

prominent members of the Association, besides representatives of metropolitan Nursing Homes.

THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S ADDRESS.

The Earl of Dudley, Governor-General, addressed the gathering, and offered to the nurses who were present in considerable numbers a sincere and hearty welcome. His Excellency added, "I may say at once that both Lady Dudley and those who are aiding her in her efforts to extend the benefits of district nursing in Australia recognise very thoroughly that the only path to success lies through the interest and assistance of the trained nurses in this country. They represent individually and collectively the essential material without which no scheme of this kind can be successfully inaugurated and built up. They provide forces which we are bound to enlist on our side if we are really to succeed in our aims; and such being the case it is very necessary that we should take the earliest opportunity of explaining to the members of so important a body as the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association some of the broad outlines of the organisation we propose to set up."

Proceeding to deal with the public criticisms made with regard to the scheme, and the misapprehensions which have arisen as to the precise scope of the objects which Lady Dudley has in view, his Excellency said that these were natural because any discussion of the scheme had so far, of necessity, been carried on in a somewhat vague and nebulous manner, but they could be dispersed by knowledge and explanation. The first misapprehension he desired to remove was that Lady Dudley's projected scheme might menace, or overshadow, the existence of nursing associations already established in Australia. It would be the aim of the promoters of the new scheme to establish close and friendly relations with those associations, to create uniting links between them and the new organisation, to give them representation upon its councils, and to draw upon them, when necessary, for assistance. "The aims of existing associations were different from those of the new one, and consequently, though co-operation was desirable, there was no reason why either should wish to predominate in the affairs of the other. To take the A.T.N.A. for instance, composed almost entirely of hospital and private nurses. How could any organisation, however widespread, such as Lady Dudley proposed to set up, interfere with the status and prospects of the hospital nurse? They must look to the hospital-trained nurses as the body from whom the district nurses were to be drawn. Everywhere hospital nurses formed the constitutional body from which the specialised nurses were drawn, and the more, therefore, that the scope and extent of specialised nursing were enlarged the more employment and opportunities were provided for the nursing profession as a whole.

Then it was thought in some quarters that any large increase in the number of district nurses would injuriously affect the prospects and employment of private nurses. There was, however, no reason for any such apprehension, as the promoters of the scheme aimed at catering for the needs of a class quite different from that which usually

employs a private nurse. If it was feared that some who now do so would, for reasons of economy, look to the ministrations of district nurses, all he could say on that point was that great care would be taken in drafting the regulations of the Order that no attempt of that kind, to take a base advantage of the services of its nurses, could possibly succeed.

In regard to the position of the nurses, the work they were to be asked to perform would be of a very arduous character, involving hardship, fatigue, and conflict with difficulties of transit, distance, and climate, which workers in cities were never called upon to face. That would, he was convinced, not prevent them from obtaining the services of the nurses they required, but it would be their care to see that the salary offered to a nurse who consented to join the Order was in every way sufficient, and no stone would be left unturned to promote her health, comfort, and happiness in the arduous but splendid work she would be asked to do.

Again the fear had been expressed that Lady Dudley intended to inundate the country with "cheap and inefficient nurses." This could not be current amongst well-informed people, but for the sake of others he might say it was intended to employ for work in the Bush only the very best and most efficient nurses, ladies thoroughly trained in the three branches of nursing—medical and surgical nursing, and midwifery—holding the highest certificates of efficiency. Periodical and systematic inspection and supervision would also be exercised.

"Surely, then," concluded his Excellency, "we are justified in appealing not only to the general public but to nurses themselves for support and assistance in our endeavour to carry even into the remotest corners of this country the comforting and health-giving ministrations of a trained nurse, and to set upon district nursing generally throughout Australia a seal of dignity and honour which will be worthy of its great traditions and ideals.

Mr. Harold Boulton explained the work of district nurses in Great Britain and Canada, and said that similar work, as required in Australia, was done by the Victorian Order of Nurses in Canada out in the prairies, amongst the Rockies, in the forests, at the lumber camps of Vancouver, and the frozen wastes of Labrador. The organisation would be controlled by a central committee, on which local committees would be represented. Let us hope many expert nurses will have seats on such committees, as they have with such immense benefit in the United States of America.

Miss Amy Hughes said it was a poor district nurse who was not able to do wonders in the house with nothing at all. They could raise the standard of living, teach the lesson of citizenship to the people, and become health missionaries amongst the poor.

At the conclusion of the speeches, tea was served on the corridor verandah, where their Excellencies chatted with their guests, and we all realised that the first step had been taken in a splendid new national work which would bring the very highest nursing skill within reach of those who greatly needed it. Only those who have lived in the Bush

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)