

the lever of the Parliamentary vote their conscientious work for the community counted for very little, and the help of Members of Parliament was imperative and greatly appreciated. She hoped that a Committee would be formed within the House to push forward the rights of the public and of trained nurses to statutory registration.

RESOLUTIONS.

Three resolutions were then presented to the meeting, all of which were passed unanimously. The first, proposed by Miss M. Heather-Bigg, matron of Charing Cross Hospital, and seconded by Miss L. V. Haughton, matron of Guy's Hospital, asking that effect should be given at the earliest possible date to the unanimous recommendation of the Select Committee on Registration of Nurses (1905), that it is desirable that a Register of Nurses should be kept by a Central Body appointed by the State.

In seconding the resolution Miss Haughton said that legal status was quite essential for the nursing profession; it was not a luxury, not a hobby, but an imperative necessity, and would make things very much better for those responsible for the training of nurses.

The second resolution, proposed by Miss H. L. Pearse, Superintendent of School Nurses under the London County Council, and seconded by Mrs. Shuter, conveyed the cordial congratulations of the Society to the British Dominions and States in the United States in which State Registration laws have been recently enacted. Miss Pearse said that the need for organization and registration was more urgent than ever, and that daily one could not fail to be impressed with the numberless and increasing openings for trained nurses, not only in the care of the sick, but in preventive work. Under the National Insurance Act much work for the sick would be done by nurses, and they ought to be fully trained and registered.

The third resolution protested against the exclusion of the Trained Nurses' Organizations from direct representation on the Advisory Committees under the National Insurance Act, and brought this grievance to the personal knowledge of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Miss E. B. Kingsford, the mover, said that, as a patriot, she was disgusted at being continually ignored, and was getting to the end of her patience. The one class which should have direct representation on the Advisory Committee were the trained nurses, and she felt there must be some ulterior motive in their exclusion. What she most feared was that this exclusion indicated that thoroughly trained nurses would not be expected to deal with the

insured sick. This would be deplorable, because the poor did not send for nurses for minor ailments. When they required trained nurses they were usually seriously ill, and ought to have the best possible skill.

Miss Beatrice Kent, who seconded the resolution, said that what was at stake was the principle of freedom through direct representation of self-governing societies on the Advisory Committees. Freedom meant opportunity, and this had been granted to every class affected by the Act excepting trained nurses. It was said that patience was a virtue, but where it involved a wrong to others besides oneself it became a vice. There was no personal feeling in the protest which was being made to the Chancellor, but, like Miss Kingsford, she was tired of the work, health, strength, and money of trained nurses being utilized and no corresponding privileges being granted to them.

The Chairman pointed out that the interests of the nurses had not been overlooked by those who held a watching brief for the nursing profession, but every effort had been made to bring their claims before the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Sir Robert Morant, the Chairman of the Insurance Commission.

The exclusion of trained nurses from direct representation might be the result of pure ignorance, for Government Departments were very ignorant about women's needs, especially in connection with nursing matters, but there was a danger in the fact that the only members of the nursing profession nominated by the Commissioners to seats on the Advisory Committees were three officials of a charitable Institute—which recognized and inspected midwives acting as nurses through the County Nursing Associations—entirely under lay control. It was a dangerous system which had crept in all over the country, and provided very cheap contract nursing to the rural poor. As a charity, it was argued it was better than nothing; but the nursing profession claimed that the insured sick had as distinct a right under the Act to qualified nursing as they had to qualified medical, midwifery, and pharmacy benefit. The grievance of the nursing profession was that they were deprived of the privilege of expressing an independent expert opinion by their exclusion from representation on the Advisory Committees in England and Ireland, a privilege accorded to the medical profession, to certified midwives and chemists through their professional organizations. The denial of legal status to the nursing profession was primarily to blame for the grave injustice.

After the usual vote of thanks to the Chair the meeting terminated, and the members ad-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)