

the British delegates and seconded by Miss Knottenbelt that Miss Goodrich should be elected an Hon. President of the International Council upon her retirement, in recognition of her services during her term of office. This resolution was, of course, unanimously carried.

Much regret was expressed that Miss Wright, who should have been the Canadian delegate, was absent through illness. There are so many interesting meetings taking place, and so much to see and to learn; but I will endeavour to send you a contribution frequently.

BEATRICE KENT.

CONFERENCE DAY.

THE NEED FOR A TRAINED NURSES' ECONOMIC LEAGUE.—DISCUSSION.

At the Conference convened by the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, and held at 11, Chandos Street, W., on June 17th, after Miss Hawkins had concluded her able Paper on the above subject, the Chairman (Mrs. Fenwick) said that the nursing profession had had a very bitter experience of exploitation, because the control of their work, fees and assets commended itself as a profitable problem to financiers in various directions. If someone nipped in to manage your business and financial assets you might be sure there was money in it. The National Insurance Act was resented by nurses, as they were refused a hearing before it became law, and it was drawn to meet the needs of male extern workers, and not that of women intern employees. Nurses had, however, submitted to the law like orderly citizens, and Miss Mollett had seen clearly that a Trained Nurses' Friendly Society, under professional control, might prove useful, but it was only permitted to exist on sufferance, because the financiers who managed nurses' assurance eagerly grasped control of their insurance. There could be no effective progress or power in any profession which did not manage its own money.

Mrs. Herbert Lewis, Chairman of the Women Clerks and Secretaries' Society, said nurses were underpaid, and apparently had a dislike to combination, but she wondered sometimes if women would not get much further if they were a little more loyal to one another. The League which it was proposed to form would perhaps not appeal to those at the top, but there was every reason why it should. It had been suggested that probationers had to join certain insurance societies. The same difficulty had been found with clerks and secretaries. Nurses should organise now, as after the War there would be a big slump. The subject of women's wages as a whole was depressing, but we had only ourselves to blame if we did not face our difficulties boldly. Nurses were the kindest and most generous part of the community. They gave in a most wonderful way, and the independent ones should help

the others. The National Insurance Act was very unpopular with professional women workers. It was important that women's insurance societies should be strong, so that when the time for revision came they might be in a position to say what they did and did not want. Those managing women's societies were anxious to speak with authority. The speaker urged the members of the nursing profession to study their own problems. Those in assured positions could do much to encourage the younger members.

The Chairman said that if the Trained Nurses' Economic League were founded it would not be popular in well known quarters where nurses were "done for." But there were many questions that needed tackling. Much tabulation of statistics was necessary.

For nursing education (which, if good, must be costly), nurses made no money payment as a rule, but they gave years of hard work below cost, and this labour was a most valuable asset to the hospitals, without which many might have to shut their doors. Referring to the question of remuneration, the speaker said when the War Office required probationers—it doubled the usual salary offered, for half the work. The question of the endowment of Nursing Schools was an economic question of first importance and required consideration.

With regard to Insurance, there were immense possibilities if in the hands of the nurses themselves. With an expert committee of trained nurses, it had been proved that even in a small society a considerable sum could be saved.

The question referred to by Miss Hawkins of the control of a professional Journal was of vital importance to the power for good of every profession. The solidarity of the medical profession made it possible to acquire an income from advertisements of upwards of £28,000 a year in the *British Medical Journal*, money which was wisely spent in consolidating the medical profession for its own benefit, and the safe treatment of the public. Such profits were the legitimate asset of the profession which created the demand for the goods advertised, and not of predatory and unprofessional persons. Such profits should be available through their own official organ by every profession, as organization was costly. "There are thousands of pounds to pick up," concluded the Chairman, "if you are loyal to one another."

Miss Carter then seconded the resolution proposed by Miss Hawkins, "That a Trained Nurses' Economic League be now formed," which was unanimously agreed to.

Whether such a League succeeds or not entirely depends upon the interest taken in it by the nurses themselves.

WELCOME HELP.

The President of the Society for the State Registration of Nurses acknowledges with thanks, a subscription of £1 1s. from the League of St. John's House Nurses.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)