

The Matrons' Council.

A meeting of the Matrons' Council was held at 20, Upper Wimpole Street on Friday, April 19th, at 4 p.m. Miss Isla Stewart, President, was in the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The Report to the Council was then read by the Hon. Secretary.

REPORT.**MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES.**

Since the last meeting of the Matrons' Council the Executive Committee has met once for the transaction of business; the Nursing Directory Sub-Committee has also met and sanctioned the insertion of the names of 78 duly qualified nurses upon the Directory, six applications were rejected as ineligible, and three were referred back for further inquiry. The Registration Sub-Committee has also met twice and arranged the lines of a pamphlet to be issued dealing with State Registration of Nurses.

THE STATE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

Reasons for issuing the pamphlet.

The History of the Movement.

The Present Condition of Nursing—In Hospitals, Infirmarys, Nursing Homes, Private Nursing, District Nursing.

Why we want Registration.

What it will do for Nurses—the Medical Profession—and the Public.

Suggestions for its accomplishment:

(a) Before legislation is effected Parliament must acquaint itself with the present conditions of nursing.

(b) A Society should be formed with the express object of dealing with State Registration of Nurses.

At present nurses, when they have left their training schools, have no protection nor are they subject to any effective professional control.

THE DEPUTATION TO THE WAR OFFICE.

In accordance with the instructions of the Executive Committee the Hon. Secretary wrote to the Secretary of State for War asking that a deputation might be received from the Matrons' Council at the War Office to express the views of the Council with regard to Army Nursing Reform. Lord Raglan, Under-Secretary of State for War, courteously consented to receive the deputation. The Honorary Officers were invited to attend, and on behalf of the Council the following waited upon Lord Raglan on April 2nd to present a memorandum in writing:—Miss Isla Stewart, President; Mrs. Bedford Fenwick and Miss Knight, Councilors; Miss Huxley and Miss Mollett, Vice-Chairmen; Miss Beatrice Jones, Member, who has lately returned from active service in South Africa; and Miss M. Breay, Hon. Secretary. The memorandum was as follows:—

AN ARMY NURSING DEPARTMENT AT THE WAR OFFICE.

Suggestions from the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland as to the formation of an Army Nursing Department at the War Office.

SIR,—We, as a Deputation from the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland (an Association of Superintendents of Trained Nurses), desire to express our thanks to the Secretary of State for War for his courtesy in receiving us. As past or present Superintendents of Nursing of large Metropolitan and Provincial Training Schools, and with an average experience of nursing of about 20 years, we are grateful, on behalf of the Society we represent, for the present opportunity of expressing our views on the important subject of the reorganization of nursing in the Army.

NURSING PROGRESS.

Within the last twenty years progress in nurse training has greatly advanced in Civil Hospitals. The nurse of the present day must be a highly educated and skilful person if she is to render efficient service to physicians and surgeons and to the sick. Scientific medicine and surgery have of recent years made great strides. Operations are now daily performed which, years ago, would not have been attempted, and which are only possible because the surgeon in his absence can, with confidence, leave his patient in the charge of a skilled and experienced nurse. Nursing is, in fact, evolving as the necessary complement of medicine and surgery into a skilled profession.

In this connection we beg to point out that in all civil hospitals in this country the nursing of male patients is entirely and most satisfactorily done by women, and we can see no valid reason why the Sisters in Military Hospitals should not be entirely responsible to the medical and surgical officers for the carrying out of their directions in relation to the sick in every detail.

NURSING ORGANIZATION.

The organization now generally adopted in Civil Hospitals, by which the Medical and Nursing Departments are each controlled by a head officer, directly responsible to the Committee, has been found to be the plan upon which the efficient and harmonious working of these institutions is best achieved. Where the control and discipline of the nursing staff is vested in the Superintendent of Nursing there is no doubt that nursing attains most nearly an ideal condition. Where the Superintendent of Nursing is not entrusted with the necessary authority disorganization and friction occur.

NEED OF A NURSING DEPARTMENT.

The present occasion seems opportune for suggesting the need of the formation of a Nursing Department, in affiliation with the Medical Department, at the War Office, superintended by a fully trained and experienced administrative nursing officer. We beg to point out that a Bill has recently passed Congress in the United States of America, inaugurating an Army Nursing Department in connection with the Army Medical Department at Washington, under the direction of a thoroughly trained nurse.

Persons which might advantageously be relegated to such an officer might be:

1. In conjunction with the Director General to deal with all matters of organization and discipline in the Nursing Department.

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