

Lord HANNEN : That she has satisfied the Committee that it ought to be put on the Register.

Sir R. WEBSTER : Ought to remain on the Register, The effect of the Royal Chartered Association of Nurses upon very reasonable persons—not unreasonable persons—would be that they would be allowed to think that, by being on the Register, and by the prestige of the Association, a person would be particularly qualified to be on the Register of duly trained and qualified Nurses. This is not imagination, my lord. I have asked your lordships to examine some passages in the evidence. They show what was the object put forward by some of the promoters. Their Register would be regarded by the public as being a Register that would guide them to trained and qualified Nurses, as distinguished from Nurses at large. Then there is prestige about it. They say that they can save the public from the liability to have an untrained or unqualified Nurse posing as a trained or qualified Nurse. And how? Only by the Register. In other words, I say it must either be compulsory, if a Nurse is to carry on her profession, it would be practically compulsory that she should go on to the Register, because one of the witnesses said : “By establishing my Register I shall save the public from the risk of having an unqualified person.” How? Only if the name is there. If a person's name does not appear on the Register, the public has no protection against her. They must go and consult the Register; and unless the Register does amount to a certificate of the examination of the Nurse in point of qualification, it is of no value, or of very little value to persons who want qualified Nurses.

Lord OXENBRIDGE : You think that if a Nurse wants business she must get herself registered?

Sir R. WEBSTER : Yes; practically that is so. If she wants business she must go on the register, because the register is the caution for the public against any unqualified Nurse.

Lord HANNEN : Do you not think it will be a useful thing for the public if it showed at what school Nurses had been educated, and that they were persons who had been proved to be fit?

Sir R. WEBSTER : My contention—and I am arguing the matter—is that not only will it not be a useful thing, but it will be a dangerous thing. Various paragraphs in the report point out the danger. I do not want to read them again. It would be taken to amount to a representation that the Executive would have the power to remove a Nurse's name. But the Nurse's name is not removed because the Association are not satisfied that she is unfit.

Lord HANNEN : Because it has not been shown that she is unfit.

Sir R. WEBSTER : But then, the unfitness arises perhaps from a circumstance that might never appear on the register at all. She may be trained, but she may not have temper, nor tact, or she may be unhandy.

Lord HANNEN : Yet she may have a character for tact and kindness.

Sir R. WEBSTER : It is only with safeguards of a very striking nature imposed by the statute that any such registration is admitted. At any rate I know of none other. And when you come to examine the evidence in this matter, it is only in connection with the profession of a Nurse that you have to consider the enormous importance of the qualifications which I have put forward. It is only in connection with such work as a Nurse has to carry out that the extreme, the paramount importance, of the Nurse's disposition, her kindness, her gentleness, her temper, her presence of mind are so forcibly brought to the consideration of all those who have to deal with sickness, and with the duties in which Nurses are ordinarily employed.

Lord HOBHOUSE : Did not the Lord's committee decline to give any opinion?

Sir R. WEBSTER : Certainly.

Lord HOBHOUSE : And all the arguments you quoted were

on the one side; that is, they were in the draft, but when Lord Sandhurst moved a resolution giving effect to them the committee rejected it.

Sir R. WEBSTER : Of course, it is entirely for your lordships. For my purpose it makes no difference.

Lord OXENBRIDGE : I think what took place was this, that it came to six to two for not agreeing with Lord Sandhurst because they had not heard the other side against the Charter.

Lord HOBHOUSE : Yes, I think that is so.

Lord OXENBRIDGE : I think I understood that they might not have agreed to it; but that on the question of procedure being called to the attention of the committee their lordships declined to, or could not, then take that proposition into consideration as they had declined to receive evidence upon it.

Sir R. WEBSTER : Those whom I represent have the interests and the training of Nurses as much at heart as any concerned. Many of them have brought personal experience to bear on the actual training of Nurses and personal preparation for that work. If this register were merely a directory to which the public would be led to go to find worthy and trained Nurses, not one of those whom I represent to-day would be here. It is because they are satisfied that the consequences of this registration would be far greater, and more serious to the Nurses' profession, that I have to impress upon your lordships to consider that so far from being useful, this institution would be detrimental both to their training and to their reputation as Nurses. I say it would be absolutely detrimental to the interests of the profession, and I would call your attention to the questions on page 410 of the blue book. It is the first report, and I begin at question 6,944. The witness is Miss Lückes, matron of the London Hospital, and she is asked:—“Are you in favour of what is called the British Nurses' Association for the registration of Nurses?—No; I think it is a terrible mistake; I think it is doing everything to retard the progress that nursing has been making.”

“Why?—It places good and bad Nurses on a level. It is excellent for bad and inefficient Nurses, and fatal to the good ones.” Now, that is the opinion of a person who has been interested in this work for years. She goes on:—“Take the test they might apply; it cannot be true that time is the test, or Miss Page would have been a splendid Nurse. Or if you think of provincial hospitals, three years in a small quiet provincial hospital is not to be compared to the value of six months' experience at a London hospital; they would see so much more and learn so much more there. Then the theoretical examination which is another test they might apply, is no guide whatever to the practical fitness of a woman for her work. It is my experience, and that of many other matrons, that those who come out best in their theoretical examination are often the least fitted either for good nursing or for managing a ward. You can no more make a Nurse of a woman who has not a gift for nursing than you can make a musician of a person who has no ear for music and no notion of the thing. Then I think that anything which places them all together on a register like that; when you have no distinct, definite, reliable basis, must make it more difficult, even than it is at present to know whether you can obtain reliable women, or whether the qualifications are imaginary as it were. If I might, I should like to complete the account of the registration that we ourselves make. We copy the certificate into the probationer's register; we sum up her various qualifications; if she is appointed a staff nurse, or private nurse, she is so entered on that register and a record is kept there; and finally, at Miss Nightingale's suggestion, we have established a supplementary register, and when a nurse leaves she is given a paper which informs her that if she chooses to take the trouble to send me word what she is doing and how she gets on, her record of that will be entered for her benefit in the supple-

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