

The Matrons' Council Conference.



The Conference convened by the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, and held at 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London, W., on Friday, November 22nd, was a well attended and pleasant gathering.

In opening the proceedings, the President, Miss Isla Stewart, who was in the chair, said that at the last time the Council met in that room, on October 19th,

it was at a special meeting of a somewhat warlike character—to protest against the attempt of the Metropolitan Asylums Board to degrade—she used the word in its right sense, i.e., to lower in status—the Matrons in M.A.B. Hospitals and Asylums.

Miss Stewart then briefly reviewed the situation up to the present time, and announced that a letter had been received from the Local Government Board stating that the draft regulations, which have been submitted to them will only have effect if, and so far as they may be embodied in an Order to be issued by the Board, and that before any such Order is issued the Board will give full consideration to the representations which have been submitted.

Miss Stewart reported that the following Societies had addressed communications to the Local Government Board, petitioning against the proposed change in the status of the Matrons; the Irish Matrons' Association, the Poor Law Infirmary Matrons' Association, the Workhouse Nursing Association, the Legal Committee of the Women's Industrial Council, the Scottish Registration Committee, and the Ulster Branch of the Irish Nurses' Association, as well as the trained nursing staffs of numerous hospitals and institutions throughout the United Kingdom. She understood that the Women's Local Government Society and the Councils of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses and the Colonial Nursing Association were also considering the question.

The answer of the Local Government Board was very hopeful, because, in view of the strong expression of adverse opinion, she thought the Board would have heard the objectors before sanctioning the

proposed deprivation of status, but they had informed the Council that they did not think it necessary to trouble a Deputation to attend.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said that she believed until it had received the representations of the Matrons' Council and others that the Local Government Board was quite unaware that anything was proposed that was injurious to nurses. They might have made this sweeping change with the best intentions. She sincerely hoped that the outcome of this controversy would be the institution of a Department of Nursing in connection with the Local Government Board, so that in future the Board might have expert nursing information at its disposal in its own office, a reform already established at the War Office.

RESOLUTION.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said that it often fell to her lot to do disagreeable things, but she felt it a duty to move the resolution she was about to propose.

Those present would probably have seen in the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, and in the daily press, the case of Mrs. Christina Price, who posed as a trained nurse, though the detective in charge of the case had been unable to discover that she had any certificates. She was sentenced at Nottingham Assizes recently to two years' hard labour for obtaining goods on false pretences, and the Judge, in passing sentence, described her as "an accomplished swindler." She had previously been convicted in Edinburgh and London of fraud, and fraud and larceny, but had subsequently found no difficulty in obtaining access to private houses as a nurse. Indeed, she informed the Judge that she had "always been a success in her nursing career." Mrs. Fenwick thought the case should be brought to the notice of the Home Secretary, who was the responsible Minister in charge of Home Affairs. She, therefore, moved the following resolution, which was seconded by Mrs. Okell, and carried.

"That the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland desires respectfully to draw the attention of the Home Secretary to the evidence given at the trial of Mrs. Christina Alexandra Gordon Stuart Price before Commissioner E. Tindall Atkinson, K.C., at the Nottingham and Notts Assizes on Wednesday, 13th inst., in which it was proved that the prisoner had, upon numerous occasions, obtained access into private houses as a trained nurse after periods of imprisonment for fraud and larceny; and to the terms in which his Lordship passed sentence on her:—'You are an accomplished swindler. That is the history of you, and the sentence of the Court is that you be sent to imprisonment for two years with hard labour.' The Matrons'

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