

the only trained nurses. I have been informed that a Charter has already been granted to the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute—a Royal Charter. That, my lord, does not provide for a Register of Nurses; but by it, the nurses are entitled to be members after one year's trial; they are allowed to be called the Queen's Nurses; they are to have a badge which they are entitled to wear as long as they observe certain conditions which will be furnished to your lordships by the officials, who will also be able to tell your lordships whether my information is correct. But it is a most remarkable thing, my lords, that these Queen's Nurses, sanctioned by Royal Charter, having privileges thereby conferred on them, will not be entitled to get on this proposed Register—they must be excluded from it, meaning thereby that they are not to be regarded and registered as trained Nurses. Yet they are trained Nurses, chartered Nurses if that is the proper expression, who are "authorised" and who have certain privileges granted them by virtue of a Royal Charter. Before I leave this part of the case I must humbly but firmly protest against the action of the opponents in this matter being misrepresented. We are not here to object to a Charter which will only confine itself to proper objects—the collection of funds, the improvement of Nurses, and so on; but we do object that under colour of that application they are seeking to obtain a chartered register, which will be the means of their holding out directly to the public that Nurses who are not on that chartered register are not trained Nurses, and are not Nurses in whom the public ought to place reliance. It has been said, even at your lordship's bar, that the object of the Association was to guard the public against unqualified persons by their names not appearing on the register; therefore by whatever name you call it, directory or anything else, that is the object. Now, my lords, with regard to the certificate; I would point out that in May, there were 2,821 members of this Association, and at present there are only 2,532.

Sir H. DAVEY.—Where are you quoting from?

Sir H. WEBSTER.—I take the figures from THE NURSES' JOURNAL, which is the organ of the Association; so that there are 290 or less than there were six months ago. Now, that brings me to another point. My friend, Sir Horace Davey, referred to the number of nurses who supported the application for the Charter, and he assumed that all the members of the Association supported it: That is not so my lords. The nurses never signed the petition at all. The gracious lady who is the President, signed on behalf of all the nurses in the Association, and the nurses had not been asked as individuals to express any opinion as to the register. Not only so, but there are the names of several nurses who are members of the Association, yet who have signed the petitions against granting this charter. Therefore, your lordships must not treat the enumeration of supporters with the authority which my learned friend desired. Now, my lords, more than once when I was addressing your lordships, Lord Hannen put to me the analogy of the medical practitioners. But I would ask your lordships' kindly consideration to the marked distinctions and the safeguards which the Legislature imposed in connection with the Medical Register, not one of which would apply to this Royal Charter. In the first place no private person could give information to the governing body as to incompetence, or unfitness, or breach of duty, no such person could send information. Proper notice has to be given. And all this was made the subject of statutory enactment in the Medical Practitioners' Act of 1858. By the 28th section of the Act notice was obliged to be given to the central body of any of the names proposed to be struck off.

Lord HOBHOUSE.—What Act is it?

Sir R. WEBSTER.—It is the 21st and 22nd of the Queen, chap. 90. Now, in the present case, in order to make the register effective it must be the duty, not only of every hospital, but of every nursing institution who sends out a nurse, to communicate with the registering body; and I at once call your lordship's attention to the enormous difference there is in dealing with the nurses' profession as compared with the medical profession. You know that it requires the greatest tact, judgment, prudence, and other qualifications of that nature. In view of that fact, I humbly submit that your lordships, sitting here, are not in a position to say what the Parliamentary Committee could say after the examination of witnesses with reference to a bill, and having before them the results of the inquiry which the Board of Trade thought it absolutely essential to make before this privilege should be granted. I am only showing the importance of the matter. By section 45 of the Act, notice has to be given by every registrar of the death of every medical practitioner, so that the register may be corrected from time to time so as to be an effective register. By sections 18 and 23 the teaching body are required to establish a certain scheme of examination, and what I may call the qualifying functions of the British Nurses' Association—if they were in a position to do that which they purport to do when they get their Charter—those qualifying functions can only be exercised by them in a certain way. "The Council may require information as to the course of study" taken—that is to say, the British Nurses' Association can send to the hospital or training school and ask what is the course of study they required. It is not denied that the standard of training is very different in many of these institutions. In many, one year's work would be worth as much as three in others. This section then enables the examining body to send and ascertain. I submit that no Charter should impose such restrictions as those which are here asked for. Your lordships have power to limit it so that they could have no control over any one of the training schools for nurses who had practically done the work in the past, and who would have no say in the management of this new body. Again, the Medical Charter provides for offences in connection with the Register by section 38 of the Act; the falsification of the Register is made a misdemeanor, and registration obtained by fraud is by section 39 also made an offence. Would your Lordships just observe the importance of that. The document which is now going forth to the public is the Register of Trained Nurses—a Chartered Register of Trained Nurses. Entry to it may be obtained by false representations. It is said that the Board shall inquire into and investigate the credentials of every applicant for registration. Suppose false credentials are sent—there is no offence created, and yet the analogy of the Medical Register is quoted. Then again, I do not know what is to prevent a person passing herself off as being registered. Every one wanting a nurse will not want to see documents. It is an offence to call yourself a qualified doctor, and so on. I do not want to repeat arguments, so I will only mention that your Lordships will find the same provisions in the Pharmacy Acts.

Lord HANNEN.—They are all registered—they must be on the General Medical Register.

Sir R. WEBSTER.—I think so. But in the present case there is no such protection for the public. They do not protect the public against breaches of the Act. That is just the thing that requires to be inquired into, and in the resolution of the British Medical Association which I read, and which my learned friend was instructed to say is a Committee which carries no weight—

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