

Nurses in Council.**The Best Means of Co-ordinating the Work of the National Associated Alumnae of Trained Nurses and its Branches—State Organizations.***

BY MISS KATHERINE DE WITT.

FOR many years after training schools for nurses were started, no effort was made for united work. Now, however, the force of the adage, "In union there is strength," is making itself felt, and nurses are beginning to band themselves together for mutual aid, exchange of ideas, and better progress. A large number of training schools now have alumnae associations. In Cincinnati, Brooklyn, and Rochester, these alumnae associations have joined to form a union, and New York City has its Metropolitan Nurses Club and its Nurses Protective Association. The Associated Alumnae of the United States and Canada numbers over two thousand members at the present time, and will, it is hoped, continue to grow in numbers and influence. One of the problems which now confronts it, is that of State and provincial organization. Is it best to organize these branches, and along what lines can they work if formed?

In almost all large bodies which have both National and State associations, the State branches are secondary, formed after the national organization, and growing as they are needed, and because they are needed. Sometimes the State association is a branch of the National, and the societies which compose it are, in them, its branches. This is the case in European medical societies where the National associations divide and sub-divide with military exactness, all under one management. Again, the State associations may be almost independent bodies, formed to cover more ground than the National, and connected with it only by sending delegates to it as any society does. The membership of a State association, also, may differ from that of the National. Its members may join as individuals rather than as clubs or societies. In all events, the State Branches of an organization should not be forced upon its members, but should grow spontaneously as the need arises.

The method of forming State and provincial associations is outlined in our constitution. Any three or more alumnae associations may unite to form such a branch; they may elect such officers as seem suitable, and may frame such a constitution and bye-laws as shall not contravene those of the Associated Alumnae. Each of these branches may select a director who becomes a member of

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the Board of Control of the Associated Alumnae, and represents the interests of her association there.

What reasons are there for forming State and Provincial Associations?

1st—It will bring many more nurses in touch with the work of the Associated Alumnae. The expense of travelling from one part of the State to another is not nearly so great as of travelling from one part of the country to another, and many nurses who are not sent as delegates might be able to attend the State and Provincial meetings.

2nd—It might be well to select some one place for meeting, and to establish permanent headquarters there, so that these would always be a definite place to which nurses, associations, or schools could apply for information. At the present time most of the training schools are situated in the large cities, and the selection of such a place for headquarters would accommodate the majority of the nurses in a State or Province.

3rd—The State or Provincial Associations might take under consideration business which is to be brought before the Associated Alumnae by its delegates, sift out the unimportant details, and present only the gist of the matter for final consideration. If a motion is presented to a large body in the first crude form, much time is wasted investigating its details, its objects, its bearing on the subjects, etc. If these branches could investigate the subjects to be discussed and present them in their more condensed form, being ready to furnish all available information, the business of the Associated Alumnae could be expedited, and the delegates would come to the meetings with minds prepared to discuss more intelligently, and to waste less time on the more unimportant phases of a question.

4th—If meetings are held often enough to bring the nurses of one state or province into working unity, and into personal relations with each other, the good resulting would be great. One most characteristic fault of our profession is that the graduates of one school have no sympathy with those of another. Loyalty to one's *Alma Mater* is commendable, but the loyalty is greatly overdone, resulting in criticism of other nurses and even in antagonism. We can never do our best work while such feelings exist, and they will exist until nurses are brought more in contact with each other, and are forced to see with their own eyes that other schools are as good as their own. Where they have been thrown together in practical work such rivalries disappear. In the Emergency Hospital at the World's Fair, nurses from all parts of the country and Canada met, worked together, and were warm friends. In the Visiting Nurse Association in the different cities members of different schools work together

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)