

## Our Foreign Letter.

To the Editor of "*The Nursing Record.*"

Government House,  
Ottawa, Canada,  
February 15th, 1897.

MADAM,—At a public meeting held at Ottawa on Wednesday, February 10th, at the instance of the National Council of Women of Canada, under the presidency of His Excellency the Governor-General, the following resolution was unanimously passed, having been moved by the Hon. Wilfrid Laurier, Premier of the Dominion, and seconded by the Hon. Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior :—

"That this meeting heartily approves of the general character of the scheme described as the 'Victorian Order of Home Helpers' as a mode of commemoration by the Dominion of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and that a fund be opened for the carrying out thereof."

The need that exists in country and remote districts throughout the Dominion for the services of trained practical women as district nurses seems to be universally admitted, and there appears to be a very general consensus of opinion that no better national scheme could be devised for commemorating Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee than the establishment on a permanent footing of a Victorian order of public servants, whose patriotic mission it would be to meet this want.

All candidates for this Order will have to undergo an examination, and be practically tested as to their fitness for the work which they are to undertake.

The standard for this examination, and the tests to be undergone, will be prescribed by medical men and others who understand the need which has to be met. It is proposed that the co-operation of various hospitals and medical men in different parts of Canada be invited in carrying out this examination, so that there may be convenient centres for all candidates.

Already such co-operation has been heartily promised in several centres.

The examination will especially bear on the three following points :—

- (1) A practical knowledge of midwifery, sufficient to attain a prescribed certificate.
- (2) A practical knowledge of first aid to the injured and of simple nursing.
- (3) A general knowledge of home-keeping, simple home sanitation, with the ability of preparing suitable food for invalids.

It is proposed that no person under twenty-eight or thirty years of age should be admitted into the Order, and, when admitted, an undertaking should be given to continue the work, provided health does not prevent it, for a period of at least three years. A uniform will be provided, and a badge, which may take the form of the St. Andrew's Cross, with letters V.R.

Trained nurses who may desire to enter the Order will be made very welcome. They will have to pass the examination, and be personally approved by the Committee.

Women who have already lived in these country districts, and who are respected and have the confidence of their neighbours, would be preferable to any

others in many instances, and it would be well to encourage parishes and townships to choose someone whom they know, and send her down to one of the centres, where the necessary training could be given. Arrangements will be made whereby candidates can be enabled to obtain the necessary training.

Districts wanting to secure the services of a Home Helper will be required to raise a certain sum towards her maintenance, which they would undertake to give yearly to the Central Committee during her residence, or to provide suitable board and lodging for her, and means of conveyance. On application to the Central Committee a suitable helper will be selected for the district applying, and a grant would be given towards her expenses to meet the sum raised by the district, and her salary would be paid by the Central Committee.

It may be mentioned that the scheme has been most favourably received by the medical men to whom it has been mentioned, and their valuable co-operation in carrying on this work will be anxiously sought for in all districts affected by the plan.

All arrangements should be made so that it should be considered an honour to belong to this Order, and that the members of it should be regarded as public servants.

Her Excellency the Countess of Aberdeen, having thought it but right to acquaint Her Majesty's Secretary with the project that was being planned by the National Council, has received the following telegram from Sir Arthur Bigge :—

"Osborne.

In reply to your telegram, the Queen has refrained from expressing approval of any particular scheme for commemorating the Diamond Jubilee, though, of course, any project for the relief of the sufferings of the sick in Canada will be assured of Her Majesty's sincere sympathy.

(Signed) BIGGE."

It is proposed, therefore, to open a fund for establishing such an Order of Home Helpers in Canada. Not less than a million dollars should be raised to make the scheme effective. This would mean but a contribution of one dollar from every family in the Dominion.

The Bank of Montreal has kindly undertaken to receive subscriptions for the Victorian Order of Home Helpers in Canada, at any of their branches.

The local Councils of Women will undertake the collection wherever they are formed, with the co-operation of others, and it is hoped that committees for the purpose will be organised in all districts, and Mrs. Edward Griffin, Russell House, Ottawa, has kindly consented to act as Secretary and Treasurer.

Allow me to express the hope that you will bring before your readers the institution of this fund, as a means whereby a suitable national commemoration of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee may be carried out by the people of the whole Dominion unitedly, and in a manner which will both be in accordance with the known wishes of the Queen, and be of permanent benefit to all parts of the country.

It will, of course, be observed that the carrying out of this scheme need in no way interfere with any local forms of commemoration which may be contemplated.

I remain,  
Yours faithfully,  
ISABEL ABERDEEN.

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