

initiated similar legislation for Scotland and Ireland.

These three measures which were almost identical, passed through Parliament with a few verbal alterations, and received the Royal Assent in the House of Lords on December 23rd, the last day of the Session, before Parliament was prorogued.

REPORT ON THE PASSING OF THE NURSES REGISTRATION ACTS BY THE PRESIDENT.

The Chairman then said :

" The occasion on which we are called together to-day is a most auspicious one, and I have—as your President—to report to you that your Society, which was founded seventeen years ago to obtain an Act of Parliament for the legal registration of nurses, has accomplished its work. (Applause.) No one in the nursing world knows better than the nurses in this room what that work has been : It has been collar work all the time. We have had to find the brains ; we have had to find the voluntary workers ; and, more than that, we have had to find the cash to carry out extensive propaganda work throughout the United Kingdom. We have done all those things, and we are to be very greatly congratulated that we have, as a body of professional women, found the brains in our own ranks, found the spirit to conduct the campaign, found the soul to sustain it, and found the money to pay for it. (Applause.) It is an exceedingly honourable record, upon which I congratulate you heartily. The work of those seventeen years, as I and you know well, has been very uphill work, but it has been a splendid work, and I think it has brought out the very best nurses in the United Kingdom. All those nurses who joined this Society and gave it their help during those years of great discouragement, have proved themselves to be worthy of the Profession of Nursing, and worthy of the title of 'Registered Nurse,' worthy of the confidence not only of their colleagues, but worthy of the confidence of the public. That is a very hopeful beginning, and I only wish that the Minister of Health had been here so that he could have heard that short record of what we set out to do and how we have done it. We were the first Society to promote a Bill for the Registration of Nurses. We were founded in 1902, and in 1904 we promoted our Bill. I have here a little bundle of Bills which have been introduced session after session for fourteen years. And I am very thankful to be able to report to you that when I take up the Act promoted by the Government, I find it incorporates nearly every section and fundamental principle which we incorporated in our Bill all that time ago. (Applause.) The Government Act gives to the nurses a splendid opportunity of organising their Profession and of building it up, not only for the benefit of the public, but also for the benefit of themselves. The principal thing we asked for was a Governing Body, so composed that we could largely govern ourselves. The Government has granted that. (Applause.) That

is the finest thing in the Act—that is professional enfranchisement. (Hear, hear.) It is the very essence of the Act ; without it, the whole Act would have been worth nothing. It might, indeed, have been, in time, a danger rather than a benefit to the profession. Then we have also other vital principles incorporated in this Act. We are to be given the opportunity of making ourselves highly efficient. You know we have never had that before ; all the efficiency we have been able to get, we have wrenched from Fate. (Laughter.) Most of the things we have learned, we have learned with one eye while the other eye was a great deal too tired to read. This Act gives us an opportunity of defining what our education shall be to fit us as safe attendants upon the sick. (Applause.) It gives us the opportunity of defining and prescribing the education, the term, and the kind of training which we consider it right we should go through ; it gives us the opportunity of having that knowledge tested by independent examination. And then it provides after registration the opportunity of going out amongst the sick and amongst the well, as highly trained and skilled professional women with the protected title of 'Registered Nurse' (Applause.) And there are many other good things in this Act. It is short, but it is crammed full of possibilities, and it is not too narrowly drafted. We need not be tied up in knots. One great principle is, we have a right of appeal to the High Courts if we consider ourselves aggrieved. That is a just provision. What is the use of being a human being if one cannot command justice ? The Act gives us power of appeal. It also gives us what I know a large number of nurses are thirsting for—a protected uniform—one which shall be not only becoming to the nurse personally, but a uniform which will show her rank. (Applause.) I hope that, in the future, you will all have an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon this ; though whether, if you do, we shall ever come to any sort of conclusion as to what the uniform is to be, remains to be seen. (Laughter.) Anyway, we are to have a uniform, like soldiers of the King, for we are soldiers of the people. I hope the uniform will be one of distinction, and also that we shall have a badge.

" Of course, the Act is not perfect. You know the House of Commons, the 'Mother of Parliaments,' does not always put forth perfect legislation. There is such a thing as expediency. We are an expedient people—we do very well upon it—and we do not like too professional and too strict legislation ; we are a freedom-loving people. There is one feature in the Act which I know you all feel apprehensive about ; that is an undemocratic clause to which we agreed, because we realised that so much had been given to us of which we might have been deprived, that we felt the man who drafted this Act was to be trusted to give us a just Council. (Hear, hear.) We asked in the past that we ourselves might nominate our representatives on the First Govern-

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