

Lord RIPON.—You mean a different moral effect.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER.—And practical effect.

Lord RIPON.—Not a different legal effect?

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER.—Not a different legal effect, a different practical effect, and a different operative effect to people to whom it would speak, and it would be assumed by the Association, and by the public, that unless nurses were registered they shall not be considered trained nurses at all. Would your lordships look at page 555 of the Lords' Report; I need not read the question, but you will see this answer given by Mrs. Fenwick:—"I do not think that we desire to register personal qualifications of that sort. What we want to do is to place the skilled nurse on safe ground; that is, that when she has gone through a certain training and knows a certain amount, she should not have to compete in the open market with unskilled nurses; and that the public should be protected from any amateur and bogus nurse who may don a cap and apron with very little training, and take the same amount of fees from the public as a trained nurse." How are the public to be protected? It is only by the register. No other means has been shown whereby it will protect the public, therefore it is obvious that the protection is to be by certain names being on the register and certain names not being on it. I say, therefore, that not to recognise this is to put your head into the sand and fail to detect the danger. I will now direct your lordships' attention to a letter from Sir Henry Calcraft, dated the 6th August, 1891, The letter to the Board of Trade from the petitioners was in May, and then the President of the Board of Trade, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, replied in June. The letter I shall now read is 6th August, 1891, and it is from Sir Henry Calcraft to Dr. Bedford Fenwick. It is as follows:—

"Sir,—With reference to your letter of the 31st ult., and to previous correspondence with regard to the application of the Royal British Nurses' Association for a license under section 23 of the 'Companies' Act, 1867, I am directed by the Board of Trade to state as follows:—The Board do not propose to enter into a discussion with you as to their legal powers under the section in question, as they are unable to see that any useful purpose would be served by so doing. If the Royal British Nurses' Association is of opinion that it can legally contest the decision at which the department (in the exercise of their statutory discretion) have arrived in the matter, it is of course open to it to do so, in such a manner as it may be advised. With regard to your statement that the decision of the Board of Trade not to grant a license in this instance, was announced without affording the Royal British Nurses' Association 'any opportunity of stating its case,' I am to observe that the decision of the Board was arrived at upon the facts and circumstances actually before them. If the case of the Association was inadequately stated when the original application for a license was made on its behalf, that is not a matter for which the Department are responsible, and, however this may be, the Association has since had every possible facility afforded it for re-stating its case after a perusal and consideration of all the documents before the Board of Trade in the matter. You have now availed yourself of these facilities, and have re-stated the case for the Association. After commenting upon the alleged unimportant and untrustworthy nature of some of the objections sent to the Department, you state that some of the persons who made them were unaware of the facts, and you add, 'In the most important petition of

all, to which well known medical men have complaisantly added their signatures, nearly every statement is utterly inaccurate.' On these points the Board of Trade are unable to accept your statements as conclusive. The fact remains that (in consequence of adopting their usual action in requiring the application of the Royal British Nurses' Association to be advertised) the Board has been made aware of a strong opposition to it on the part of the authorities, whose position renders their opinions of great weight on such a matter. It appears to the Board of Trade that they are not competent to determine the very important questions connected with the establishment of a Register of Nurses, which should be settled before the register can be effectively established. Some of these questions are of great weight. Under these circumstances, the Board of Trade are unable to grant the desired Licence to the Royal British Nurses' Association. They wish it to be distinctly understood that they are led to this decision by no hostile feeling towards the Association or its objects, but by a conviction that full inquiry (by competent authorities) into all the facts and circumstances of the case and into the objections that have been raised should precede any further steps on the part of Her Majesty's Government. As evidence of the position taken up by the Department in the matter, I am to state, in conclusion, that should the Association decide to make an application to the Privy Council for an inquiry with a view to obtaining the powers they desire, such application would receive the cordial support of the President of the Board of Trade." The powers they desire now, and the powers they were then desiring, were powers to make their register a useful record of competent nurses, instead of a misleading record as it must be under the circumstances to which I have called your lordships' attention. And, perhaps I may say now that our (the opponents') contention is that such powers sought directly or indirectly ought only to be given after full Parliamentary inquiry, when the merits of the case can be discussed and evidence taken, and your lordships ought not to be asked to prejudge without inquiry—for really I never heard of evidence being called before a Committee of the Council on such applications; there may have been but I don't know of it—your lordships ought not to be asked to express an opinion in favour of a chartered register of Nurses, if your lordships think there is even ground for inquiry into the allegations we have made; and if, my lords, as I shall show later on, we are supported by nine-tenths of the people engaged in training Nurses for thirty or forty years. At page 556 of the Blue Book of the evidence before the Lords Committee, in continuation of Mrs. Fenwick's examination, Earl Kimberley asks; "About the legal powers which you spoke of, will you tell us a little more precisely what they will be?" A Royal Charter or a short Act of Parliament would probably appoint a Registration Board composed of the leaders of the medical profession who are interested in nursing, and of hospital matrons with great experience. It would empower them to overlook the certificates which nurses could bring forward, and to register them upon these certificates. Of course, they would have to rely upon the certificates which they received from their training schools; so that the matter still remains to a great extent in the hands of the authorities of the training schools; if they did not choose to certificate a person as an efficient nurse she could not be registered."

"I thought you intended it to become a prohibitory power to prevent nurses not belonging to the society from being sent out to nurse. I may have misunderstood you?—I think it would act directly upon that matter, because the public would soon recognise the fact that when they paid a

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