

## THE IRISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

### THE ULSTER BRANCH.

The annual meeting of the Ulster Branch of the Irish Nurses' Association was held in the Deaf and Dumb Institute, College Square, Belfast, on the 15th inst. Miss Workman, Hon Sec., read the annual report, and stated that the Executive Committee had met five times, the Amusements Committee twice, and that there had been several picnics and social meetings, and two lectures.

Referring to the annual report read by Miss Workman, the President, Lady Hermione Blackwood, from the Chair, urged the members of the Association to try and increase the membership, and quoted the words of two leading members of the nursing profession, one of whom had said that Leagues and Associations should be joined not for what the members could get out of them, but for what they could give to them, while another had said that nurses failed lamentably in regard to supporting their own profession. Lady Hermione spoke of the great loss the nursing world had sustained in the recent death of Mrs. Kildare Treacy, and said if there were a few more women with her ideals, energy and enthusiasm in the nursing ranks, the profession would occupy a far better position than it does to-day.

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

Miss Tate was elected, and Miss White was re-elected as Vice-President for the coming year.

Miss Newman, Miss White, and Miss Workman were re-elected on the Finance Committee, and Mrs. Campbell, Misses E. Campbell, Douglas Elliott, E. Hamilton, H. Noble, MacMahon and Selway were re-elected on the Amusements Committee.

#### NURSES AND NATIONAL INSURANCE.

The Chairman then introduced Dr. Marion Andrews, who had very kindly consented to address the meeting on the subject of the Insurance Act.

She prefaced her remarks by saying that as the Insurance Bill, whether the nurses liked it or whether they did not, had become an Act of Parliament, it was absolutely necessary they should try to understand its main provisions, and should decide whether they would form a Friendly Association of their own or would join any existing Friendly Society. She then proceeded in a very clear and interesting way to explain the chief points of the Act, and at the close of her address said she would be glad to answer any questions. She was asked what guarantee there was that the minimum 7s. 6d. promised by the Act would be the minimum, also whether disablement benefit would be granted to a nurse who might be incapacitated from following her profession, but who was not absolutely incapable of earning a little in other ways. To the first question Dr. Andrews replied that there

was no absolute guarantee that the minimum promised by the Act would be the minimum, but that if nurses were careful to join good strong well-managed Friendly Societies, there was no reason to fear that the minimum would be less than 7s. 6d. To the second question she replied that though by the wording of the Act the disablement benefit would seem to apply only to those who were totally incapacitated from work of any kind, she thought that the meaning could be interpreted as it was in the Insurance Act in Germany, and that disablement benefit would be granted to any who were proved to be incapacitated from following their usual profession, and who were not able to earn more than one-third of their former salary. A voice from the audience asked, "And if I am never ill what benefit do I get by insuring?" Dr. Andrews replied that as nurses usually got medical attendance and board free, and as a rule were healthy women, it would be to their advantage to join Friendly Societies composed of nurses only, as then they could make arrangements suited to their peculiar condition.

The Chairman then read a letter from the Secretary of the Irish Nurses' Association in Dublin, saying that their Association was anxious to form an Irish Nurses' Friendly Society, which could be affiliated to Nurses' Friendly Societies in England, Scotland and Wales, and which would then be a strong body, and that she would be glad to hear whether the nurses in the North of Ireland would be ready to join such a Society if it was formed.

The Chairman then explained that the National Pension Fund for Nurses was starting a section for insurance under the Act, and that all nurses must decide for themselves which of the two Societies they would wish to join, but in any case it was evident that it would be to the advantage of all nurses to join Societies that only took nurse members.

Dr. Marion Andrews remarked that if only the Act for the State Registration of Nurses had been passed, the word "registered" would naturally have been inserted before the word "nurse" in the clause relating to their employment under the Act.

A vote of thanks to Dr. Andrews for her instructive address was proposed by Miss White, Superintendent of the District Nurses' Home, and was seconded by Miss Dorwood.

A vote of thanks to Miss Workman, the capable and energetic Hon. Secretary was then proposed and passed.

Dr. Andrews kindly volunteered to go to any Hospital or nursing institution to give further explanation of the Act, and several Matrons present declared they would be glad to avail themselves of her offer. It was suggested that when more nurses had been instructed in the provisions of the Act, a public meeting of nurses might be called in order that their wishes as regards joining an Irish Nurses' Friendly Society or the National Pension Fund might be made known.

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