

In wars abroad the Army takes its hospitals with it, and they are placed on the lines of communication, and at the base. In this country the sick and wounded would be removed to buildings selected as hospitals, large towns being chosen as centres, usually university towns, where the physicians and surgeons had been enlisted as members of the Territorial Medical Staff. The Red Cross Society was asked to work in each one of these areas, and to consider in each place what building or site would be most suitable for a hospital. Thus the Red Cross would be responsible for the buildings and their equipment, and the War Office for the personnel.

Sir Alfred Keogh then said that a nursing staff was essential to every hospital. He was therefore anxious that the system proposed should be acceptable to the nursing profession. He had seen all the Matrons in the principal hospitals in the great centres, and received many valuable suggestions from them.

After enumerating the Nursing Staff required, Sir Alfred Keogh said that the provision of the requisite staff was women's work and women's work only. Moreover, it was not a man, not a soldier, or a doctor who had first suggested the nursing of the sick and wounded in military hospitals by women. So far as he had been able to ascertain, the first suggestion came from Queen Isabella of Spain, and he believed he was quite right in recommending to the Secretary of State for War that this work should be handed over to women.

The Lord Mayor then introduced Miss E. S. Haldane, LL.D., Chairman of the Territorial Nursing Advisory Council, and, sister of the Secretary of State for War, who said that Sir Alfred Keogh had given an excellent sketch of the scheme as it had come from the War Office, and no one could speak with more knowledge. It was left to her to try to explain the place of women in the matter, and she would like to say just a few words from the point of view of the Advisory Council. Their work was to carry out the staffing of the hospitals with nurses. It was strange that the organisation of these hospitals had not been undertaken before, and that it had not been realised what invasion meant, and that the civil hospitals could not possibly undertake the care of the sick and wounded at such a time, which was bound to be one of distress and illness.

There were some who considered it unnecessary to arrange for the formation of a Territorial Nursing Service in time of peace, considering it a better plan to provide the nurses along with the lint and the bandages, in the

event of invasion. Miss Haldane thought that women were inspired by patriotic feelings as well as men, and that there should be an appeal to them. Moreover, it was necessary that the nurses should be selected with great care, when time and consideration could be given to this duty, which would be impossible in the turmoil of a great war.

She had been impressed by the large amount of work which had to be done by the Organising Matron, many applications were received, and many of them were unsuitable. It was matter for congratulation that the Army Council had allowed the nurses to come forward in a time of quietude and calm. She then explained the method of their selection, the regulations laid down by the Advisory Council. There was an age limit of 55, and a certificate of three years' training was required. It had been suggested that there were many excellent nurses who had not had this amount, and that two years would suffice, but it was felt that the nurses should have the highest qualification, and that it should not be less than that of the regular Service. It was estimated that altogether 12,000 beds must be provided, allowing 35 per cent. for an Army of 200,000 men. Nurses would more or less join the hospitals in their own areas, but if they wished to join in the area of their training school they could do so.

It was probable that lectures would be arranged, but it was not proposed that the nurses should have special training in the military hospitals, though the Matrons would have one week every second year. In one centre it had been found useful for the equipment to be used in the hospitals to be shown, and for the medical officer to explain what was done in the field hospitals. There had been a most hearty response in the provinces, and in Scotland, the Sisters acting as recruiting sergeants for the staff nurses. London had now to play its part, and she believed there were plenty of patriotic women in London to provide the nurses, who would be required for the four hospitals.

Lord Esher then explained the scheme as it affected London, and said that the country owed it to the present Secretary of State for War that preparation was to be made in connection with the Territorial Force for dealing with the sick and wounded in war. He moved the following resolution:—

“That a committee be formed for the purpose of carrying out the scheme; that the Lady Mayoress, for the time being, shall be the Chairman, and that the committee shall consist of the following ladies and gentlemen, with power to add to their number.”

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