

title her in case of necessity, to be defended and advised with the full strength and ability at the command of the whole society. Other societies will probably also arise for promoting improvements and for communicating information and knowledge on professional matters, or, perhaps, even for carrying out the protection of the whole nursing profession by watching and guiding legislation in Parliament which might otherwise have injurious effects upon its members.

#### NATIONAL COUNCILS OF NURSES.

Such Leagues, Co-operations, and Societies are no new thing. They exist already either in the nursing world, or in the case of other professions; but I would hope that in our case organisation will not stop there. I look forward with confidence to the time when every Nurses' League, Co-operation, and Society, for whatever purpose each may exist, will be represented by delegates, according to the size of the respective body, upon a National Council of Nurses; that this National Council will meet at regular intervals, and will possess a central office and efficient clerical staff, so that it can keep in constant and active touch with every one of its constituent associations; so that it can consider, and decide upon, questions of professional importance, and can concentrate the ability and power of the whole nursing profession in the country not only on its deliberations, but also in carrying out whatever schemes may seem to it to be required for the good of the profession.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

I would go still further, and look forward to the time when there will be such a National Council as I have sketched in every civilised country, and when all National Councils will be united together by possessing representatives upon the International Council of Nurses. By such an International Council, information concerning nursing methods, improvements, and reforms in every country could be collected and distributed to the National Councils, through the medium of accredited nursing journals. I believe that such an International Council will do much to promote harmony and reciprocal goodwill amongst the nurses of all nations, whilst it will bind together the nurses of the world into one great sisterhood of mercy. Already Federations of Nurses in Great Britain and Ireland, the United States of America, and Germany, are united by affiliation to the International Council of Nurses and are ready to welcome into such affiliation National Councils formed in other countries.

#### ORGANISATION BY THE STATE.

2. With regard to the Organisation of Nursing by the State, I look forward to the establishment by Parliament of a Central Nursing Council, entrusted with the control of nursing education, and with the disciplinary oversight of trained nurses in every country. Such a Council should be empowered to define the curriculum of education for a trained nurse, to appoint examiners to test the knowledge acquired by each candidate, and confer a State diploma of Nursing upon persons who have thus satisfied the Council as to their educational training and their professional knowledge. At first, of course, a Nursing Council must recognise and place upon a Register of trained nurses, those who at the time of the passing of the Act were engaged in the *bonâ-fide* practice of their profession, and could produce evidence of training satisfactory to the Council, or had obtained a certificate of nursing from a recognised training school. After a short period of grace, only those nurses would be so enrolled upon the Register who had conformed to the requirements of the Council, and satisfied its examiners. Finally, it would be essential that the Council should possess power to remove from its list anyone who proved to be unworthy of professional trust and confidence. Beyond this, I think that two principles should be firmly recognised; firstly, that the fees paid by the nurses for their examination and certification should be sufficient to defray the working expenses of the Nursing Council. Nurses could well afford to do this; they would reap a rich return, in professional prestige and personal benefit from the institution of such a system; and, moreover, by thus defraying the whole cost of their government they could justly demand what I regard as the most essential principle of all. They could demand that the great principle of constitutional government should be carried out in their case; and that they should, therefore, be permitted themselves to elect a majority of the members of the Council who would govern them, and expend the monies they had provided. In any Act of Parliament, constituting such a General Nursing Council, it would be essential that the State should appoint representatives of its own. But it would be just, it would be constitutionally correct, and I venture to say that it would be absolutely essential, that the registered nurses should directly elect their own Governing Body.

Such, in brief, are the views which I have long held on the future organisation of the Nursing Profession.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)