

growths, when they are less freely supplied with blood is to shrink and diminish in size; and it is well known that at the menopause the uterus and ovaries shrink in size because, as their functional activity ceases, their blood vessels become smaller, and they therefore receive less blood nourishment than during earlier life. But the tumours which grow, either like fibroids from the uterus itself, or in connection with the ovaries or Fallopian tubes, create, by their mere development, an extra blood supply, and this is not necessarily diminished when the patient reaches the age of 50. The important fact, therefore, is now becoming recognised that tumours connected with the uterus and ovaries, so far from becoming smaller and more harmless at the change of life, in a very large proportion of cases actually become larger then, or exhibit a process of more unhealthy development, degenerating in fact in many cases into cancer or other malignant growths. Out of the 32 cases of the above series, who were over 50 years of age, no less than 27 showed definite signs of such degeneration; and it is open to question whether the remaining five cases, if they had been left a few months or years longer, would not also have become more or less dangerously degenerated.

The importance of these facts cannot be exaggerated, because they prove the advisability of early operation in all cases where the tumour is rapidly increasing in size, or when the hæmorrhages are very profuse. Many patients in former days were buoyed up with the hope that if they could only exist till they reached the age of 50, they would then be practically cured; and many went on ten or fifteen years in constant illness and suffering, only to find when they reached that age that they were growing worse instead of better, and too often they were then so exhausted in health and strength that any operation for their relief or cure was either of doubtful expediency or was altogether inadmissible. Finally, the death rate now, in skilled hands, is so small—only 5 of the above 200 died—that many patients, not unnaturally, consider that the risk is preferable to the many months or years of ill-health, to say nothing of the more or less acute suffering, which so many of these patients were compelled to undergo in former times.

It is needless, perhaps, to emphasise the fact that these remarks apply only to the cases in which the tumour is causing dangerous symptoms; because the very frequency of uterine fibroids in women makes it obvious that in a very large proportion the growth either causes no trouble at all, or only slight and temporary symptoms.

The National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland.

A Meeting of the Grand Council of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland was held at the Office, 431, Oxford Street, London, on Wednesday, the 7th inst. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President, was in the chair.

The minutes having been read and confirmed, the President reported progress in the arrangements for the forthcoming Quinquennial Meeting of the International Council of Nurses, to take place on July 19th next at Caxton Hall, Westminster.

QUINQUENNIAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

The chair will be taken by the President or her representative at 11 a.m., who will give a short Address of Welcome to the Presidents of National Councils and international delegates. The applications of National Councils of Nurses for affiliation will then be received. The Presidents of these Councils will be presented to the delegates, the international officers will be elected, and amendments to the constitution considered. Resolutions placed on the Agenda will be discussed and voted upon, and the next meeting place decided upon.

The meeting then considered the arrangements *seriatim*, and it was decided that the bouquets to be presented by the National Council to the new President of the International Council, and to the Presidents of affiliated Councils, should be offered by a member of each Society composing the National Council of Great Britain and Ireland, as far as possible.

THE FOUR DELEGATES.

Four ladies were then nominated subject to their consent to act as the delegates of the National Council, and as only the Foundation Members of the International Council, the Hon. Officers, and the four delegates from each National Council are entitled to vote, it was decided to have a distinctive badge of bright red ribbon for those ladies, which Miss Isla Stewart undertook to make, so that they could be easily distinguished and placed in the reserved seats.

HOSPITALITY TO OUR GUESTS.

After the Quinquennial Meeting the Presidents and delegates of the affiliated Councils and other distinguished guests to the Congress will be entertained at luncheon by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, the Founder of the International Council of Nurses, at 1.45. The guests will then be taken for a motor drive to show them

previous page

next page