

'You would never have got your Bill unless someone had bribed away my matrons.' What does he mean by that? He means that those people who were formerly against Registration and who are now professing to be in favour of it must have been offered some consideration; that there is some ulterior motive which has appealed to them; that they are not advocating Registration now simply and solely for the sake of Registration. But if the promoters of this College Bill had, as their only object, the Registration of Nurses, surely they would have contented themselves with taking the Bill which is now before the House of Commons, which was before your Lordships' House eleven years ago, which passed through this House without a division, which later was accepted in principle by the House of Commons—which, in short, is the Bill that holds the field and has been generally approved in principle. They would have taken that Bill and would have contented themselves with moving amendments in the House of Commons and later, if necessary, also in your Lordships' House.

"My noble friend, the mover of this Bill, suggests that if your Lordships give it a Second Reading, it will be possible to refer it to some Joint Committee, so that both Bills may be considered together. I may tell your Lordships that there have been many conferences between the supporters of this Bill and the supporters of the Bill which is before the House of Commons. Concessions have been made to the supporters of the College of Nursing Bill, and they have lost a splendid opportunity—firstly, by asking too much; and, secondly, by failing, on many occasions, to stick to agreements which they have made. My noble friend skated very skilfully over thin ice by drawing an entirely fanciful distinction between the two methods by which Registration might be established, and he declared that the principle of his Bill was that of the 'experimental method.' You will see that this 'experimental method'—if you have had the time to study the literature which has been liberally showered upon you—consists of methods which cannot be regarded as entirely fair. The College of Nursing gave a promise to nurses which they had no right to give, because it was a promise which they had no power to fulfil. They said, 'If you will join our College and pay us one guinea, you shall be registered without any further fee.' That is what my noble friend calls making an experimental Register. In the first place, I may say that there is no need whatever to make an experimental Register. Once you grant State Registration, there will be no difficulty whatever about carrying it out, nor will there be any reluctance on the part of any trained nurse to get her name registered. Experiment, therefore, is entirely unnecessary and beside the point.

"The supporters of the College of Nursing Bill have been exceedingly busy. I understand that they have been advocating their Bill not only inside this House but outside, and that their method has been one of confident assertion.

I know as a fact that some members of your Lordships' House, who admit that they have not read either Bill, have gone away in consequence of this 'lobbying' with the notion that Lord Goschen's Bill is the better. Others, again, with equally imperfect knowledge of the subject, have been seized with the notion that this is a democratic Bill, whereas the Bill before the House of Commons is not democratic. Both of those claims are utterly unfounded, as I shall presently proceed to show your Lordships. But to me this is yet another striking illustration of the fact that one of the best ways of getting on in the political world is by sheer effrontery. I have had no time for doing any of this 'lobbying,' and I have neither the talent nor the inclination for that kind of work. I have come here relying entirely on the strength of my case, and I rely upon it even though it is not in my power to put it before you as strongly as it ought to be put.

"I am going to try to justify my motion for the rejection of this Bill, first of all on grounds of expediency; secondly, on grounds of principle; and thirdly, because the Bill itself is a thoroughly bad Bill." (Hear, hear, from noble lords, and a sudden outburst of applause from the public gallery.)

#### THE GROUNDS OF EXPEDIENCY.

"In the matter of expediency, the original Bill for the State Registration of Nurses, the Bill which I had the honour of piloting through this House eleven years ago which your Lordships accepted without a division, and which, several years later, was approved in principle by the House of Commons—has now made good progress in the House of Commons. It passed Second Reading with general approval of Members of all parties, and it has been through the Standing Committee. Why complicate the issue by introducing a totally different scheme at this stage? Why go out of your way to be at cross-purposes with the other House, especially at a time like this, when it is all essential that both Houses should be in agreement and when there is such an enormous number of important political measures which you have to discuss and bring into law?

"Why delay registration? With the exception of my noble friend on the right, Lord Knutsford, everybody is agreed that we have to have registration. Why delay when it is not necessary to do so? The only effect of giving a Second Reading of this Bill is that there will be an indefinite amount of delay. You are not going to get the House of Commons to agree to this Bill. They have already approved of the other, and you cannot reconcile these two Bills because they are totally and fundamentally different in principle. It may possibly be a better plan to give this power to the College of Nursing, but the other plan holds the field. Your Lordships are committed to it. You have accepted it in principle. The other House of Parliament is committed to it. Therefore, it is shortsighted, a waste of time, and utterly futile to go back and start afresh on a new scheme in regard to which it would certainly take years to

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)