

prompt action which it took to make public the proposal of the Metropolitan Asylums Board to deprive future Matrons of the Hospitals and Asylums under its control of the rank of principal officer.

The result of this publicity was that an overwhelming expression of opinion opposing this re-actionary proposal was at once forwarded to the Local Government Board by the Matrons and Nurses of the United Kingdom, and by many influential societies of social workers.

At a Conference convened by the Council in London in November, questions of great interest to the profession were discussed, viz., "The Equality of Rich and Poor in Sickness," "The Place of Trained Nurses in Prisons," and "The Organisation of a Nurses' Defence Union."

Amongst the suggestions brought forward at the Conference were:—

1. That through the influence of her Majesty the Queen, an efficient system of nursing for the rural poor might be organised through Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute.

2. That, failing voluntary help, there should be a parish nurse as well as a parish doctor available, especially for maternity cases.

3. That the Matrons of Prisons should be highly qualified trained nurses.

4. That a system of education and training should be defined for prison warders and wardresses, which should include a knowledge of nursing and hygiene.

5. That there should be medical women in female prisons, and that vengeance and punishment should be entirely left out of the treatment of prisoners, and a system of reformation and rehabilitation inculcated.

6. That it was necessary to organise a Nurses' Defence Union both for collective and individual protection, and the Matrons' Council accepted the suggestion that it should take the initiative in formulating a scheme.

NURSES IN GOVERNMENT SERVICES.

One of the most interesting points in connection with the development of nursing is to note how the services of nurses are increasingly in demand by the Departments of State and public bodies. Trained nurses are now employed by the Admiralty, the War Office, the India Office, the Colonial Office (through the Colonial Nursing Association), and under the Local Government Board, in infirmaries, infectious hospitals, and asylums. Although the Board of Education does not directly employ nurses, in a memorandum lately issued it has expressed the opinion that the work of

medical inspection cannot properly be accomplished without assistance from the school nurse, and recommends her employment wherever practicable by educational authorities, and there is evidence of the need for the services of nurses in connection with the Home Office, so that prisoners may receive intelligent treatment in cells and wards. In connection with the organisation of a Territorial Army it is likely that the services of trained nurses will be requisitioned.

DISTRICT NURSING.

District nursing among the poor continues to be carried out with much efficiency by the well-trained and certificated nurses with three years' certificates working under Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute. Side by side with the work of these nurses, however, there seems to be growing up a system of employing certified midwives, with a very limited amount of training in general nursing, to nurse the poor in their own homes in rural districts under the supervision of a fully-trained County Superintendent.

We regret this, because there appears to us to be a real danger of lowering nursing standards by this arrangement, and of admitting that a woman may be sufficiently trained to nurse the poor when her training would not be considered to qualify her to nurse the rich. The question of the efficient nursing of rural districts is not an easy one; but we believe that in dealing with it the following broad propositions may be laid down as axioms:—

1. The illnesses of rich and poor are the same, and therefore there should be no differences in the quality of the nursing provided for both classes.

2. The "cottage nurse," as Sir Victor Horsley told the Select Committee on Nursing, is "only a cheap method of doing the work imperfectly." "Of course, those women are undoubtedly useful to a certain degree, but they would be much more useful if they were properly paid trained nurses." That thoroughly trained nurses can and do undertake the work in rural districts with great benefit to the patients has been proved in the Highlands of Scotland, and in the remote districts of the West of Ireland in connection with Lady Dudley's Scheme. The work of Lady Dudley's nurses in this lonely locality has been remarkably successful, and its value lies in the fact that none but fully-trained Queen's nurses are employed.

The cost of each nurse is from £50 to £55 for initial expenses of establishment, and from £108 to £112 when it is necessary to

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