

## THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TRAINED NURSES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND AND THE CARE OF THE SICK AND WOUNDED

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### RESOLUTION AND STATEMENT SENT TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR

When War was declared early in August the Nursing Profession in the United Kingdom realised with satisfaction that never before had it been so well prepared to fulfil the duties which might be imposed upon it. An experienced Matron-in-Chief was at the War Office at the head of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, with a supply of expert Matrons, Sisters, Staff-nurses, and orderlies at her command. In addition to the regular staff, a Reserve of fully qualified nurses was available. This Service was well supplemented by the Territorial Force Nursing Service of nearly 3,000 thoroughly trained certificated nurses, selected and supervised by a number of very experienced Principal Matrons. These expert nurses were at once mobilized.

Of volunteer trained nurses several thousands were available.

Thus we looked forward with confidence to nursing the sick and wounded soldiers in the most skilled manner possible; and had the War Office grasped the helm at once, and taken absolute control of every hospital, and every nurse utilised for nursing the troops at home and abroad, we are of opinion that an enormous amount of disorganization and suffering might have been prevented.

This apparently the War Office was unable to do, because certain powers and responsibilities had been delegated to the British Red Cross Society—and that Society, so far as nursing is concerned, has failed to appreciate the value of trained nursing skill in the practical application of medical treatment, so that when War broke out it was absolutely unprepared so far as a supplementary trained nursing service was concerned.

It took but a few weeks to prove the dangerously inefficient system of nursing approved by the British Red Cross Society, and evidence of this inefficiency elicited a firm protest in the form of a Resolution passed unanimously at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, held in London on December 3rd, 1914. This Resolution was sent to the Secretary of State for War, and resulted in a request from the Director General of the Army Medical Service for evidence in its support—a request which was complied with in the following Statement on December 31st, 1914.

### RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TRAINED NURSES

The National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, in Annual Meeting assembled, desires to place on record its unqualified disapproval of the present organization of the nursing of sick and wounded soldiers in military auxiliary hospitals at home and abroad.

In the opinion of the National Council, the standard of nursing for the sick and wounded should be of the highest quality that a grateful nation can provide for men who are risking their lives in the defence of the Empire.

This Council therefore most earnestly petitions the Secretary of State for War (whose Department is primarily responsible for the health and comfort of the troops) to prevent the expenditure of the munificent subscriptions of the public on inefficient nursing, and the subjection of the sick and wounded to the dangerous interference of untrained and unskilled women, who have been placed in positions of responsibility for which they are not qualified, greatly to the detriment of the discipline in military auxiliary hospitals, and the general welfare of the sick.

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