

## STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

DEBATE ON THE COLLEGE OF NURSING,  
LTD., BILL IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.*(Continued from page 390.)*LORD KNUTSFORD DECLARES HIS INTENTION  
OF VOTING FOR THE NURSES' REGISTRATION  
BILL OF THE COLLEGE.

VISCOUNT KNUTSFORD began by reiterating his time-worn arguments with which we are all familiar: (1) That Registration of Nurses will not protect the public or the nurses; (2) that the public do not need protection against nurses working in hospitals or whose skill and character are guaranteed by hospitals or institutions, or against district nurses, village nurses, cottage nurses, who are working under a Committee who are responsible for them. The only nurses, therefore, that the public want protection against are those who are working on their own; but even of that limited number, you do not want protection against any nurse who is engaged by a doctor.

Lord Knutsford argued further that Registration is perfectly useless unless there is combined with it a penal enactment that nobody is to nurse or to practise, unless registered—as unregistered women would be able to put “nurse” over their doors. You could not make it a penal offence for an unregistered woman to nurse. If you did that, you would stamp out some of the very best work that is being done in the whole country. You would stamp out all the district nurses who do not happen to have had the full hospital training, though they are able to do God's own work in every village they live in, you would stamp out cottage nurses, you would stamp out village nurses, and no V.A.D. could do any bit of nursing she felt inclined to do.

Lord Knutsford said further that a large meeting of hospital Matrons, and another of all the hospitals held recently were unanimously in favour of Lord Goschen's Bill. He then made a complete *volte face* and said he was certainly going to vote for Lord Goschen's Bill, that he felt he was now a voice crying in the wilderness. He must therefore take the best course he could, and without admitting that he had been wrong, must do his best to rectify what the House might think his mistake.

I am, he said, *quite convinced*—and that is what makes me vote for this Bill against all the principles I have held so long—that *this Bill will be for the benefit of nursing*. I do hope that your Lordships will give it a Second Reading, and when it is given a Second Reading, do let us try and get from the representative of the Local Government Board, whom I see here, some assurance that, whatever differences there are between the two Bills, whatever councils are set up, shall be made the subject of an inquiry or a Committee.

LORD KNUTSFORD ADVISES PARLIAMENT TO FORCE  
A COUNCIL UPON THE NURSES.

You cannot get an agreement. But you may get a Council forced upon them which will carry the confidence of nurses after the first sore feelings have passed off. For what my opinion is worth, I beg you to give this Bill a Second Reading.

## “ JUMPING A CLAIM.”

THE MARQUESS OF CREWE said that the subject was one with which some years ago he had been closely concerned, as when Lord Amptill's Bill had been before the House some eleven or twelve years ago he had filled the office of President of the Council, and was consequently the Minister concerned with the subject.

Since that time there had been a definite novelty in the situation by the establishment of the Royal College of Nursing (a Limited Liability Company cannot bear the title, “Royal.”—ED.) He had not been able to keep up any continuous knowledge of this question, or of the claim of the College of Nursing to a paramount place. Without more knowledge, he did not feel able either to support or dispute that plea.

We are (continued Lord Crewe) in this further difficulty, that we have not got before us yet the other Bill, which I suppose ought to reach us soon after Whitsuntide and to pronounce an opinion either for or against this Bill without having seen the other appears to me an a most impossible course to take. On the whole, therefore, it appears to me that the wisest course for us to take is that which has been favoured by my noble friend who has just sat down—namely, that this Bill should receive a Second Reading, but a Second Reading which does not imply any recognition of its superiority (if it is superior) to the other measure.

The noble Viscount, Lord Goschen, appears to have been almost accused of what is known as “jumping a claim,” in having introduced this measure before the other Bill has reached us. I think we ought to regard this one altogether without prejudice until we have seen the other. When the other comes, if your Lordships are so impressed by its superiority over this measure it could be proceeded with; or if we are not able, after it has been read a second time, to decide that it is definitely superior to this, then I trust that His Majesty's Government will recommend the course of sending both to a Select Committee. I do not think that any serious waste of time need be involved in that course—that is to say, not such waste of time as will prevent the chosen Bill, the ultimate Bill, from becoming law this year. That we all hope some such measure will do. We know very well—and my noble friend here (Lord Knutsford) recognises the fact—that the establishment of a Register is strongly demanded by the vast majority of the nurses themselves. I think that is quite enough for us. That being so, we ought not to delay any longer than can possibly be helped. But it clearly will be idle to proceed with this Bill in any way until we have seen the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)