

The Making of a Constitution.

WE have received a copy of the report of the First Annual Convention of the Associated Alumnae of Trained Nurses of the United States and Canada, and most interesting it is. The Convention, which was held in the rooms of the Trained Nurses' Educational Exhibit, held in conjunction with the International Health Exposition, New York City, and presided over by Mrs. Isabel Hampton Robb, President of the Associated Alumnae was, as was pointed out from the chair, remarkable as being the meeting of an organized, representative body of nurses, associated for definite objects, who were ready to deal with some of the problems, which, with the growth of the profession, have presented themselves for solution.

The formation of the Associated Alumnae was inaugurated after the third annual meeting of the American Society of Superintendents of Nurses, when a very comprehensive paper was read by Miss L. L. Dock on, "A National Association for Nurses and Its Legal Organization." At this meeting a committee of five was appointed by the Chair to select seven others who should form the nucleus of a convention to prepare a national constitution, and that they should secure an equal number of delegates from among the older alumnae societies, who should not be holding hospital positions, to unite with them in drawing up a constitution. It was also ordered that a report should be made at the next annual meeting, and this was done at the annual meeting of Superintendents held in Baltimore in February, 1897, when the Committee reported that a Convention with delegates of representative alumnae associations had been held at Manhattan Beach in September 1896. A constitution and by-laws were drafted for an association covering the United States and Canada, and a second meeting appointed to be held in Baltimore in February, at the same date as the meeting of the American Society of Superintendents, when the constitution was adopted and officers elected. The expenses incurred, up to the time of the first meeting, were defrayed by the Superintendents' Society, and after that by the Alumnae Associations represented.

At the first Annual Convention held last year many important questions were considered, including methods of work, arrangements of committees, and constitutional amendments, as well as the question of admitting the smaller schools into institutional membership, and the limitations which should be imposed.

The advisability of establishing a permanent organization in New York was also discussed, and, the question of the expense incurred by those

delegates who had to attend from a great distance having been raised, it was agreed that the expense should be shared by the Alumnae Associations.

The question of incorporation was discussed, and Miss Dock pointed out that the Association being really an International one, it would be impossible to get a Charter which would include Canada. Each country would have to obtain a separate Charter.

The next question raised was that of a magazine or periodical, the opinion being expressed that it was only right and fitting that the Association should have its own periodical. Miss Dock thought it was one of the necessities of life, it was perfectly astonishing how little nurses had to say to one another in reference to their work. She suggested that each delegate should go back to her Alumnae and ascertain how many subscribers she could obtain. That would be something definite to go on. The subject of the small general hospitals was then considered, and it was ultimately agreed to be advisable to admit as associate members, without right to vote, small general Alumnae Associations giving two full years of instruction in hospital, provided that the Superintendent be a graduate of a general hospital. This and other amendments to the constitution were proposed by the Committee on amending the Constitution, after which a motion to adjourn was made and carried.

At the last session the officers for the ensuing year were appointed, when Mrs. Hampton Robb was re-elected President by acclamation. The Nurses' Associated Alumnae is, therefore, well launched on its career, and we do not doubt it will be a power for good both with regard to the members of the nursing profession, and also of the general public. The Society has shown its appreciation of the work done in its formation by the American Society of Superintendents by passing a vote of thanks to that Society, and its gratitude to its President for her arduous work in this connection by re-electing her.

In the future, as laid down in the President's speech, there are many questions before the Associated Alumnae requiring solution, and taking into consideration the spirit shown so far, and the fact that Mrs. Hampton Robb is at the helm, we do not doubt that these questions will be dealt with in a wise and generous spirit, and that the conclusions arrived at will be far-reaching in their results. Such questions as the construction of a code of ethics, the elevation of the standard of nursing education, and the organization of State and local branches are all of the utmost importance, and the wisdom of the President was evinced in her appeal to each member to cultivate a sense of individual attention and personal responsibility towards her Society.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)