

Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses.

CONFERENCE OF QUEEN'S SUPER-INTENDENTS.

By invitation of the Council of the Institute a Conference of Superintendents of Affiliated Associations in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales was held in London, April 28th. Over 100 Inspectors and Superintendents attended, and were entertained to lunch before the Conference at the Westminster Palace Hotel. After lunch those present were received on behalf of the Council by the Lady Mary Howard, the Hon. Mrs. C. A. Egerton, and Mrs. Maurice Martineau, and the chair was taken at 2.30 by Mr. Harold Boulton, M.V.O., Vice-Chairman of the Council and Hon. Treasurer of the Institute. Lord Goschen, Chairman of the Council, Sir Dyce Duckworth, the Master of St. Katharine's, and Mr. Archibald Williamson, members of the Council, were also present.

After a few words of cordial welcome from Mr. Boulton, who referred to the responsibility which rested with the Superintendents in forming the ideals of nurses in their charge, and the necessity of their co-operation in keeping the standard of district nursing at a high level, Miss Rogers (Sunderland D.N.A.) opened the discussion as to the method which might be adopted to induce a larger number of suitable candidates to offer themselves for training as Queen's Nurses. In the first place she urged the necessity of educating public opinion as to the requisites for a district nurse. District nursing required not only the best nursing training; to be efficient the nurse must as well be sympathetic, tactful, reliable, resourceful, possess common sense, and be prepared for a certain amount of self-sacrifice with regard to her work. She made some practical suggestions for bringing the work more prominently before the public, the matrons, and nurses in hospitals, at the same time putting forward that sufficient inducements must be offered, and the advantages given must compare favourably with those offered in other branches of nursing to make the profession worth following. Miss Böge (Shoreditch) and Miss Chadwick (Blackburn) touched on the question of salary, the former putting forward the opinion that a Queen's Nurse should receive £35 in her third year.

Means of facilitating promotion among the Queen's Nurses was dealt with by Miss Morgan (Cardiff), who pointed out that Superintendents should neither themselves shrink from responsibility in making reports on their nurses through fear that their judgment might not prove correct, nor fail to endeavour to overcome the natural reluctance of their nurses to seek responsibility. Staff nurses were apt to get merged in the homes where things of necessity were done by rule, and there was not perhaps much scope for individuality. Superintendents had all experienced the difficulty of finding suitable nurses for their staff, especially when they were seeking assistant superintendents. Nurses of good education were wanted for the more responsible positions, and those likely to be suitable

for promotion might be given opportunity of testing their capacity in the more difficult single posts or as senior of two or three nurses. In urging the necessity of the co-operation of district nurses in preventive measures, such as health visiting, school nursing, the treatment of tuberculosis, etc., Miss Böge gave her practical experience of work in connection with the different agencies in Shoreditch and Bethnal Green, where the District Nursing Association is rightly considered one of the most important charities in the district, and is represented, as a rule, by the Superintendent on all committees dealing with measures for the promotion of health, and has taken an active part in assisting their work. Health lectures were given for the Health Society, and help in the battle against infantile mortality and the spread of tuberculosis. School nursing seemed likely to come once more into the hands of the Queen's Nurses, and closer co-operation with the Invalid Children's Aid Association had now been entered into. Public recognition of the work of the Queen's Nurses in these ways would do a great deal in settling the first two subjects on the agenda paper. It was only the best trained nurses and the best women all round who were suitable to undertake the wider duties of a Queen's Nurse.

A short discussion took place on the State Registration of Nurses, Miss Buckle (Brighton) representing that the Queen's Nurses could only consider the question from an outside point of view, as they already had the status of a registration of their own.* Opinions on both sides were expressed, one Superintendent representing that the nurses' chief objection to the idea of State Registration was the fear of the necessary examinations. It was desirable that nurses should be instructed in writing papers, as it would help their knowledge and teach them to express themselves simply.

The scheme for the Territorial Force Nursing Service was shortly described by Miss Andrew (Gateshead) and Miss Hughes drew attention to the conditions for the enrolment of nurses, and expressed a hope that many Queen's Nurses would join the Force. When a question was asked as to how the work of the Queen's Nurses was to be carried on in time or war if they were called upon to nurse the sick and wounded, Mr. Boulton recalled His Majesty's question on the occasion of the reception of the Queen's Nurses at Marlborough House in 1902, when he asked whether all the Queen's Nurses were present, and on being told "Yes," His Majesty wanted to know what the patients were doing. That occasion had proved it was possible for the patients to do without the nurses in an emergency, and emergencies had always to be met by special arrangements.

The last item on the agenda invited suggestions as to ways in which Superintendents could help their committees by encouraging patients to become annual subscribers of small sums. Different means had been adopted in different districts. In

* It should be understood that enrolment as a Queen's Nurse implies no legal status, and only applies to a nurse so long as she remains the employee of the Institute.—Ed.

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