

THE NURSING CONFERENCE.

A very interesting and well-attended Conference was held at 46, Marsham Street, Westminster, S.W., on Thursday, June 29th, convened by the National Union of Trained Nurses, when Miss E. M. Cancellor, Chairman, presided.

The following organisations were represented, through the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland:—(1) Matrons' Council, (2) Society for State Registration of Nurses, (3) The Irish Nurses' Association, and the Ulster Branch, (4) League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses, (5) St. John's House Nurses' League, (6) School Nurses' League, (7) Chelsea Infirmary Nurses' League, (8) Registered Nurses' Society, (9) Queen's Hospital Nurses' League, Birmingham, (10) Victoria and Bournemouth Nurses' League, (11) Leicester Royal Infirmary Nurses' League; also the Scottish Nurses' Association, Royal British Nurses' Association, Poor-Law Infirmary Matrons' Association, Guy's Hospital Nurses' League, and the Midwives' Institute.

In her introductory remarks Miss Cancellor explained that it was thought that it might be helpful at the present time to discuss questions which were uppermost in the minds of nurses, to pick the brains which were most worth picking, and to arrange a concerted plan of action so as to voice, with no uncertain sound, opinions on questions which were of vital importance to the nursing profession.

She then invited Mrs. Strong, President of the Scottish Nurses' Association to address the Conference.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

Mrs. Strong, who was warmly applauded, said that she had been asked for words of encouragement, and the Conference had her most hearty good wishes in their struggle for vital points in connection with the training and status of nurses.

She much admired the manner and spirit in which the present generation of nurses were working.

A former generation had grasped the necessity for a fixed curriculum for the education of nurses in the hope that they might induce the Government to take it up as a basis, and develop it into a standard for national adoption. There had been no lack of pupils, and no difficulty in carrying out the plan. Perhaps it was a bold and quixotic step, but without some practicable demonstration of what could be done they could hardly expect to be listened to.

They were indebted to the promoters of the College of Nursing for giving an impetus to their efforts to bring about uniformity in a nurse's education, and to fix her status. There had been a general feeling that Parliament had its hands full enough, but nurses had been coerced into taking steps in self-defence. The formation of the

College of Nursing, Ltd., had made them bestir themselves, and to state definitely what they wanted. Vagueness would not do, they must battle with it.

The National Union of Trained Nurses had realised the strong necessity, for the union of trained nurses to counteract what they believed to be half measures, but there was need to beware of multiplying societies; better to make use of those already existing; a multiplicity of societies was confusing to the public.

"You," said Mrs. Strong, "are young, you have brains and you must work out in detail what you wish your curriculum to be." For herself she wished to see it made illegal for anyone to enter a hospital for practical training without a fixed preliminary education, not only in elementary anatomy, physiology, and hygiene, which could be obtained at a minimum of expense if the medical schools throughout the kingdom would form classes for nurses for this instruction, but also that each hospital should be required to give fixed clinical instruction before the pupil was admitted for practical work in the wards, these classes to be uniform, controlled by the State, and class certificates to be given.

Those present could call to mind the first days and weeks they spent in hospital if placed there without previous instruction, the bewilderment, and the overwhelming sense of impotence, and in some cases shattered nerves for life through the sudden contact with acute suffering. Often it was the stodgy probationers who held on, and those with more wit who gave up. Further, there was the patients' side to consider; there was much less risk to them in being handled by one who had some clear idea of what she was doing, and who received her instructions in a language which was no longer foreign. She had searched in vain in the Bill prepared by the College of Nursing for some indication of uniformity of education and a common examination before nurses were placed on the Register. It seemed to leave the training schools much where they were, merely placing on a register the nurses from recognized schools, and leaving the mass of small hospitals ostracised, whereas, given a fixed minimum of theoretical knowledge, the practical training in hospitals (large or small) could be tested by independent fixed examinations, and a common diploma granted, thus placing all hospitals on a common footing. She thought the term "graduate in nursing" would convey more than "registered."

Nurses must form a governing body for themselves. "You know," said Mrs. Strong in conclusion, "or should know, your own needs. If you have clear thought you will have clear speech. Make up your minds what it is you want and stick to it."

NURSING IN SMALL HOSPITALS AND AFFILIATED TRAINING.

Miss Cancellor, who presented the first paper, first outlined the cottage hospital movement, by

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