

This "Charter of Liberty," as we have said before, will, we feel sure, appeal to the majority of persons as a very sensible scheme, and one that does not in any way demand unreasonable concessions upon the part of Hospital Governors, and yet it is to be regretted that few of our leading Hospitals, to say nothing of the smaller Institutions, have by their own initiative accepted such a moderate time table in organising their Nursing departments.

Mr. Sydney Holland has visited the majority of Hospitals and Nurses' Homes in London, and many others in England, and has gathered that there exists a very general consensus of opinion that a reduction in the working hours of Nurses would be beneficial. Many of the officials have, at the same time, pointed out the difficulties with which their Committees are faced when considering this important question, because of the great expenditure involved in finding space to accommodate the necessary increase of the Nursing Staff, and in maintaining that Staff when housed; and it is encouraging to learn that, as far as he can judge, the Matrons of all Hospitals he has visited would gladly welcome an improvement of the Nurses' hours, provided that improvement is a reasonable one.

A County Nursing Conference.

A VERY interesting Conference was held on Tuesday, the 17th inst., at Stafford House, under the auspices of the Council of County Nursing Associations—a Council formed last year—in order to discuss the best plans for providing sick Nurses in rural districts.

There were many interesting and notable people gathered together in the beautiful background Stafford House affords, and several nursing uniforms stood out against the richer costumes of the women of leisure—though of these there were many who work hard in various good causes, as do Lady Winchilsea and Lady Laura Ridding.

The Hon. Sydney Holland is evidently—added on to his many excellencies—a hygienist, for he was very zealous in arranging for the ventilation of the meeting-room. His assiduous opening of windows caused more than one chilly journalist to don an overcoat and to swathe his throat in silk mufflers.

Presently, as the crowd grew beyond expected dimensions, Mr. Holland announced that the meeting would adjourn to the Staircase Hall, adding, amid much amusement, a recommendation to the audience to transport themselves

with *their chairs*. This was done with good-humoured cheerfulness.

The Earl of Winchilsea took the chair with the genial kindness which renders him so universally popular, and opened the meeting by saying that "For many years past the organisation of nursing forces in towns had been admirable, but it was very important that equally good arrangements should be made in rural districts, but this is somewhat difficult to attain to." And certainly it was desirable and feasible that organisation and uniformity should be aimed at, in order not only to extend the work, but to do so economically. Two systems only used to be in vogue: one, the Holt-Ockley system, while excellent in many ways, had not established a minimum standard of training, had no organised inspection, and provided only cottage helps, not trained Nurses, so that it could not be applied to towns. The other system was the Queen's Jubilee Institute, which had done most valuable work. Unfortunately the Nurses of the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute were too expensive to be obtained throughout our rural districts. Two important points had arisen which made Nurses for the poor feasible. The first point was the fact that in many Counties Nursing Scholarships had been granted by the County Councils, these removing the stumbling-block and difficulty of providing funds for the necessary training of County Nurses. The second point was that the Queen's Institute had resolved to affiliate with Nurses who had received six months' maternity training and held the L.O.S. certificate. The Queen's Institute also undertook to inspect the County Nurses, and it was evident that this was a safeguard to public interests, as the less trained a Nurse was the more necessary was inspection. In one district in his own county, one County Maternity Nurse had attended 288 confinement cases, and had paid over 300 visits in one year. He did not recommend that County Nurses should be resident in the patient's home.

Mr. Sutton Milthorpe, of the Lindsey Division of the County Council of Lincolnshire, said that Lincoln was solid in support of the system of Rural Nurses, of whom the local medical men at first were jealous, but now appreciated highly.

Lord Valentia, the Chairman of the Oxfordshire County Council, said that his Council was most heartily in sympathy with Nursing Scholarships, but had feared to endow any lest they might contravene Clause 8 of the Technical Education Act, which forbids the teaching of any trade or calling.

Lady Baker, Hon. Secretary of the Dorset Health Association, spoke of the Nursing Scholarships which were given in her county.

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