

THE THIRD READING.

On Tuesday, June 22nd, the Bill, having been considered in Committee reported as amended, was considered in the House of Commons, read the third time and passed.

Mr. Storey (Sunderland) pointed out difficulties concerning sub-standard nurses which might arise at the end of five years between Scotland and England, and the possibility that English assistant nurses who start training five years after the Bill has become an Act will still be able to go to Scotland and work there. He then pleaded for the elimination of the clause to close the training of assistant nurses after a five-years period for enrolment.

This amendment was supported by Mr. Linstead (Putney), who pleaded that the door should be kept open after the five-years period, and suggested that "the Secretary of State should take power himself to close the door if he finds it necessary."

Mrs. Hardie (Glasgow, Springburn) said: "This is the one clause which has made the Bill acceptable to the Nursing Profession in Scotland. In view of the fact that the Committee in Scotland (the Alness Committee) was against the introduction of assistant nurses, this is a departure from the findings of that Committee. It was wise of the Secretary of State to put it into the clause, and I think it should be left in."

The Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr. T. Johnston, agreed that the Alness Committee was very representative and was unanimous in reporting that there should be no assistant nurses grade set up in Scotland, and repeatedly said it would be a retrograde step to do so. ". . . There is no subject in the Nursing Profession over which there is, I believe, greater disputation than over this. . . . Unless we can put in this limit of five years we shall never get the assent of the local authorities, who are opposed to this grade of assistant nurses, so far as they are vocal, local authority associations were opposed to it, and it is impossible to get a move on in the provision of more nurses in Scotland, and get harmony in the Nursing Profession, unless some such clause as we have drafted in this Bill is agreed to by Parliament. I think I am right in saying, though I speak here with some diffidence, that even the Royal College of Nursing now are agreed to accept it as the lesser of two evils, and as most steps in life are a choice between two evils, I commend it to the Committee."*

The Amendment was negatived, and the Clause ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 14.—(Training of Assistant Nurse to be reckoned towards period of training for admission to the Register.)

This clause provides facilities for Assistant Nurses who have some training to qualify for the full State Registered Nurse grade; but it was urged that she would have to come down from her present £70 salary to £45 (the salary of a Student Nurse). A question was asked if this privilege would be accorded to V.A.D.s. It was urged that if a V.A.D. can pass the necessary examination and transfer herself to become an Assistant Nurse with a view to becoming a State Registered Nurse, she was eligible to do so.

Mr. Johnston replied that so far as his information went, the clause is only available to benefit girls who have at some time or other undertaken part of the training for the grade of State Registered Nurse.

The debate continued and was most illuminating as to the attitude of laymen when attempting to control women's work of which they are singularly ignorant.

Mr. Gallacher (Fife West) had a very lively "set to" with Mr. Johnston on the suggestion that Assistant Nurses if training to become Registered Nurses should have their

salaries reduced from £70 to £45, the remuneration of Student Nurses.

This Mr. Johnston repudiated.

Mr. Messer rose.

The Chairman (Major Milner) tried to snuff him out. But Mr. Messer is a very persistent person and clenched the argument by pointing out that the Bill provides that an Assistant Nurse is to start at £70 a year. The Student Nurse starts at £45. The Bill provides that an Assistant Nurse, after her period of training, may count that period without reduction.

The Amendment was agreed to.

We wonder if Student Nurses will still materialise when these Acts are in force. We doubt it.

Clause 19.—This clause provides for funds subscribed by Registered Nurses to be used to meet the inevitable deficits for the enrolment of semi-trained women as Assistant Nurses, including examination expenses and travelling and subsistence allowances duly allowed to members of the Assistant Nurses' Committee.

This grossly unjust provision was agreed without one word of protest, after which presumably we are expected no farther to meddle therein—until the day of retribution dawns, as it certainly will do at no distant date.

THE LIST.

Needless to report, a List of Nurses more or less trained during the past 20 years are to be added to the Register without examination should they apply, thus breaking faith with thousands of Nurses who have conformed to the law and been registered after three or four years' arduous work, study, and examination. Verily it can no longer be claimed "that an Englishman's word is as good as his bond."

We sincerely sympathise with our colleagues in Scotland who have faithfully opposed the de-grading of their profession of which they are so justly proud, and hope they will keep in mind their policy of "patients first."

No further information on this matter is available as we go to press. No doubt the Nurses (Scotland) Bill will have passed through the House of Lords, and become law before our next issue.

CONSOLATION FOR SCOTTISH NURSES.

"No country is wretched, sweet lady," returned the knight, "till by a dastardly acquiescence it consents to its own slavery. Bonds and death are the utmost of our enemy's malice; the one is beyond their power to inflict when a man is determined to die or live free; and for the other, which of us will think that ruin which leads us into the blessed freedom of Paradise?"—JANE PORTER: "The Scottish Chiefs" (1809).

CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

At the recent York Diocesan Conference, Dr. Garbett the Archbishop, uttered a grave warning against venereal disease and advocated more clinics for its confidential treatment, together with the compulsory notification of babies born with it.

Church and State must co-operate as far as possible in both prevention and cure, he said, and the Christian was bound to make it plain that promiscuous intercourse was not only physically and morally dangerous, but a sin against God.

"It is unchristian for us simply to say that a man is suffering the due penalty of his sin," continued Dr. Garbett. "Pity should urge us to do all in our power to restore him to health both in body and soul."

"Christian morality always regards pride as the sin which above all others separates man from God and his neighbour. If we bear this in mind we shall be less likely to adopt a superior or rigid attitude to those who have yielded to sin."

* We disagree with this expression of opinion. The choice is between right and wrong, a basis of conduct we commend to politicians.—ED.

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