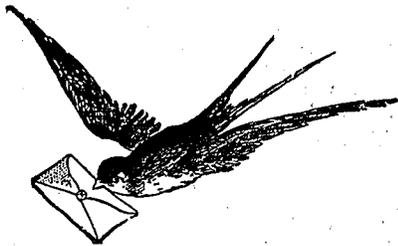


Our Foreign Letter.

NURSING POLITICS IN CANADA.



It is not too much to say that the Canadian nursing world has received a rude shock, and had it not been for the prompt action taken by Miss Agnes

Snively, Lady Superintendent of the General Hospital, Toronto, and a few of her colleagues, we Canadian nurses might have awakened one fine morning to find ourselves professionally disfranchised, to an even more dangerous degree than nurses have become in Great Britain, owing to the present management of the Royal British Nurses' Association.

Briefly, several weeks ago half a dozen private nurses doing work in Montreal, united in an effort to form a Canadian Nurses' Association. They had a Bill prepared and submitted by Dr. Roddick to the House of Commons, and applied for an act of incorporation. The Bill was introduced and some of its clauses were discussed by the Private Bills Committee—but most happily, before the Bill passed out of the hands of the committee, strong opposition developed.

The Bill did not seem to have any particular object in view other than the collection of rents and revenues from sources not mentioned and also gave an Advisory Board of Physicians power to discipline not only the members but pass judgment on the eligibility of those who might desire to become members. This was one of the objections to the Bill and its chief danger. The pre-empting of the entire territory of the Dominion for the purposes of this Association was also another objection to the Bill.

Those opposed to the Bill thought that any such association should be strictly self-governing without the aid of physicians as proposed in the advisory board. The principal objection, however, was that those who asked for incorporation did not represent the trained nurses of the Dominion or the training schools of the great hospitals of the Dominion.

The lady superintendents of the hospitals of the leading cities of Canada, as well as many trained nurses, were consulted by Mr. J. Ross Robertson, M.P., Chairman of the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto. Copies of the Bill were sent out, and about 30 of the superintendents of the leading hospitals of the Dominion examined it, and expressed very freely in writing their opinion of the Bill. These opinions, which were unanimously against the measure, were presented by Mr. Robertson to Dr. Roddick, who had the Bill in charge, and he was so impressed with the objections, that he withdrew the measure.

The result of the withdrawal of the Bill, will be the foundation of a trained nurses' association for the Dominion, and it is suggested that the membership shall include the lady superintendents of all the hospitals of Canada, and the alumnae of each training school, and I am glad to learn that Dr. Roddick of Montreal, Mr. Cameron of Toronto, and the hospital authorities of Vancouver, Winnipeg, London, Hamilton, Toronto, Kingston, Montreal, Ottawa, St. John and

Halifax, will give support to the organization of such an association.

I enclose you a copy of the Bill presented by Dr. Roddick of Montreal, and opposed by Mr. J. Ross Robertson of Toronto, hoping you may find space for it in the NURSING RECORD, which is widely read and approved in Canada, as it is well that the policy it advocates, the absolute control of the profession of nursing by members of the medical profession, should be placed on record; in these days that such a proposition should have been made appears almost incredible, and it is well that our Lady Superintendents have grasped the terrible danger to the further development of nursing on self-governing lines, if such a principle were accepted by the Dominion Government, and also that we have in the ranks of medicine, generous and liberal minded men like Mr. Ross Robertson of Toronto. Anyway, we trained nurses are fully awake now to the fact that we must stand shoulder to shoulder over the question of personal and professional liberty, and with conscientious co-operation I have no fear but that we shall be able to evolve an organisation of Canadian nurses, which will make for the good both of nurses and the sick, but we shall require much intelligent firmness to effect this end. Our constant sisterly intercourse with those members of our profession working in the United States has been of very great benefit to those of us working in Canada, and the lines laid down by the associated Society of Superintendents must be those on which we must advance if we are to hope for a justifiable degree of self-government and avoid the rocks on which the Royal British Nurses' Association has been wrecked.

BILL

Presented by Dr. Roddick, of Montreal, and opposed by Mr. J. Ross Robertson, of Toronto.

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE CANADIAN NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

Whereas the persons hereinafter mentioned have, by their petition, prayed that it may be enacted as hereinafter set forth, and it is expedient to grant the prayer of the said petition: Therefore her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:—

1. Mesdames M. E. Rogers, E. Sait, H. M. Dunlop, A. Colquhoun, Ida E. Dodd, F. Clements and H. S. Hill, together with such persons as become members of the Association, are hereby incorporated under the name of "The Canadian Nurses Association," hereinafter called "the Association."

2. The head office of the Association shall be in the city of Montreal.

3. The total annual value of any property held by the Association shall not exceed the sum of twenty thousand dollars.

4. The Association may adopt by-laws and regulations for its government, the management of the corporation and the general administration of its property.

5. The rents, revenues and profits arising from every source of income shall be appropriated solely to the accomplishment of the objects of the Association.

6. Only women who are over twenty-one years of age, who, as general nurses, have been in a training school attached to a general hospital of not less than seventy-five beds and for not less than two years, or as monthly nurses in a lying-in hospital for not less than six months shall be eligible for membership of the association.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)