

much pleasure in supporting this vote of thanks to you, Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not necessary for me to read this resolution to you again. Having heard it, and also the speeches which have been made in support of it, I ask you to pass this Vote of Thanks to the Minister of Health by acclamation.

Amidst loud and prolonged applause the chairman offered the Vote of Thanks to Dr. Addison.

THE REPLY OF THE MINISTER OF HEALTH.

THE RT. HON. DR. ADDISON, M.P. (Minister of Health): Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Miss Macdonald, Major Barnett, Dr. Goodall, and ladies, I thank you very much indeed for your vote of thanks. It is very unusual. (Laughter.) As a matter of fact, it is the first vote of thanks I have ever had in my life. (Loud applause.) The last thing a Minister expects is thanks. Criticism is our daily bread: at all events, we have to thrive on it as well as we can, for that is all we get. (Laughter.) Therefore, I regard this occasion, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, not only on its own merits, but from the peculiar personal experience which it presents, as unique. I would, however, respectfully congratulate you and this Society on a good finish, so far as the Act is concerned, to their long, persistent, patient and difficult labours. (Hear, hear.) I know that, in season and out of season, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick pressed this upon us when I was a private Member, and I was lost in admiration of her pertinacity. (Laughter and applause.) But without pertinacity in Parliament, as a rule, little is achieved. It has been a very long struggle, and when we look back upon it, I myself wonder what it has been all about, because the thing has seemed so obvious—(Applause)—it has seemed to me all along an essential, if we were going to secure the Nursing Profession upon a properly organised basis upon which it could develop, so as to fill, in a proper and adequate manner, the measure of service which the community might expect to receive from it. This is one of those Acts, small in itself, which attracts, necessarily, very little public attention, but it is one of those small but fundamental Acts out of which great results, in time, must come. And it is, no doubt, with a full recognition of that fact that your patience and pertinacity have been exerted. As Mrs. Bedford Fenwick has mentioned, we managed to get it an agreed Bill, but I should like to say, quite frankly, that that result would not have been achieved had it not been in the first place, for the leadership and help of Major Barnett and some other Members—(Applause)—and that of Members of the Other House who were associated with a Bill of a different kind on the same subject. It is largely to the help of these gentlemen that the rapid progress of the Bill was secured, because it was an understanding, both in your Council and with others, that the Government would give facilities for the Bill if we could get one that was substantially agreed. Therefore we had, in the first place, to secure one, so that I could say to the Cabinet that it was a substantially agreed Bill.

That was the difficulty, and my colleagues saw to it that it was removed, and, given that assurance, it had an easy passage through the House. And I would like to pay a tribute to the wide vision and statesmanship of those in the different parties with whom we negotiated. Although it is exceptional to mention civil servants, I only want to tell you, ladies, lest in any way you might think that I did it, that the major part of the departmental work I saddled on the shoulders of Sir Robert Morant. (Applause.) Well, now, this is an essential Bill, because you have all recognised—that is why you struggled for it—that the nursing profession hitherto in this country has not played the part that it might play in our health services. And, so far as I am concerned, so long as I am at the Ministry of Health—and I hope that will be quite a long time—(Applause)—I intend to push forward the measures necessary for making an improved Nursing Service in the country. (Applause.) And I want to say at once, both to nurses and to those who are responsible for their training and for their payment, that I regard it as essential that the Nursing Profession shall be a properly paid profession. (Applause.) That is essential if we are to get a sufficient number of good, well-trained recruits. We need a great increase in our nursing facilities throughout the whole country, and greatly in our rural areas, and a proper development of our health services is impossible without it. It is for this reason I regarded it as a duty, as soon as possible, to get a Nurses Registration Act on the Statute Book. And this, ladies, although the foundation of the labours in this particular regard, is only the first step; we want more trained nurses, we want them more freely available in our country districts, and widely throughout the country, in our various services. And with respect to their qualifications and other matters, it will be for the Council that will be set up to get to work upon important preliminary matters without delay. As your Chairman has told you, you have been good enough, in the Act, to trust your fortunes to a great extent, to the Minister of Health to deal fairly in setting up this first Council, and we will do our best to be fair. (Applause.) But the first essential of the Council which I am about to set up, in my opinion, is this—that it shall understand its business. (Applause.) Therefore, I do not propose to make it particularly an ornamental Council—(laughter)—it will require to be a working Council, well constituted, and with a good and generous representation of people who have themselves been "through the mill." (Loud applause.) Well, I believe I am right in saying that letters have been prepared—and I think they have gone out—to various bodies—of course, yourselves—asking for suggestions in respect of the membership of the Council which we are about to set up. And, as I explained before, as the responsibility is mine, I must exercise it, if I can, without fear or favour. (Hear, hear.) Therefore, we shall endeavour to secure the kind of Council that I have indicated, and,

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