

nursing profession on to a better and more national basis, and I cordially recommend this Bill to the House for a Second Reading.

MAJOR HURST SUPPORTS THE BILL.

MAJOR HURST (Moss Side C.U.) : I should like to welcome this Bill. The great merit of this reform is that it is a social reform which comes from inside the body affected and not from outside. The real framers of this measure are not the State, or the State officials, but the pioneers in this cause among the nurses themselves. It is well to recognise that a debt of gratitude is due to those who have been pioneers of this movement for many years, and also the fruitful propaganda by which the College of Nursing have brought this scheme within the range of practical politics within the last few years. [The College of Nursing, Ltd., came into the field when the pioneers had convinced both Houses of Parliament of the justice of their claim.—ED.] Major Hurst also spoke on the necessity for safeguarding admission to the Register. He congratulated the Minister of Health on providing for a special uniform and badge for registered nurses, and expressed the hope that before the Bill became law it would give power to deal with the questions of overwork and underpayment of Nurses.

MAJOR BARNETT CONGRATULATES THE MINISTER OF HEALTH.

MAJOR BARNETT (St. Pancras, S.W., C.U.) : As the promoter of the Nurses' Registration (No. 1) Bill, I wish to say a few words in support of the Second Reading of this measure. I was a little sceptical when the pledge was given whether it would be fulfilled so soon. It was only given last July, and to-day we have this Bill brought forward; a great measure, which will put the principle of the State Registration of Nurses on the Statute Book.

As the sponsor of the No. 1 Bill, I cannot say that this Bill is in every respect an improvement on my own proposals. I very much regret its limitation to England. When a measure introduced by a private member, which had got as far as the Report Stage, provided a single register for the whole of the United Kingdom, one might have hoped that a Government measure would do the same, but I can imagine that what was possible for a private member's Bill was not so easy for a Government Bill, in view of the fact that a Ministry of Health has been set up for Scotland, and something tantamount is contemplated for Ireland. I hope and believe that, if this measure finds its way on the Statute Book, in the course of a few months we shall have a Scottish Registration Bill and an Irish Registration Bill as well.

My right hon. friend referred to the rock on which the discussions on my Bill were wrecked—the question of the initial Nursing Council. As the right hon. Gentleman has pointed out, the difficulty is to choose the nurses who are to sit on the Council, because *ex hypothesi* we have no register and cannot have an election by the nurses of those who are to represent them. My Bill endeavoured to solve that by giving rights of

appointment to many societies and individuals. Here I can congratulate my right hon. Friend on having cut down the Council to reasonable dimensions. I think that twenty-five members is quite enough for such a body, but in attempting to create a Council by nomination from various nurses' societies, we found we were continually increasing the number of the Council. We had gone up to forty-three, and I am not sure that we should not have gone up to forty-five. The difficulty was to get the respective societies to agree as to their respective rights of nomination to the Council. With the greatest courage my right hon. Friend has cut the Gordian knot. He has decided to nominate the nurses to the initial Council himself. I do not know which to admire more, the courage of my right hon. Friend or the skill with which he addressed himself to this problem. It is a courageous act for my right hon. Friend will have to select the ladies to sit on this Council. No doubt he will do it very well, because he will do it in consultation with the societies, and any society that thinks itself entitled to be consulted has only got to say so. My hon. and gallant Friend opposite spoke of this measure having become a matter of practical politics owing to the exertions of a certain body to which he referred. I do not wish to introduce into this discussion any element of dissension, but the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses have been advocating State registration for over thirty years, in season and out of season, and it is a triumph for their principles, on which they are to be congratulated, to have the Minister of Health introducing the measure which is brought before us this afternoon. Nothing will please me better than to have this Bill with or without Amendment—I do not think it requires Amendment—passed into law.

THE BILL WELCOMED BY MR. LYLE.

MR. LYLE (Stratford, C.U.) : I desire on my own behalf, and also on behalf of the College of Nursing, to give this Bill a very warm welcome. It is most satisfactory to find that the Minister of Health has been able in so short a time to fulfil the pledge which he gave. Now that they have introduced it, I hope that the Government will push forward this Bill with the least possible delay, and give the nurses the thing which they have so long desired. The Minister of Health has excised the breaking spot of the last Bill, and has taken the selection of the provisional Council on his own shoulders. I have not the least doubt that the decisions he will make will be received and abided by loyally by the great majority of nurses.

THE LOSS TO THE NATION OWING TO A LACK OF STATUS FOR NURSES.

MR. HAYDAY (Nottingham, W., La.) :—I hope this Bill will become an Act as rapidly as possible. In thinking seriously over the past and present position of the nurses of Great Britain it is impossible for anyone to estimate the loss to the nation owing to the absence of a status for one of the most valuable services or professions of which this country can boast. I feel that it is

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