

"You would keep in touch with each Nurse, you mean?—Yes, just as a medical man can be struck off the register; a qualified medical man, for gross professional faults or crimes, so a nurse should be. It would not be right to give any one individual hospital committee the right to do so. This Register would be published like the Medical Register, the Law List, and similar volumes every year, and be on public sale, so that any one could, at a glance, see whether any given woman was a trained nurse or not, and, if so, what exact training she had received."

Passing by a reference to a Pension Fund, I call your lordships' attention to the bottom of page 554, question 9,623:—

"Then if you had a Charter or an Act of Parliament, you would have this much larger power which would enable you to strike off Nurses from your list, and you would have considerable powers of enforcing discipline?—Certainly."

9624. "You can now strike them off your list?—Yes, but that would not have the same moral influence."

9625. "Do you agree with Dr. Bedford Fenwick, that those powers would be desirable?—I believe so."

9626. "Namely, by Act of Parliament or by Charter?—Yes."

9627. "And to do what?—By granting a Royal Charter to the Nurses' Association, to confer legal powers of control and discipline over the registered Nurses, or by a short Act of Parliament, appointing a Registration Board, and ordaining that no public or private institution should send out women to nurse the sick, who were not duly registered. To my mind, the latter would be the better way by far. But the former could be brought into operation at once, and would give a strong basis for parliamentary action."

Lord Hobhouse.—There seems to be a great confusion between a Royal Charter and Act of Parliament. I do not see what powers a Charter could give.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER.—Certainly, these gentlemen seem to have extraordinary ideas of the powers of a Charter. This idea of a directory is obviously the last resort of clever men, when what really they want to get would not commend itself. Look at page 7 of the draft Charter. "At any general meeting it shall be lawful for the members of the Corporation or such of them as shall be then present to ordain and make such byelaws as to them or the major part of them shall seem proper for the regulation and good government of the Corporation and of the members and affairs thereof, and generally for carrying the objects for which the Corporation is founded into full and complete effect, with reasonable penalties and fines to be contained in such byelaws on the offenders for non-performance of or disobedience to the same, and the said bye-laws, penalties, and fines, or any of them, from time to time to alter, change, or annul, as the said members in general meeting shall think requisite, and to mitigate the same as they shall find cause, so as all and singular such bye-laws, penalties, and fines, be reasonable and not repugnant or contrary to the provisions of these presents, or to the laws and statutes of this our realm." Well, my lords, I know of no power to impose fines by Charter, but I point out that they recognise that, unless they have machinery which will make this an effective Register, the Royal Charter is not wanted.

Lord Hobhouse.—On the last occasion I asked Sir Horace Davey what power could be gained by a Charter which could not be gained by the Joint Stock Companies' Act, and I understood him to say they wanted power for dealing with funds, &c.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER.—I shall point out to your lordships later on, that if it were only a question of obtaining incorporation, and the powers of incorporation, the Limited Companies' Acts would give them more than they could get by Charter.

Lord RIPON.—Their contention is that they have been refused incorporation.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER.—I think your lordship has a little over stated it.

Lord RIPON.—Without taking the word "Limited,"

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER.—Oh yes, quite so! I will deal with the Board of Trade incident later on. I shall point out that the objection to the grant then was on the ground that what they proposed to do would not effect the object—not that it would not be a good thing to obtain incorporation, but that they did not—but perhaps I had better refer to that matter here. I will call your lordships' attention to page 71, where you will find the following letter from Sir Henry Calcraft, dated May 6th, 1891.

"I am directed by the Board of Trade to say that they have carefully considered the application for a license under section 23 of the Companies Act, 1867, authorising the Royal British Nurses' Association to register as a Limited Company without the use of the word "Limited."

The Board of Trade have received a large number of communications from bodies of persons whose interest in hospital nursing is unquestionable, and whose experience entitles them to speak with authority, strongly objecting to the issue of a license.

After careful consideration of the objects of the Royal British Nurses' Association, and of the representations made in opposition thereto, the Board of Trade are unable to satisfy themselves that the means which the Association propose to adopt are either adequate to carry out their objects satisfactorily, or so free from objection as to warrant the Board of Trade in the issue of a license, and, under these circumstances, they are unable to accede to the application.

I am, however, to point out that this refusal in no way precludes the Association from registration as an ordinary joint stock company, under which registration they would enjoy the same powers and be subject to no greater responsibilities than would be the case if they were registered without the word "limited."

And now, my lords, I turn to page 72, and I should not read this but for the fact that my learned friend read a letter (of which we have never seen a copy), suggesting that the Board of Trade were supporting the Charter. According to my instructions we have never seen or heard of the letter until it was read, and I should like to see the whole of it. I do not know under what circumstances it was written, but under no circumstances can it be stated to be of any revocation of the reasons given in Sir Henry Calcraft's letter. The letter from the President of the Board of Trade stated "After careful consideration of the objects of the Royal British Nurses' Association . . . I was unable to satisfy myself that the means which the Association propose to adopt are either adequate to carry out their objects satisfactorily or so far free from objection as to warrant me in granting the application."

Therefore, my lord, it was that they did not get the powers. They can get those powers to-morrow; they can get incorporation to-morrow, but they must call themselves "Limited" for this purpose, and it is because—we humbly submit—under colour of getting the sanction of a Royal Charter that this register will have a different effect to that which would result from a mere list of members, and that this distinction does appear to us to be one of great importance—

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