing profession.

The House of Commons Second Reading of the Bill had shown that Parliament intended itself to govern through an independent Statutory Authority set up under the Act, and did not intend to hand over its powers to any private body of persons, and to this policy the Standing Committee adhered. (Applause)

After dealing with other points amended in Committee, Mrs. Fenwick stated that Petitions were now being circulated by Matrons on the College Council, one of which attempted to depreciate the status of the Matrons' Council, and the fine pioneer work it had done in the Registration cause, and to secure more nominated representation for Matrons; and the other invited the signature of nurses to a Petition against the very moderate fees proposed to be paid for registration, by a lady who evidently was ignorant of the matter, as she had invited nurses to sign an incorrect statement as to the amount of the fees agreed upon by the Standing Committee, which proposes £1 1s. during the first twelve months, and £2 2s. for the subsequent two years of grace. The fee for both registration and examination after the term of grace was to be £3 3s.

Mrs. Fenwick said that for twenty-five years the Matrons associated together in the Matrons' Council had stood by the nurses, and voiced the demand for legal status, and during the whole period they had been subjected to unjust criticism in the subsidised hospital press, and to persistent misrepresentation by those opposed to any degree of self-government for trained nurses, and she advised the members present to express their indignation at the unmerited attacks made upon their Council at the instigation of the College of Nursing Company in the House

of Commons, and by colleagues whose attack was as ungenerous as it was disloyal.

Mrs. Fenwick then moved the following Resolution:—

#### RESOLUTION.

The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland protests against the attempt now being made by the Matrons associated, under lay control, in the College of Nursing Company, Ltd., to depreciate the standing of the Matrons' Council, on the ground that it "is in no sense representative of the heads of the Nursing Profession."

The Matrons' Council is representative of those trained Matrons who, for the last quarter of a century, have had the foresight and courage to associate themselves together for the promotion of the organisation of trained nursing by the State, through a Nurses' Registration Act.

This principle has been opposed, and bitterly contested by the lay Committees of hospitals, to which most of the Nurse-Training Schools are attached—a policy which the Matrons of these institutions have found it prudent to support, by opposing—and influencing their nurses to oppose—the principle of State Registration of Nurses by Act of Parliament.

The members of the Matrons' Council have for years been subjected to intimidation, through an interested Press, and otherwise, and they earnestly plead that Parliament will now pass, without delay, the Nurses' Registration Bill, calculated to emancipate the whole Profession of Nursing from the undue influence of Hospital Committees and their salaried officials, who are largely responsible for the present unsatisfactory economic condition of trained nurses."

The Resolution was seconded by Miss Marsters, and, on being put to the meeting, was carried unanimously.

The tone of the meeting was unmistakable. It unflinchingly, and with spirit, adhered to its principles, and was not disposed to sit down in silence under unmerited attacks from those whose ungenerous policy it regarded as professionally disloyal.

At the conclusion, Miss Heather-Bigg, from the Chair, in the name of those present, thanked Mrs. Bedford Fenwick for her able and lucid speech, and for all her work for so many years for the nursing profession in which they were proud to be associated with her.

Mrs. Fenwick was presented with four bouquets of lovely spring flowers, for which she expressed her sincere appreciation.

A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to Miss Heather Bigg for her services in the chair, and for coming up from Tunbridge Wells to attend the Meeting.

The meeting then terminated, and the members took tea together at Selfridge's Cafeteria.

ANNIE E. HULME,

Hon. Secretary.

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