

enquiry had been made into the financial position of nurses, and was told that some effort had been made by the Women's Industrial Council some years ago, but they were unable to obtain sufficient information for statistical purposes.

The Chairman then invited Mrs. Bedford Fenwick to speak on the Organisation of Nurses' Societies.

### THE ORGANISATION OF NURSES' SOCIETIES.

Mrs. Fenwick said that there was only one basis upon which to build up an effective Nurses' Society—the individual one, and its foundation must be the individual will, expressed by the vote, otherwise there would be government without consent.

It was always wise to study men's organisations, and one found that politically nearly every man had the vote. On village councils, borough councils, municipal councils, and in London by the London County Council, for which she had a great admiration, the business was managed by the elected representatives of the people, and men had the privilege of electing their representatives in Parliament.

In professional societies of men the same system was in force.

With regard to nursing organisation English women seemed peculiarly incapable of following a lead; they had shown little power of co-operation for the common good and preferred small self-centred societies which had proved ineffective. When the British Nurses' Association was founded, in her house in 1887, nurses flocked to the standard and there was promise of a fine organisation. Unfortunately, however, the controlling power was monopolised by men and an autocracy resulted.

Mrs. Fenwick then described her visit to the World's Fair at Chicago in 1892, when she was one of the British delegates to the World's Women's Congress, at which Mrs. May Wright Sewall, the founder of the International Council of Women, spoke on the International Idea, and how she was asked to convey to this country the desire that it should form a National Council of Women. The National Union of Women Workers had already been founded and eventually a scheme was agreed upon whereby a National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland was formed and became the Governing Body of the Union. It was composed of delegates from women's organisations and societies, the National Union continuing to enroll individual members and form local branches. The National Council of Trained Nurses was founded on much the same system, and based on the graduate vote; societies composed entirely of nurses with the necessary qualifications were affiliated to form the National Council, but it had not so far admitted individuals to membership, thus many nurses were unable to enter the International Federation of Nurses which had spread all over the world. To-day there was an awakening amongst nurses, and a desire for more professional co-

operation, and it was possible that the National Council of Trained Nurses and the National Union of Trained Nurses might in co-operation bear somewhat the same relation to one another as the National Council of Women and the National Union of Women Workers, the former affiliating leagues and societies of nurses and the latter individual nurses and branches. Through such affiliation with the National Council they would enter into affiliation with the International Council of Nurses with its splendid organisation; all its congresses in Berlin, Buffalo, Paris, London, had been marvellously successful. At its last meeting at Cologne in 1912 twenty-three countries were represented by 1,000 delegates, and at the banquet at the close of the Congress speeches were made by distinguished nurses from all parts of the world. It was a magnificent and uplifting gathering, demonstrating the value of professional solidarity in the highest degree.

The National Council was the only portal to affiliation with the International Council of Nurses, and she thought that together the National Council and the National Union should be able to devise a constitution by which every trained nurse in the kingdom who desired effective national organisation and international federation could take her part in elevating the nursing profession to a high standard of efficiency throughout the world.

Miss Thurstan, who attended the International Meeting at Cologne, said that it was a revelation to her of what comradeship meant, everyone was a comrade; it was an unforgettable experience.

When she and other British nurses passed through Denmark from Belgium in 1914 nothing could exceed the kindness they received from the Danish National Council of Nurses at Copenhagen. A reception was given to them at the Palace Hotel. chocolates, pictures, &c., were sent to their hotels, and every opportunity was given them of seeing the hospitals and other institutions, and of having an enjoyable time.

Miss A. E. Hulme said that she and Miss Kent, as British delegates, had the same wonderful experience at the meeting of the International at San Francisco last year; nothing could exceed the kindness and hospitality they received. Mrs. Fenwick remarked that to be a member of a National Council of Nurses, taking credentials from its President, was an open sesame in nursing circles throughout the civilised world.

Miss S. A. Claridge, who was in Germany just before the outbreak of war, described her experiences at that time.

Before the close of the proceedings the Chairman asked whether it was the feeling of the meeting that another Conference should be held in the autumn.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick thought the Conference might be a conjoint one, convened by the National Council of Trained Nurses and the National Union, as the former usually held an annual Conference; by such co-operation everyone interested could be invited to attend and help to make it representative.

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