

Territorial Nursing.

A large number of Matrons and nurses responded to the invitation of Miss Barton, Organising Matron of the Territorial Force Nursing Service of No. 3 General Hospital of the City and County of London, to a meeting at Chelsea Infirmary, to promote interest in the Service. Every chair in the room was filled and nurses were standing in the passage. Miss Barton was supported on the platform, which was gaily decorated with the national flags, by Lady Mackinnon, member of the London Committee, Miss E. S. Haldane, LL.D., Vice-Chairman, Miss Amy Hughes, member, and Miss Sidney Browne, R.R.C., Secretary of the Advisory Board of the Service.

Miss Barton, in her opening address, said that the scheme was a triumph of good organisation and an object lesson in preparing for emergencies. Every district had its Territorial Nursing Association, and every Territorial Hospital, in the event of invasion, would be equipped with its nursing staff, not by the magic of a magician's wand, but because clever brains had devised a scheme which had become practically possible through the co-operation and patriotism of loyal nurses.

Miss E. S. HALDANE, who was the first and principal speaker, said that when the nation was under arms all would want to do something to help. Under the Territorial Scheme, women, and more especially nurses, had their definite place and work. She almost envied the nurses who, because of their professional skill, had so important a part assigned to them. The difference between the old Volunteer Scheme and the Territorial Scheme was that the latter was complete in every arm. It had its own infantry, yeomanry, artillery, engineers, army transport corps, sanitary companies, and nursing service. It was a Home Army, ready to meet the enemy, if, as might happen, the First Line was called abroad, and that moment was chosen for an attempt at invasion. It was a Peace Army, which, inaugurated just a year ago, now included a quarter of a million men, and was recognised by the King, who was going to present the colours in June.

It was interesting, Miss Haldane said, to remember that the first medical service was founded by a woman, Queen Isabella of Spain, the same who was such a friend to Columbus, who recognised how necessary it was to provide hospital tents in which to collect the sick and wounded.

Miss Haldane then clearly explained, by means of maps, the divisions roughly to be observed in time of war. Close to the fighting line, regimental first aid would be rendered; then the sick and wounded would be taken by the first ambulances to the collecting zone, where tents and dressing stations would be established. The next division was the evacuating zone, where the wounded would be attended by men now being taught first aid by the Matron and Sisters at the Military Hospital, Millbank. From the evacuating zone they would be passed on to the clearing hospital, generally at a place called Rail Head. From this hospital some might be sent back to the front, others to their

own homes, and the rest to stationary hospitals at the base, and from thence by rail, if the line is open, or by canal, motor, or any available conveyance, if communication by rail is intercepted, to the general hospitals.

Miss Haldane reminded those present that it was as professional women that they had earned their right to a place in the Territorial Scheme, and that military nurses were the only women whose names appear in the Army List. She said also that in many ways there was a difference in the organisation of military and civil hospitals, and the Director General was now organising lectures, not exclusively for nurses, which would be helpful in explaining military organisation.

In conclusion, Miss Haldane said she had endeavoured to explain the Territorial idea. In the future she thought it would be realised that in the early part of the twentieth century a great problem had to be solved, and that both men and women, as far as possible, had endeavoured to find an adequate solution.

Miss AMY HUGHES, who was the next speaker, said she thought it was a common failing of nurses not to trouble about politics; many did not read a daily paper, or else took one merely for the sake of the serial story, so they did not all understand the Territorial Scheme. She hoped they would realise its seriousness and importance. Before long nurses would be recognised as a professional, legal, body, and it was as educated professional women that they had to take their share in this national work. They must be ready and disciplined for it. If ever invasion did come, it would be a time of disorganisation, unrest, trouble, and distress, and all nurses would have a great strain put upon them. She reminded those present also that in the Territorial Hospitals they would be under strict military discipline, and that in volunteering for service they were assuming real responsibility and a solemn duty.

The meeting was then invited to ask questions, which were answered by Miss Sidney Browne, after which a vote of thanks to the Chairman and speakers was heartily carried on the motion of Lady Mackinnon, seconded by Miss Mollett.

Miss Barton, with her usual hospitality, then invited all present to adjourn to another room for tea and coffee, where the question of Territorial Nursing was still further informally discussed.

A leaflet has been issued under the authority of the Executive Committee of the London Committee for the information of nurses desirous of joining the Nursing Service of the Territorial Force. It may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Miss Goodhue, 14, Ashley Gardens, S.W., or from the Organising Matrons, Miss Stewart, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C.; Miss Davies, St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, W.; Miss Ray, King's College Hospital, W.C.; and Miss Barton, Chelsea Infirmary, S.W.

When called up for duty on embodiment, Sisters and Nurses will wear a special cap and cape, in addition to their ordinary indoor uniform.

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