

## LEAGUE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL NURSES.

### STATE REGISTRATION.

#### Report from the Delegate on the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses.

Last week we published an account of the Meeting of the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses, on July 5th, but only made a brief reference to the Report of the League's Delegate on the Executive Committee of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, in order to devote more space to it than was possible in that issue.

Miss Gladys Le Geyt, Delegate of the League presented her Report to the Meeting, giving briefly and concisely the history of the Nurses' Registration Bill promoted by the Central Committee in the House of Commons.

"With the removal of the Parliamentary ban on Private Members' Bills the Society was," she said, "prepared to take its full share of political responsibility in aiding, to the uttermost, the efforts of the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses, to find the means of getting a hearing in the House of Commons for the pioneer Registration Bill."

She traced the course of the Bill from its introduction by Major Barnett into the House of Commons, "the opportunity of a hearing for which we had worked and waited for fourteen long years was ours, and with a sympathetic House the goal of protection for the sick, and of emancipation for the nursing profession seemed within measurable distance.

"The Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd., did not oppose the Second Reading of the Bill. They would have found it difficult, if they had opposed the Second Reading of the first Nurses' Registration Bill which had a prospect of success to justify their action to their members, but they relied on obtaining amendments to Major Barnett's Bill in Committee.

"The Second Reading of the Bill was down for March 28th—a memorable date, when for one day a record of complete unity on the principle of Registration was for all time proclaimed in and out of the House of Commons. One milestone passed. A long, long dream came true."

Miss Le Geyt then showed that the Council of the College endeavoured to get its constitution, giving preferential treatment to that body, incorporated in the Bill, in Committee, and failed.

The President of the Local Government Board was asked by the Committee to consider and subsequently to advise the Committee as to the Constitution of the First Council. This Dr. Addison did, and in consultation with the members interested recommended the adoption of a Constitution substantially the same as that in the

Central Committee's Bill, but giving two additional representatives each to the Royal British Nurses' Association and to the College of Nursing, Ltd. This, Sir Kingsley Wood announced, had been agreed to by the member in charge of the Bill, and the representative of the College of Nursing.

Miss Le Geyt also outlined the other principal amendments agreed to, and then showed that the Council of the College, having failed to obtain the amendments it desired in Committee, directed three lines of action against the Bill.

(1) It circularised its members, directing them without delay to write to Members of Parliament urging them not to support the Central Committee's Bill.

(2) It obtained the introduction of its own Bill into the House of Lords, and

(3) Having secured a Second Reading, on the understanding that that Bill would reach the House shortly after Whitsuntide, started to get what are known as wrecking amendments put down by Members of the House of Commons.

There were only a few Friday afternoons left on which private members' Bills could be considered. On June 27th, the Bill was considered, at 3 o'clock, on the Report stage. Miss Le Geyt showed that the two precious hours available were quite long enough to get through the Report Stage if there had been no opposition. But that opposition was provided by the friends of the College of Nursing, Ltd., who proceeded with their wrecking policy (after having endeavoured without success to induce Major Barnett to withdraw the Bill). The precious hours went by; all that could be done was to report progress, and the chances of the Bill reaching the House of Lords this Session were now remote. On July 4th, the same thing happened. "It must," said Miss Le Geyt. "be clearly understood that there has been no opposition whatever to the Nurses' Registration Bill in the House of Commons except the opposition of the College of Nursing, Ltd.; the Bill could easily have got through and passed into law.

"The work of building is a long and patient process. That of wrecking is easy. It took, for instance, many years of arduous work to raise the fair edifice of Rheims Cathedral. It took not as many hours for the German guns to wreck it. State Registrationists have, for thirty years, been patiently educating the public and Members of Parliament as to the need for State Registration of Nurses. The foundations were well and truly laid. At last opportunity was within their grasp. In a few weeks a well-considered Registration Act might have been placed on the Statute Book.

"Then the iconoclast. Wrecking is so easy a pastime. But when it has been accomplished, what then?

"If the State Registration of Nurses is postponed indefinitely, we must place the responsibility where it rightly belongs, with the College of Nursing, Ltd."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)