

International Council of Nurses until such time as a National Council of Nurses is fully formed, and it was unanimously decided that this was desirable. Those present were commissioned to carry back to the Leagues and Societies which they represented an account of the proceedings, asking them to co-operate in the formation of a Provisional Committee, with the result that we now have forty-two delegates from seven societies and we have before us to-day an application for representation on the Committee from the Parish of Nottingham Nurses' League.

The following fifteen members of this Provisional Committee were present at the Quinquennial Meeting of the International Council of Nurses held in Berlin in June last:—

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President of the International Council of Nurses, *Delegate of the Registered Nurses' Society*.

Miss Isla Stewart, Hon. Vice-President of the International Council of Nurses for Great Britain and Ireland.

Miss Knight, Matron, General Hospital, Nottingham; Miss Ross, Matron, Western Hospital Fulham; Miss M. Breay, Hon. Secretary, *Delegates of the Matrons' Council*.

Miss Richmond, Matron, Women's Hospital, Birmingham; Miss Huxley, President Irish Nurses' Association; Miss MacDonnell, R.R.C., Matron of the Richmond Hospital, Dublin, *Delegates of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses*.

Miss Jenkins, Lady Superintendent, Resident Staff Quarters, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C.; Miss E. M. Waind, Lady Superintendent, Galen House, Guildford, *Delegates of the League of the St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses*.

Miss Barton, Matron of the Chelsea Infirmary; The Lady Hermione Blackwood, *Delegates of the Chelsea Infirmary Nurses' League*.

Miss M. Burr, *Delegate of the League of St. John's House Nurses*.

Miss Rogers, Matron of the Leicester Infirmary; Miss E. Pell Smith, Lady Superintendent of the Home Hospital, Leicester, *Delegates of the Leicester Infirmary Nurses' League*.

At the meeting of the International Council the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

"That invitations be officially sent to the Federation of American Nurses, the Provisional Committee of the National Council of Nurses of England, and the German Nurses' Association, inviting them to affiliate with the International Council of Nurses."

Since then I have received a letter from Miss L. L. Dock, Hon. Secretary of the Council, formally inviting this Provisional Committee to co-operate with the Council, and it is to consider this letter that this meeting has been convened to-day.

The Chairman then called upon Miss Breay to read Miss Dock's letter, which was as follows:—

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE UPON INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION FOR ENGLAND.

Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee,—

It is my most pleasant duty to lay before you for your formal consideration the following action taken by the International Council of Nurses at its meeting in Berlin on June 17th. After the hearing of reports from different countries on the status of nursing organisation, it was proposed by Miss Isla Stewart, seconded by Miss Dock, and carried unanimously:—

"That invitations be officially sent to the American Federation of Nurses, the Provisional Committee of the National Council of Nurses of England, and the German Nurses' Association, inviting them to affiliate with the International Council of Nurses."

I therefore beg your earnest consideration of the motion, with all that it involves, and confidently hope for an affirmative reply, as your very presence at the Berlin meeting, which

gave the Councillors of the International such deep satisfaction and hope, was an assurance that English nurses were sympathetically interested in the question of international union.

The aspiration which draws us on towards international bonds is the aspiration towards a full and complete self-development. We feel—we see in all directions—we hear on all sides, in all countries, the criticisms and reproaches directed against unworthy representatives of our profession. Crude and half-educated women, being admitted as they are by hundreds every year into the ranks of nursing, with no standards, no ideals, no stimulus, must inevitably drag down the good name of the nursing art, once rescued from ignominy by Florence Nightingale and her peers. It is not the fault of nurses themselves that this flood of half-trained women is being poured forth. It is the result of ignorance on the part of hospital and infirmary managers, of greed on the side of nursing institutions, and of indifference on the part of the public.

Nevertheless, intelligent and educated nurses are seriously to blame if they do not take cognisance of bad conditions. The refined and educated nurses must set the standard and draw the line to-day, just as Miss Nightingale did, by exerting the power of character and influence as she did.

But to do this it is absolutely necessary to have a certain amount of freedom and privilege. The nurse must be allowed the freedom and responsibility of a member of the State and of Society. If she is under tutelage, under the repression of outside control, dependent perhaps for her bread and butter on the will of others before whom her own mind must bend, forbidden any share in the conduct of her own affairs, she is helpless.

Therefore it is that the fundamental necessity of self-development is freedom to develop, or self-government, and so the germ or root idea of the International Council is to seek, in all countries, those nurses who are struggling toward self-government, to the end that they may improve their status, and that of their fellow-workers.

In several countries this struggle is going on with ever-increasing intensity. In Germany a Society of self-governing nurses has been formed, after enduring actual persecution, misrepresentation, and even abuse from those elements of Society which have endeavoured, often with excellent motives, to keep nurses in a state of individual dependency. The German nurses are beginning to realise that the entire community of nurses throughout the State earns yearly large sums of money which they are not permitted to enjoy, but which goes mainly to institutions.

They realise, further, that this opportunity for gain makes it profitable for many institutions to send forth an imperfectly-educated and poorly-trained type of nurse; and they realise that this is a menace to the community and an injustice to the worker.

Italy and France also show very interesting conditions of nursing development, but they are not yet ready for international affiliation.

The three countries named in the motion, with Ireland, either separately or with England, are the only ones at present having organisations framed on national lines—as in New Zealand and Australia, where nurses have attained a most advantageous position, national bodies have not yet formed.

We must, however, expect that these fortunate countries will soon realise how much help they may be able to give to others.

In the hope that we may all support and encourage one another in the work of progress,

I remain, most sincerely yours,

L. L. DOCK,

Secretary.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said she felt sure all present had listened with sympathy to Miss Dock's most inspiring letter.

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