

International Council News.

We hear from Mrs. Grace Neill, Assistant Inspector of Hospitals in New Zealand, that she has decided to leave that happy colony, to join her son in America. Mrs. Neill's work in New Zealand has been of the utmost national importance and benefit to the community, especially her great work in suggesting and helping to get passed the Bill for the State Registration of Nurses, which became law in New Zealand in 1901, and which has already done so much to organise nursing, and raise the status of nurses. Mrs. Neill, who was trained in London, was an early member and energetic worker of the B. N. A., but like the large majority of intelligent women, when she found its hon. officers were opposed to progress, and were becoming unsound on the registration question—left it to work out the salvation of nurses through more intelligent means. Mrs. Neill has acted as registrar, and has had the happiness of seeing her work progressing in the most satisfactory way in the colony of which she has been such a valuable public servant, for she has not only seen the Nurses' Act through but one for the registration of midwives, out of which have sprung the four St. Helen's Lying-in Hospitals for the benefit of the wives of the working class, who can afford to pay a small sum for attendance during the lying-in period. These hospitals, which are situated at Wellington, Dunedin, Auckland, and Christchurch, contain about 15 beds, and only admit married women as they are too small to be indiscriminate; but the St. Helen's nurses attend destitute cases in the districts, whether the mothers are married or not. The late Mr. Seddon took the deepest interest in the provision of efficient nursing care for lying-in mothers and in the training of midwives, and it was largely due to him that the Midwives' Act was passed in New Zealand in 1904. The first two of the St. Helen's Hospitals, those at Wellington and Dunedin, were opened by him, and he was to have opened the third at Auckland on June 14th, 1906, when his lamented death on June 10th intervened.

Mrs. Neill, who is a Councillor, that is a foundation member, of the International Council of Nurses, writes: "I hope to be a free woman before long and shall make an effort to attend the next International Congress and meet old friends." We hope this means "Paris." We feel sure her old friends who have watched from afar her splendid work for nurses and nursing will be delighted to see her again in Europe.

Progress of State Registration.

Dr. D. MacGregor, Inspector-General of hospitals and charitable institutions in New Zealand, makes the following statement in his Report presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by command of his Excellency the Governor. "Under 'The Nurses' Registration Act, 1901,' during 1905 seventy-five hospital-trained nurses passed their final State examination, and their names were added to the Register. The fees amounted to £83 10s., and the expenses (examiners' and supervisors' fees) to £97 11s. 8d. England is trying hard to obtain State registration for hospital-trained nurses, and the States of Australia are also moving in the same direction. New Zealand has proved by five years' experience the advantage to medical men and the public, as well as to the nursing profession, of having a recognised standard of proficiency, and consequently State registration."

Dr. MacGregor considers that one defect in the New Zealand Registration Act should be remedied. He states: "The original Bill classified New Zealand Hospitals into those large enough to give nurses a thorough training and those too small to provide adequate practical training, but Parliament rejected such classification. This defect should be remedied at once, for by failing to restrict our training schools to those hospitals containing forty beds or over we prevent our New Zealand State-registered nurses from claiming registration in other countries."

Under "The Midwives' Registration Act, 1904," 761 midwives were registered. Of these, 63 hold certificates as midwives, and the remainder were placed on the Register because they were certified by medical men as having been for three years, or over, practising as midwives, and were of good character. With the passing of the Midwives' Registration Act, the day of the dirty, ignorant, careless woman, who has brought death or ill-health to many mothers and infants, will, says Dr. MacGregor, soon end. After 1907 every woman who undertakes the responsibilities of a midwife will have to show that she is competent to do so.

In the course of his Report he strongly comments on the increasing tendency of nurses on duty to wear dangling chains, numerous brooches, rings, etc., and says he has counted as many as five brooches worn at the same time by one matron. The nurse's cap has also shrunk into a small piece of starched linen crowning an edifice of pads and loose hair. Matrons are, he thinks, wrong, and surgeons inconsistent to allow this.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)