

fourth (to hold Conferences, to discuss subjects of professional and also of general interest) during the past year.

The Annual Report was unanimously adopted, and it was agreed that it should be placed upon the minutes.

THE RED CROSS SOCIETY.

The Hon. Secretary then read the following letter from the Secretary of the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War (which acts as the Red Cross Society of England) :—

DEAR MADAM,—In reference to Miss M. Breay's letter of the 2nd inst., addressed to the Society, in which that lady communicates the Resolution passed at the recent Conference of the Matrons' Council, on the subject of the desirability of organizing a Corps of Nurses for active service in foreign wars, and asks that the views of the Council of this Society thereon may be sent to you.

I beg to inform you that the subject of Miss Breay's letter has been considered, and this Society is of opinion that while a National Corps of Nurses, such as it is proposed to organize, might probably be of some advantage in time of war, if and when foreign governments were willing to accept the services of English Nurses for work in conjunction with their own staff, the formation of such a Corps in time of peace would possibly be more costly to organize and maintain than is justified by the probable need in time of foreign wars.

It would therefore appear that the scheme suggested by your resolution would be met, if your Council could see their way to keep a Register of qualified nurses, having a knowledge of one or more foreign language, and willing to take service in any foreign war, and if such Register was divided into sections, applicable to each of the London Hospitals, it would enable your Council to select groups of ladies when necessary, who were more or less acquainted with each other, and to tend to preserve that *esprit de Corps*, which has been remarked upon during the discussion on this subject at the Conference.

As you may be aware, this Society has up to the present found the funds necessary to establish the Army Nursing Service Reserve, which has been sanctioned by the War Office, and is being managed by a small Committee, with Princess Christian of Schleswig Holstein, at its head. This Reserve will no doubt, meet all the extra needs of our own Army in time of war, and the Council do not see their way to assist in any further organization of nurses in time of peace.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
JAS. G. VOKES,
Secretary.

To Miss Isla Stewart,
Chairman,
Matrons' Council.

In the discussion which followed, the opinion was expressed that to be of value in time of war, organization should take place in time of peace; and it was regretted that the National Society for

Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War, should restrict its duties to the provision of care for sick British soldiers, and failed to extend its beneficent work to the sick and wounded of other nations. It was pointed out that the Society assumed the work of the Red Cross, but had never affiliated with the International Society, as had the Red Cross Society of all other nations, where such organizations now exist. The urgent need of trained nursing during the late Turk-Greek War had been supplied from England entirely by private effort, the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War, merely sending £1,000 after the war was at an end, and too late for any practical organisation, while the Red Cross Societies of Germany, France, Russia, and other smaller nations sent well-equipped aid officially through their respective Red Cross Societies. Evidence was also before the meeting of the much-to-be-regretted irregularities which had occurred, and which have given cause for grave scandal, and the issue of stringent disciplinary regulations amongst the Sisters selected by the India Office for Plague Duty in India; and the opinion was expressed that if these Sisters had been selected for service by a representative Board, partly composed of Matrons of influence and repute, women of higher moral tone and more discretion would have been chosen.

The evil of hurried selection and engagement of Nurses for foreign service was recognised, and a resolution agreed to, referring the whole question to the next Meeting of the Executive Committee for consideration and further report.

THE INTERNATIONAL NURSING CONFERENCE.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick presented the following report :—

"A Resolution having been passed at the Executive Committee of the Matrons' Council, on May 26th, expressing the opinion that the question of trained nursing for the sick should form one of the subjects for discussion at the forthcoming Congress of the International Council of Women.

"I beg to report that I was invited to represent Baroness von Gripenberg the Treasurer of the International Council of Women on the Executive Committee which met in London last July, to arrange the Preliminary Programme for the Congress, when I proposed that Nursing should form a department of the Professional Section. This was agreed to by those present, and several subjects were then suggested for discussion to be added to, after further consideration.

"At the Meeting of the Committee of Arrangements, held on the 30th of September last, I was invited to take a seat on the Committee, and to act as Convener and Chairman of the Professional Section of the Congress, and to form a Committee of experts of the professions open to women to arrange these departmental

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