

sidered it a very great honour to address the great gathering of nurses in this historic centre. The large audience showed that they meant to make Territorial Nursing as great a success in London as Scottish nurses had already done. The Territorial Hospitals would be staffed by the flower of the profession, and the fact that they had come forward in such numbers, without making any stipulation as to the rank in which they were to work, showed a fine spirit which might well be expected of members of a profession to whom public service was a matter of daily practice.

Nurses were to be congratulated on the opportunity and the power of serving their country in the event of invasion, and they were the only section of women who could take part in national defence. Other women would be non-efficient, and with nurses therefore rested the duty of showing that the only women who were capable of serving their country would faithfully and efficiently perform their duty.

Nurses were gathered together now to consider organisation when they could meet peacefully in this civic centre, for it was not likely that the country would receive an early intimation of a contemplated invasion. Mr. Haldane had been trying to convert the nation to the necessity for timely preparation, and had done his best to put a close to the era of "muddling through." Eleventh hour patriotism was about as useless as the lamps of the foolish virgins.

Lady Helen then proceeded to explain the lines on which the 23 Territorial Hospitals would be organised as regards the Nursing Service. Some people were, she said, of opinion that the Advisory Board should go to the civil hospitals and ask them to guarantee a certain number of nurses, but there were various objections to this.

The whole Territorial Force was organised on a voluntary basis, every unit was allowed to volunteer, and there seemed no reason why nurses alone should be deprived of this privilege, and why, in the case of a great profession, the supply should be arranged for—like the inanimate equipment—by contract. Further, a time of invasion would necessarily mean a time of exceptional stress, and the civil hospitals would require all their staffs.

Then, an improvised hospital would probably not be so comfortable, as a well ordered training school, and it was felt that a nurse who had been "on her own" would be more adaptable and better able to deal with unfamiliar circumstances than those straight from the training schools, but it might be hoped that those nurses now in hospital would have time

to get further experience before their services were needed.

It was hoped that later on lectures would be organised so that nurses might be familiarised with their duties, and that at some Territorial manoeuvres a Territorial Hospital might be mobilised to ascertain whether everything would work as smoothly as was anticipated.

When on duty the Territorial Nurses would be expected to wear the cap and scarlet cape of the Military Nursing Service, and as long as they were members of the Territorial Service they would be entitled to wear a Badge bearing the monogram of her Majesty the Queen, the President of the Order, who has taken the most practical and constant interest in its formation.

Nurses and Sisters would be superannuated at 50 and Matrons at 55, but, Lady Helen concluded, from the appearance of the majority of those present, that they had a good quarter of a century in hand before that time, and said that they could not spend it more honourably than in helping on effective defence, and setting an example to every citizen capable of doing likewise.

MISS E. S. HALDANE.

Miss E. S. Haldane, LL.D., said that she had been asked by Mr. Haldane to express his very great regret at being unable to be present. Perhaps, at some future time, the Lord Mayor, with the well known hospitality of the Mansion House, would allow him to express his views on the Territorial Service. Her brother asked her to add his sense of the importance of the work now being inaugurated. Pleading for efficiency Miss Haldane emphasised the danger of tackling an undertaking half-heartedly. Nurses were playing their part in a great national organisation, and must do so thoroughly. In the name of the Advisory Council, which directs the organisation, she wished them all success.

SIR ALFRED KEOGH.

Sir Alfred Keogh, Director-General of the Army Medical Service, explained that in time of war the one great fundamental principle, and the first duty of the Medical Service, was to maintain the fighting efficiency of the Army in the field; the prevention of wastage was therefore of primary importance.

The work of military hospitals did not end with the treatment and care of the sick. At the end of a campaign the State had to adjust the claims of soldiers. This was done by the Commissioners of the Royal Hospital, Chelsea, and claims connected with the Indian Mutiny and the Crimean War were still being

*previous page*

*next page*