

Sir HORACE DAVEY.—And I say so still.

Sir R. WEBSTER.—They desired to say that some kind of safeguard should be enforced in the case of every register which is to have anything like the authority that a register ought to have.

LORD HANNEN.—You used the word "credentials."

Sir R. WEBSTER.—Yes, my lord, and on page 6 of the red book it says, "The Board has carefully investigated the credentials of every applicant for registration." But that is not "member;" it is "every applicant for registration."

LORD HANNEN.—Therefore, I thought the nurse's name would not appear unless she were an "applicant."

Sir R. WEBSTER.—No; and therefore I point out—But perhaps your lordship means something equivalent. I submit that it is very doubtful how far a certificate could have force.

LORD HANNEN.—It might be enforced in the manner of taking them off.

Sir R. WEBSTER.—That is assuming that it comes to the knowledge of the registering body; but then there would not be any power to compel them.

LORD HOBHOUSE.—The Association might simply refuse.

LORD HANNEN.—Or might impose the condition that the name might be taken off upon objection.

LORD HOBHOUSE.—But the objection of Sir R. Webster's clients is, that it gives the Association a power to fix the test.

Sir R. WEBSTER.—I rather think that some restriction might be imposed, but I think that jurisdiction over persons not Members of the Corporation—

LORD HANNEN.—I put it on the condition that we won't admit you unless you become a member.

Sir R. WEBSTER.—Yes; and now there is another point. The medical schools are opposed to the system of allowing a separate body to give them nurses. They say that persons desiring Nurses ought to be left to go to the place where the best information is to be got. It seems to me that the register would be very much worse than the present system, because the way in which it would work in reference to the hospitals would be this. A person sends to the hospital for a Nurse, and would get in the hospital one picked out for the particular case. My lords, it is impossible that any such consideration could be given by a register or to an applicant to such an Association, and therefore I submit that the register is worse than nothing because it would prevent people going to the right places and obtaining from the very people who could give it, the right information. With great deference I submit that the register would not supply that information unless it gave much more than is proposed; because *ex hypothesi* each body training nurses say that there are as good nurses as are on the register who cannot go on the register because they do not comply with the rules. I again repeat, and shall prove before your lordships in evidence if I am permitted, that no application of any kind has been made to any one of the hospitals I represent, prior to placing its name upon the register, or with any view to the revision of the list. I would remind your lordships also of the overwhelming testimony given before the Select Committee of the House of Lords, as to the importance of the practical work of nursing and of how the Nurses carry on their work. I think your lordships agree generally with the course of that argument. My lords, I do not think there is any separate head upon which I desire to address your lordships. I have the great advantage of the assistance of my friend Mr. Bristowe, and I trust your lordships will permit him to address you in regard to this matter.

Lord RIFON.—I am afraid that would not be in accordance with our rules of procedure. After your address to the Committee we shall not need any further assistance.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER.—I am much obliged to your lordship. I think your lordships gathered when I was reading, a few moments ago, that this hospital experience is a claim which the Association makes a condition of registration. In the regulations it is stated: "Applicants for registration must produce proof that they have been engaged for three years in work in hospitals or infirmaries, of which not less than twelve months must have been spent in a recognised general hospital containing at least 40 beds. That may mean anything "engaged for three years." Of course, that is a most elastic phraseology "engaged for three years in work in hospitals or infirmaries." It may mean any work.

LORD HANNEN.—Work in Hospital must mean hospital work. You don't suggest it means sweeping dormitories?

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER.—It means a certificate of high training, and it was opposed by us because some of those I represent desire less training. I respectfully submit on behalf of the vast majority of those who have been engaged in the active training of nurses—both laymen, matrons, and lecturers, and a very considerable number of medical men—that, without full inquiry as to what is the natural effect of such a register; without full inquiry as to in what way the register can be safeguarded, no Corporation ought to be erected by charter having for its object the keeping of a register of trained nurses. If the register is a mere list of members it might have been omitted from the purposes of incorporation, because that will be provided for, by the bye-laws. My lords, those who have been labouring for years in this work are not adverse to a proper register, properly kept by a responsible body. They desire me to state that if it be safeguarded by such provisions as the legislature in its wisdom thinks should surround such a document to give it authority, to give it sanction and to give it that imprimatur which the public are entitled to expect, that then they will welcome it. But in order that this may really happen, it is essential that the persons who have been engaged in training nurses should have a very large share in the way in which this register should be prepared, and the way in which it should be kept authentic. And in order to do that, it is absolutely necessary there should be statutory provisions to enable the managers of this register to do their work in the interests of the public. Whatever your lordships' opinions may be as to the granting of the Charter, at least it should not be in the power of the managers of the institution, apart from your lordships' control, to hold out to the public that the Register will be a Register of Trained Nurses so as to give the Nurses registered by them a status; they are not entitled to have any advantages over their sisters, and, it may be, to prevent equally talented and equally qualified, but who happened not to fulfil the particular conditions of the Association (varying from time to time and not laid down by the Charter) to prevent these persons from carrying on business to the same extent as they would have done by becoming members of the Association. I can only thank your lordships for having permitted me to address you at such great length. I should not have done so, but it was regarded by Miss Nightingale and others who have laboured for years to improve the status of the nurses—and who are still actively engaged in the work—as a most important matter, because they feel that the publication of a Chartered Register by the Association such as the Royal British Association of Nurses, in the hands of nurses and doctors alone, must lower the status of the nurses, will make it much less likely that they will be

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