

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
**THE NURSING RECORD**  
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,651.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1919.

Vol. LXII

## EDITORIAL.

### THE NURSES' REGISTRATION BILL. SECOND READING.

On Tuesday last, November 18th, the Minister of Health, from the Treasury Bench, moved the second reading of his Nurses' Registration Bill for England and Wales, which, with support from Major Barnett, in charge of the Central Committee's Bill, of Mr. Leonard Lyle, on behalf of the College of Nursing, Ltd., and of members on all sides of the House, was carried without a division, and committed to a Standing Committee.

It is now over fifteen years since the first Nurses' Registration Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on behalf of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and it was a triumphant moment for its promoters when the Minister of Health advocated, on behalf of the Government, the main principles which it incorporated.

The nursing profession must realise the great difference between this Government Bill and all others which have preceded it. Former Bills have embodied what members of the profession, or others on their behalf, are desirous of obtaining; the Bill introduced by the Minister of Health incorporates what the Government is prepared to give them through a Nurses' Registration Act.

We publish the text of the Bill in full in the following columns, so that all our readers can study it at their leisure.

What, briefly, are the principles incorporated in the Government Bill?

1. The establishment of a governing body—the General Nursing Council—for the nursing profession, securing sixteen out of twenty-five seats to trained nurses. Only those who worked for the movement in the early years know how acute the opposition was to the nurses having adequate representation on their own Governing Body.

2. Power is given to the Council to regulate the formation, maintenance, and publication of the Register, to define standards of training, and to hold examinations.

3. It provides that the First Council shall have power to frame the Rules, and remain in office, if necessary, for three years, during

which the Register of Nurses will be compiled, and the electorate for the General Nursing Council formed. No preferential treatment is to be given to any one body of nurses.

4. Provision is made for a two years' term of grace, in which existing nurses may register for a fee of £1 1s.

5. Protection is afforded to the registered nurse, by the provision giving the right of appeal to the High Court in the event of any person being aggrieved by the removal of her name from the Register.

6. Power is given to institute a uniform and badge for registered nurses.

7. Provision is made for the establishment of reciprocity with Scotland and Ireland, and other parts of His Majesty's Dominions where similar Acts are in force.

8. Penalties are prescribed for misuse of the title of registered nurse, or for falsification of any matters relating to the Register.

9. The Constitution of the Council is set out in detail in the Schedule to the Bill, printed on page 374, and it will be seen that the Minister has given the registered nurses liberal powers of self-government. It is for them to use those powers, when the Bill becomes law, wisely and impartially, remembering the great trust conferred on them by Parliament, including the exercise of disciplinary and judicial functions.

10. The sixteen nurse members on the first Council will be appointed by the Minister of Health after consultation with the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses, the Royal British Nurses' Association, the College of Nursing, Ltd., and other associations, and thereafter they will be directly elected by the registered nurses.

11. The Act is not to extend to Scotland and Ireland, but, as we record elsewhere, a Bill has been drafted for Scotland, and the Irish Office has the matter under consideration.

The pioneers of nursing reform who, for so many years, have been struggling to secure a Nurses' Registration Act which will be a protection to the public, and just to the nurses, see at last the struggle nearing an end, and realise with thankfulness that, in the near future, a sure foundation will be well and truly laid, on which to build an edifice worthy of the great profession of which they are members.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)