

## HOW THE COLLEGE CAUCUS CAPTURED THE COUNCIL.

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### THE FINAL STAGE.

In 1919 the long struggle for the State Registration of Nurses entered on its final stage. On March 17th, Major R. W. Barnett, Member for South-West St. Pancras, won the fourth place in the ballot in the House of Commons and decided to utilise his good fortune to introduce the Nurses' Registration Bill promoted by the Central Committee, which he did on the following day.

Immediately it was known that Major Barnett would move the Second Reading of the Nurses' Registration Bill on March 28th, all was activity in the Registration camp.

When the fateful day arrived registrationists were in force both in the Members' and the Ladies' Galleries, and listened intently to the debate upon which so much depended. Major Barnett moved the Second Reading of the Nurses' Registration Bill in a masterly speech, showing that as far back as 1905 a Select Committee of the House of Commons reported that "it is desirable that a Register of Nurses should be kept by a Central Body appointed by the State," that in 1908 a Bill in all its essentials similar to that before the House was brought in in another place, and passed through all its stages without a division, and that in 1914 a similar Bill was introduced into the House of Commons under the Ten Minutes Rule. There was a division and, by a majority of 228 the House of Commons agreed that the Bill should be read a first time. Then the war intervened, and, of course, it was impossible for private Members to get facilities for carrying the Bill further. The reform was one which was much overdue. He said further that nothing else of such importance had been left undefined. There were statutory definitions of a medical practitioner, a dentist and a midwife. There was none of a nurse, who might be a modern counterpart of Florence Nightingale or of Sarah Gamp.

As the debate developed the tension in the minds of anxious Registrationists lessened, for it was evident that the Bill was receiving support on all sides of the House. Mr. F. Briant (Lambeth N.), Sir Donald Maclean (Peebles and Southern), Major Sir Samuel Scott (St. Marylebone), Major J. E. Molson, M.D. (Gainsborough), Lieutenant-Colonel R. E. Roundell (Skipton), who spoke strongly on the protection of nurses' uniform, Mr. F. Roberts (West Bromwich), Mr. J. Gardiner (Kinross and Western), Sir Robert Woods, F.R.C.S.I. (Dublin University), Sir Watson Cheyne, Bart, F.R.C.S., C.B. (Scottish Universities), Mr. W. Graham (Edinburgh Central), Colonel Grieg, C.B., K.C. (Renfrew W.), Captain Loseby (Bradford E.), all warmly supported the Bill. The one objector was Mr. J. P. P. Rawlinson, K.C. (Cambridge University), and Colonel Wedgwood (Newcastle-under-Lyme) made a neutral speech.

A speech which was awaited with special interest was that of Lieutenant-Colonel Raw, F.R.C.S.,

C.M.G. (Wavertree), the sponsor for the Bill drafted by College of Nursing, Ltd., which was not before the House, as it had not had a first reading. Lieutenant-Colonel Raw stated:—

"I have authority to state, on behalf of those interested in the other Bill, that no opposition will be offered to the great principle of the State Registration of Nurses, which we all very much desire to see."

Mr. Leonard Lyle (Stratford), in a maiden speech, supported the principle of State Registration of Nurses, but thought there were objectionable features in the Bill.

The Debate was wound up by Major Astor (now Lord Astor), (Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board), who said:—

"The discussion which we have had shows that there is an overwhelming support among Members of the House in favour of setting up a Statutory Register of Nurses. That is the main underlying principle of the Bill. There is a great deal of interest and support outside. We have to-day what is normally the public gallery of the House practically a ladies' gallery."

In regard to the attitude of the Government Major Astor said: "We are generally in favour of the principle contained in the Bill."

The question was then put and agreed to, the Bill was accordingly read a second time without a division, and committed to a Standing Committee.

### THE FIGHT FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT.

The real fight for self-government began when the details of the Bill were considered in Committee and centred round the Constitution of the First General Nursing Council. The College of Nursing, Ltd., which aimed at making its Council the Governing Body of the Nursing Profession under the Act, instead of "a Central Body appointed by the State," and of having its Register adopted as the First Statutory Register under the Act, had failed to influence Members of Parliament by a statement sent to them a few days before the Second Reading of the Bill, which announced that the College Bill placed £40,000 at the disposal of the General Nursing Council, to be used for the benefit of the Registered Nurses, and which attacked the financial provisions of the Central Committee's Bill. It hoped to get these amendments adopted during the Committee Stage, and once more it failed. In spite of an unchivalrous attack by Mr. Leonard Lyle on the self-governing Nurses' Organisations which had promoted and paid for the Registration movement for years, the Bill passed through Committee with certain amendments, the most important being that referring to the Constitution of the First General Nursing Council—proposed by the President of the Local Government Board, after conferring with those interested, and accepted by Major Barnett, in charge of the Central Committee's Bill, and by Lieut.-Colonel Raw, in charge of the Bill drafted by the College of Nursing, Ltd. Lieut.-Colonel Raw, as the representative of the College interests, was reason-

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