

The Scottish Nurses' Association.

The Scottish Nurses' Association met in the Masonic Hall, West Regent Street, Glasgow, on Saturday, March 19th, at 4.30 p.m. There was a very large attendance of nurses and honorary members.

The Secretary, Dr. Robertson, read numerous apologies for absence, including those from Lady Ailsa and Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, honorary members.

Sir Wm. Macewen, the President, after congratulating the Association on the large attendance at one of the earliest meetings, made sympathetic reference to the loss which the nursing world had sustained in the death of Miss Isla Stewart, Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, who had taken a very active part, even during her last illness, in the promotion of State Registration. He then described the formation of the Scottish Nurses' Association by a number of matrons and nurses in various parts of Scotland, who realised the necessity for united effort on the part of the nurses themselves to obtain the opportunity of discussing questions affecting nursing interests, of forming opinions, and of voicing these opinions; to be independent of extraneous aid, and to be helpful to one another. Although only formed seven months ago, the Association had already justified its existence both as regards members, of whom there were many hundreds, including a large number of matrons and superintendents of nurses, and by the work which it had done. He pointed out how unsatisfactory the present position of nurses is, where anyone may don a uniform and call herself a nurse, and be accepted as such by the public, who pay the same price for the untrained as the fully trained; how unequal the training of nurses is, even in the larger schools; and how very varying the standards of examination are. By State Registration this would all be changed; the qualified would be distinguished from the unqualified; all training schools, large or small, would be required to comply with the code of education set by the State, and the State, by means of uniform examinations held from time to time throughout the Kingdom, by unprejudiced examiners, would determine what constituted a trained nurse. The qualified nurse would probably receive a State diploma, and might be distinguished by the qualification, N.D.N.—National Diploma in Nursing. He next asked why the Universities, which provided for the education of women as doctors, had not thought it worth their while to provide the theoretical part of a nurse's curriculum, and he then went on to compare the unsatisfactory condition in our own country with the excellent organisation which exists in many of our Colonies, and particularly on the Continent, where a thoroughly organised nursing staff is recognised as a necessity in times of peace, and a very important part of the military mechanism in time of war. He lastly explained shortly the aims of the single portal system, for which they were fighting, with its three years' course of training, with a defined curriculum, prescribed by a Central Nursing Council, and con-

ducted in recognised hospitals and nursing schools, and its uniform State examination, conducted by examiners appointed by, or with the approval of, and under the supervision of, the Central Nursing Council, at suitable centres throughout the Kingdom, and expressed his indebtedness to the other delegates of the Scottish Nurses' Association, who, at short notice, and at their own expense, had gone to London to attend the conferences.

Mrs. Strong, ex-Matron, Glasgow Royal Infirmary, who was loudly cheered on rising, next spoke. She said that, having spent the greater part of her life as a Matron in a nursing home and in hospital, at Dundee and Glasgow, she thought it would be granted that she knew something of the requirements of Scottish nurses. She shortly traced the developments of trained nursing from the time of Florence Nightingale and Mrs. Wardroper, of St. Thomas's Hospital, to the present, describing the commencement of the movement in Glasgow and the West of Scotland, when Sir William Macewen addressed the nurses of the Royal Infirmary on New Year's Day, 1891, asking if nursing could not be raised to a distinct profession, with its minimum requirements, theoretical and practical, its teachers, examiners, and its diploma, the scheme suggested being adopted by the managers in 1893. While many hospitals both train and examine their nurses now, there is no recognised standard, and uniformity is much required. Some Scottish nurses had proved themselves equal to the demands of a Central Board, as illustrated by their having passed the stiff examinations set by the Royal British Nurses' Association. Not one of the nurses who have gone up from the Glasgow Royal Infirmary had failed at this examination, and it presents this great advantage of their being examined by an independent Board, which does away with all partiality. She strongly urged all members who wish to take a high place when Registration comes into force to enter for the examinations of the R.B.N.A., as these examinations are thorough, and nurses who pass them gain the diploma of the association. The R.B.N.A. is the only body in the Kingdom which is authorised to grant a diploma, and this diploma is already recognised as a qualification of out-standing merit. She then described and commended the objects of the Scottish Nurses' Association, of which she was proud to be a Vice-President.

Miss Wright, Matron, Stobhill, described the work which the Association had done, particularly at the conferences in London, where it had worked hard to get increased representation for Scotland on the Council. She was sure what would most appeal to nurses in Registration was the guarantee they would obtain of securing a systematic, methodical, and adequate training.

Miss Waddington, Matron, private nursing home, spoke of the benefits which would be derived by nurses who were trained out of London from passing a State examination, particularly if they intended practising in the Colonies or on the Continent.

Dr. Devon, Glasgow, explained some misconceptions which had arisen regarding the proposed fee

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