

Nursing Progress and State Registration

We see in the late numbers of the *British Journal of Nursing* that a new body of nurses has recently been formed—the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland. The function of a National Council is to act as a consultative body, and the following are the aims of this council:—

1. To promote mutual understanding between Associations of Nurses in the United Kingdom.
2. Thorough affiliation with the International Council of Nurses, to acquire knowledge of nursing conditions in every country, to encourage a spirit of sympathy with the nurses of other nations, and to afford facilities for national hospitality.
3. To promote the usefulness and honour, the financial and other interests of the nursing profession.

These aims embrace a wide reach and we nurses away so far from the centre of all professional movement must feel our isolation. We can only read of what is being done by the leading members of our profession on the other side of the world, and in a small way endeavour to have some means of mutual advance and encouragement among ourselves. There are great movements now in progress among our sisters in Great Britain. Three bills are to be brought before Parliament dealing with the organisation of nurses during the coming session.

The first is the Nurses' Bill, drafted by the Society for State Registration; the second is the bill drafted by the Royal British Nurses' Association; the third is a bill for the establishment of a Directory of Nurses.

The great pity is that all those interested in obtaining registration for nurses through Act of Parliament should not have worked together for this reform, for which the more advanced nurses have been asking for twenty years.

A great public meeting was held on 21st February, at the Caxton Hall, London, in

support of the State registration of trained nurses.

The chair was to be taken by Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, and there were to be many important speakers, and this meeting was expected to do much to hasten the day when the great aim will be attained.

In Australia this session, a bill was brought before the Legislative Council providing for the registration of nurses. This is the object for which the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association was primarily formed and established; the system of voluntary registration which has been so successful throughout Australasia that it is probable no trained nurse is now not a member of either the Australasian or the Victorian Association, and their interests are protected, and above all the interests of the public, are protected by this means of ascertaining the qualifications of women undertaking to nurse the sick.

The chief reason for a government making laws for the registration of nurses, as other bodies also, such as doctors and chemists, whose practise, if unqualified, is likely to menace the life and health of the public, is to protect that public; and having made the law which provides the means of ascertaining whether a nurse has been trained to do what she undertakes, and also lays down the necessary qualifications for registration under that law, the government then leaves to the public the option of employing the properly qualified assistant to the unqualified. The public cannot be coerced to see its own advantage, but it is for the trained nurses to so impress their superiority on the medical men under whom they work, and the patients whom they nurse, that no one will think of employing any one to fulfil this important duty but one who has the hall-mark of registration.

Ere long the efforts of the nurses in Great Britain and our neighbouring State of New South Wales will be crowned with success.

Lay aside life-harming heaviness,
And entertain a cheerful disposition.

—SHAKESPEARE.

All service ranks the same with God!
. . . . There is no last nor first.

—BROWNING.