

on in the said petitions, and the replies of your Petitioner. For convenience and brevity the Petitioner will ask leave to refer to the said reply for such statements and objections, and the replies thereto. A copy of such Reply will be found in the Appendix at p. 18.

X. The signatories of the said opposing petitions are, or have been, mostly attached to departments in which—like the Army Medical Department—only Trained Nurses are employed, and they, therefore, have no experience of the dangerous consequences of employing untrained assistants, or to hospitals or to nursing homes which make considerable profits by sending out private Nurses to the public.

XI. An analysis is of the support for, and the opposition to, the Incorporation of the Association shows the following figures:—

	Medical Men.	Nurses.	General Public.
For the Incorporation (more than)	1250	3700	4600
Against the Incorporation ... ..	280	540	140

XII. The Petitioner submits the following statements:—

- (1) The present state of affairs in the Nursing profession is most dangerous to the public, detrimental to medical treatment, and discreditable to Nurses. This is shown by the facts that:—
  - (a) Any woman, however destitute of knowledge, or of character, or of both, can term herself a trained Nurse, and can obtain employment in that capacity.
  - (b) Certificated Nurses who prove themselves unworthy of trust by drunkenness, theft, or by commission of even graver offences can continue to practise their profession under cover of their original certificate of efficiency. There are, at least, 200 hospitals in the United Kingdom at which women are trained as Nurses, and certificates of competency are given by the authorities of the majority of these hospitals. Very few of these authorities keep any detailed record of the women whom they thus present to the public as skilled workers. When these women leave the hospital service it is manifest that their former employers cease to have any power or control over them, and have no authority to cancel or recall any certificate which they have awarded, even if the possessor may subsequently prove herself to be utterly unworthy of trust. Therefore, although hospitals may dismiss for grave faults Nurses whom they have previously certificated, these women can afterwards claim to be trustworthy, on the authority of the very institution which has been compelled to discard them.
- 2) The Association, in endeavouring to bring about reforms, is engaged in a work of the greatest public importance and usefulness, and is supported therein by most important medical bodies, and by large numbers of medical men. Evidence can be adduced, if required, that the statements made in the opposing petitions as to Hospital Registers are incorrect, and that justice may even be defeated, and the public safety endangered, by the want of a General Register of Trained Nurses; that a Nurse can, at present, be dismissed for grave faults, from

one institution after another, and yet can easily obtain work at other hospitals; that hospital certificates can be forged or stolen, and by such documents improper characters can obtain positions of trust even in public institutions.

The value of an authoritative General Register of Nurses as a means of meeting the abuses above described is, it is submitted, manifest.

The Petitioner will at the hearing refer to a letter, dated the 28th of April, 1891, published in *The Times*, and signed by 37 medical men, a copy of which letter will be found in the Appendix (p. 26).

XIII. The Royal British Nurses' Association is through the Petitioner, prepared and desirous, if permitted at the hearing of this Petition so to do, to tender evidence to prove and establish such of the facts stated in this Case and the documents to which it refers as are disputed, and to refute the allegations in the opposing petitions which the Association dispute.

The Petitioner humbly submits that the Prayer of the Petition should be granted, and a Charter of Incorporation should be granted to the Royal British Nurses' Association as asked for in the Petition for, amongst others, the following

#### REASONS.

I. Because the want of an authoritative General Register of Trained Nurses, is a public danger and detrimental to the medical profession, the nursing profession, and those who are in need of nursing aid.

II. Because the Association now attempts by its Register to provide the public with some ready means of ascertaining if any given nurse has received technical education, and in that case where and when she was trained.

III. Because without Incorporation the work of the Association will be impeded, and its value to nurses and the public greatly diminished, while the grant of a Royal Charter conferring the rights and privileges of Incorporation will greatly facilitate the general work of the Association and the carrying out of its benevolent and other schemes.

IV. Because the principle of an authoritative public register for persons engaged in medical work of any kind has been repeatedly sanctioned by Parliament, and shown to be of the greatest public and professional benefit.

V. Because when nurses have finished their education and leave the hospital service and work in private houses they ought to have power effectively to combine for their mutual support and help in times of adversity, sickness, and old age; and the Association, if incorporated, will effectively provide the means of enabling this to be carried out.

VI. Because the Association is only engaged in a voluntary work, and neither seeks nor desires compulsory powers or controlling powers over other Institutions. It has never interfered, and if incorporated will not interfere, with hospital authorities, who will, if the Charter of Incorporation is granted, continue to be responsible to the public for the training given to their nurses.

VII. Because the arguments in the opposing petitions are founded on inaccurate statements, and are entirely answered by the reply lodged on behalf of the Petitioner.

VIII. Because the work of the Association is of the greatest public benefit and importance, and for the public welfare a Royal Charter ought to be granted to it.

M. MUIR MACKENZIE.

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[previous page](#)

[next page](#)