

The International Conference on Nursing.

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MORNING SESSION.

THURSDAY, JUNE 20th.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATION.

On Thursday morning, the last morning of the Conference, the President of Session was Miss Isla Stewart, Matron and Superintendent of Nursing, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, and President of the Matrons' Council. Miss Stewart said that as the programme was a very full one she would at once call on Mrs. Bedford Fenwick to present her paper.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE NURSING PROFESSION. BY ITS MEMBERS. BY THE STATE. BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick opened her paper by laying down as a fundamental principle that the organisation of the Nursing Profession should be based on the Graduate Vote, and that any form of organisation which omits this proviso is unsound in its constitution. That the professional enfranchisement of every trained nurse must be secured, and any system of organisation which can hope to promote individual responsibility and professional progress must embody this principle.

(1) The organisation of the Nursing Profession by its members.

(2) The organisation of the Profession by the State for the protection of trained nurses and the public. She defined the first part of the subject as social, economic, and political in its objects, and the second in its results as educational and disciplinary.

Mrs. Fenwick showed that the organisation first of Superintendents of Training Schools and Nursing Institutions in a Society of their own, followed by associating graduate nurses in groups of Leagues, or Societies, which are gathered up by delegation in a National Association or Council, had proved most satisfactory in the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. In countries where numbers are limited, a National Association could be formed of individuals by direct membership. The chief usefulness of Hospital Leagues was the inculcation of professional *esprit de corps*. Through their Leagues nurses possessed a definite voice in the decision of questions of national importance, and through social gatherings they learnt to keep in kindly association with one another.

In organising the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, it was hoped to include (a) Leagues of Nurses attached to hospitals, or to Nursing Societies, and Government Nursing Departments; (b) Co-operations; (c) Societies for defence and for professional protection and improvement.

Mrs. Fenwick then described how individual Leagues were united in a National Council of Nurses, and looked forward to the time when there would be such a Council in every civilised country, and when National Councils would be united through their accredited representatives upon the International Council of Nurses.

ORGANISATION BY THE STATE.

In regard to organisation by the State, Mrs. Fenwick looked forward to the establishment by Parliament in every country of a Central Nursing Council, or analogous body, entrusted with the control of nursing education, and the disciplinary oversight of trained nurses, and briefly outlined the duties of such a Council. She concluded by asserting that it would be just, constitutionally correct, and absolutely essential that the registered nurses should directly elect their own Governing Body.

ORGANISATION IN THE UNITED STATES. BY MISS SARAH SLY.

The Report on Organisation and Laws in the United States, presented to the Conference by Miss Sarah Sly, Inter-State Secretary and President of the Michigan State Nurses' Association, was a most valuable one.

Her reports of the work of the State Societies show what can be achieved by co-operation. Thus the Californian State Nurses' Association was organised in 1903, and a Registration Bill passed in 1906. In Colorado the State Association was organised in 1904, and a Bill passed in 1905, with some amendments in 1907.

Miss Sly reports that the fact that women have the ballot in Colorado is a great factor in their success in securing legislative enactments. The Graduate Nurses' Association of Connecticut was organised in 1904, and a Bill for State Registration became law in 1905.

The Graduate Nurses' Association of the District of Columbia has been active in many directions. Amongst others in February, 1907, it presented 100 dollars to the Associated Alumnae for the purchase of shares in the *American Journal of Nursing*. In February this year to the "great relief and joy" of the Association, the Bill for State Registration of Nurses was signed by President Roosevelt.

So the report goes on. Organisation quickly followed by State Registration Acts until 14 States, to which must now be added Illinois, have obtained State Registration. Where opposition is experienced it is encountered from those who would be adversely affected by the establishment of adequate standards. Thus, "the Bill for State Registration has again failed in Pennsylvania owing to the unreasonable opposition from correspondence schools and special hospitals, who brought forth, and distributed amongst legislators, an imposing letter against the Bill."

In addition to the States which have obtained Registration, 29 are organised to obtain registration.

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