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## EDITORIAL.

### REGISTERED NURSES AND THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS.

When in the year 1917, after a seventy years' struggle, women were enfranchised by the British Parliament, we wonder how many nurses took to heart the responsibility to King and Country which the Vote entailed? A very limited number, in our experience. Then in 1919 Parliament recognised Nursing as a skilled Profession—after thirty years' war—and thus bestowed legal status on trained nurses, adding still further to their communal and professional duties.

Just how has the profession as a whole done its public duty? The mass, as usual, has remained quiescent, but the minority, fired with zeal, has helped to remove mountains.

Since the year 1904, when the First Bill for the Registration of Nurses was drafted, we have been an *habitué* in the outer Lobbies in the Houses of Parliament, and some very entrancing tales we could unfold.

One lesson, of course, we soon took to heart: how much more important in the long run is one honest and courageous man than the whole of his Party. And through all these fifteen years of persistent effort we met many honest men, varying, of course, in degree in force and mentality.

Our Nurses' Registration Bill during those fateful fifteen years was in charge in turn of the late Dr. Farquharson, of Haughton, Mr. R. C. Munro-Ferguson (now Viscount Novar), Lord Ampthill in the Lords, Dr. W. A. Chapple, and last but not least Major R. W. Barnett, to all of whom the Nursing Profession owes a very deep debt of gratitude, and it is with real pleasure that we note the new Government includes Lord Novar as Secretary for Scotland, and that Dr. W. A. Chapple, Liberal member for Dumfries, and Major Barnett, Conservative member for St. Pancras (S.W.), have been returned to Parliament.

Nursing is not a Party question. The Health of the people should be a question of

vital importance to every patriotic member of Parliament, no matter to which Party he belongs, and it is from this view-point that Registered Nurses should enlist their interest and active support of questions of social and professional moment. The health and well-being of the community is peculiarly associated with the well-being of its nurses. Thus efficient standards of Nursing Education, and just economic conditions for nurses, are matters members of Parliament cannot afford to ignore, and it is the duty of the Nursing Profession to keep the nation's legislators well up to the mark in such expert questions.

With this object Registered Nurses have formed their Parliamentary Council, which has been quietly at work preparing for the recent Election for some time, so that when the great organiser of victory at the polls—Sir George Younger—pricked the Coalition bubble and it went pop, quite a valuable contingent of instructed nurses were ready to help candidates they trusted, and to enlighten constituencies on the records of those they did not.

First and foremost active support was forthcoming for Major Barnett, the man who, favoured by the ballot for precedence, gave the nurses their chance in 1919 and introduced the Nurses' Registration Bill, which resulted in a Government Act raising a noble vocation to the status and dignity of a Profession. Some twenty nurses were soon busy singing his praises in the poorer districts of St. Pancras (South-West), and the nurses' slogan, "Vote for Major Barnett, the champion of skilled nursing for the breadwinner, the mother, and babe," won instant and sympathetic response, and, we feel sure, added materially to the increased majority of 2,756 votes by which he was triumphantly returned to Parliament.

A unique and popular feature of the nurses' election campaign was the picturesque Procession of nurses in uniform on Election Day through the districts they had canvassed. Led by Miss Isabel Macdonald, upholding the splendid Banner of the Royal British Nurses'

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)