

17th. What had been done in the direction of international affiliation?

The United States of America were, at present, the only nation ready to enter into full membership of the International Council of Nurses. Yet, in 1892, American nurses had no organisation whatever, and Mrs. Fenwick described her visit in that year to Mrs. Hampton Robb (then Miss Hampton), Superintendent of Nurses at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, where, for the first time, she met Miss Dock, and their keen discussion of the question of organisation. The seed then sown fell on fertile soil, and, in 1901, when she visited the States, the whole country was covered with a network of organisations, whereby the graduate nurses of the various schools were gathered up into Alumnae Associations, and these Associations in their turn, feeling the need for closer contact, had formed the National Associated Alumnae. The Central Society held an Annual Convention to which each of the school Alumnae deputed delegates, and these Conventions have been of the greatest benefit to all the participating Associations.

The American nurses who were in London in 1899 went back and took yet another step, associating together their Superintendents' Society and Associated Alumnae into a National Federation, the five officers of which act as its representatives in the National Council of Women. Thus American nurses were ready for international affiliation; they had, indeed, a genius for organisation, and this consisted in their legislating for the needs of the time. It was a mistake to make a Constitution so stodgy that it could not be altered; it was better to have a loose tie, so that future generations could easily accept what had proved to be good and useful, and discard what was unnecessary.

In the United Kingdom, Irish nurses already had their Association, whose President would be at Berlin in June. Scotland had so far not organised sufficiently for its nurses to be represented in an associated capacity. In England we had eight societies composed of certificated nurses which elected their own officers and committees, and which numbered at least 2,000 members, standing for vital principles. These could easily unite, and 2,000 women thus associated in a society in the unity of comradeship were of more value than 80,000 standing outside for nothing at all.

German nurses were also beginning to form themselves into societies, and when once they seriously considered organisation they would probably deal effectively with it, for most German women had the advantage, which English women of the middle classes have not always had in the past, of a good general education.

Mrs. Fenwick then asked whether those present felt, or did not feel, that it was desirable that each of the societies they represented should delegate a certain number of members on to a central Provisional Committee, which might offer itself for federation with the International Council of Nurses at Berlin. She spoke of the educational advantage of keeping in touch with other nations. As a British woman she was jealous of any other nation forging ahead of her own country, but we must realise that, unless we organised nursing education on a different basis, other nations would go ahead of us. She thought that the meeting should not separate without coming to some definite conclusion with regard to international affiliation. The fact that such a meeting had assembled as the result of sending out a few invitations was in itself a proof of the interest taken in the matter.

Miss Stewart then read again the first resolution, which was proposed by Miss Barton, President of the Chelsea Infirmary Nurses' League, and seconded by Miss Pell Smith, Vice-President, Leicester Infirmary League. The latter greatly regretted the unavoidable absence of their President, Miss Rogers, and said that the opinion of the Leicester League, so far as it had been ascertained, was most universal in favour of affiliation. Miss Marquardt asked how the

expenses of the Central Committee would be met, and Miss Stewart replied that the expenses would not be large, and suggested that the combining societies should each be asked to pay a small affiliation fee.

Miss Todd thought the desirability of affiliation was self-evident, and that a combination of societies having a joint membership of 2,000 was quite enough to make a beginning. All progressive movements originated with a small number of people.

The resolution was then carried unanimously.

The second resolution was proposed by Miss Todd and seconded by Lady Hermione Blackwood.

Some discussion took place as to the number of delegates it was desirable should be appointed by each League. Miss Stewart pointed out that it was important that a sufficient number should be appointed so that some members from each League might always be present at meetings of the Provisional Committee. Miss Pell Smith proposed six; this was seconded by Miss Cameron and carried, as was also the resolution.

The third resolution was proposed by Miss Morgan and seconded by Miss J. A. Smith. On the proposition of Miss Todd, seconded by Miss Turner, the number 3,000 was raised to 5,000, and with this alteration the resolution was carried unanimously.

Miss Stewart in her concluding remarks congratulated the meeting on the afternoon's work, which she believed would have very far-reaching consequences. She spoke of the belief of Mrs. May Wright Sewall that from the international combination would be achieved the greatness of the peoples and the salvation of the world. It was a splendid belief.

From association, said Miss Stewart, came that sense of professionalism which inculcated a high standard of conduct obtainable in no other way. Higher standards of conduct and ethics were produced by the cultivation of a feeling of personal responsibility than by the enforcement of any laws which could be laid down. She said also that Miss Rogers, of Leicester, whose personality and position in the provincial nursing world commanded so much respect, and whose absence all regretted, had written, concerning affiliation, "Anything is good that tends to break down the narrow parochialism of English nursing systems," a view with which she fully concurred.

In further discussion it was agreed that those present, in reporting on the proceedings to the various societies which they represented, should ask their Executive Committees to nominate six delegates to act on the Provisional Committee, and communicate their names to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick within the next month or six weeks, so that the Committee might be fully constituted before the Quinquennial Meeting of the International Council of Nurses. It was found that members of every society in the room had arranged to go to Berlin in June, and it was considered very desirable that the representatives nominated on to the Provisional Committee should include in each case one who hoped to be present; this would add to the subsequent efficiency of the Committee, and the delegate would be able to stimulate interest by bringing back to her Society a full account of the proceedings.

The meeting, which from first to last was characterised by enthusiasm, spirit and unanimity, then terminated, after a vote of thanks had been proposed to Miss Stewart for convening and presiding at it, by Miss Pell Smith.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

Many nurses are at present desiring information as to the International Council of Nurses. It will be of interest, therefore, to recall that it was founded in London in 1899, and that a year later its officers were elected on the vote of members in Great Britain and Ireland, the United States of America, the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand, and Denmark. They are Mrs.

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