

NATIONAL UNION OF TRAINED NURSES.

Miss M. Heather Bigg, R.R.C., presided at the meeting convened by the National Union of Trained Nurses after the Annual Meeting of Members of the London Branch on February 23rd, and after introducing the first speaker, Col. Mayo-Robson, C.V.O., C.B., F.R.C.S., as one of the greatest experts in military surgery, and one of the best known surgeons in England, said "I will not stand between you and him for more than a minute, but I feel I should be failing in duty if I did not say a few words on a subject that is uppermost in the thoughts of most of us, that is the pauperising of our profession by certain fashionable ladies who are promoting a Nation's Fund for Nurses. Nowadays all our talk is of war. Well, we nurses ought to be waging a civil war against those of our profession who are lending themselves to this humiliating scheme. By what right do these Society women ask the public to create a Benevolent Fund for our profession? Who has empowered them to solicit aims on our behalf, and to invite the co-operation of the most generous of people who make up the Dramatic Profession—warm-hearted actors and actresses?"

"What we in the nursing profession want is a legitimate payment for our services, not charity. We desire to be able to provide for old age and sickness from a proper wage, and not to have to accept with cringing gratitude a paltry pittance.

"If the nation wishes to testify its appreciation of the heroic conduct and self-sacrificing work of thousands of the nursing profession during the war, let them see that we are given State Registration for Nurses and the government of our economic affairs by our representative Council of Nurses, not by a nominated body representing employers of labour.

This is the civil war I want you all to carry on. We must overcome our apathy and go forth to the battle. We must induce both the medical profession and Members of Parliament to help place our Bill for State Registration of Nurses on the Statutory Book of Law. When this Bill, through our efforts, becomes Law we shall have won a victory for our profession as great as any that has been won by our splendid armies during the world war. I will now call on Col. Mayo Robson to give us his address on "The After Care of the Disabled Soldier."

Col. Mayo Robson then delivered a most interesting address, which, by his special desire, we do not publish, as the whole question of the after care of the disabled soldier is under the consideration of the War Office, and the Council of Consultants.

PROFESSIONAL RE-ORGANIZATION AFTER THE WAR.

Miss Susan Lawrence, who preferred to deal with the general situation rather than that on which she was announced to speak said that any women's meeting to-day meets with elation and

enthusiasm. The granting of the franchise to women meant not only a great deal in the future but an extraordinary accession of importance at the present time. We were standing at the beginning of a new era for women.

The women's organizations amongst industrial workers had already triumphs to their credit, but whether women worked with hand or brain they needed substantially the same protection. Their enemy was not ill-will but conservatism.

Miss Lawrence emphasised the importance of (1) securing (2) using proper legislation, and invited her hearers to go out in London and ask the unorganized women what wages they were getting.

The National Union of Trained Nurses had to contend with the problems with which industrial women workers were confronted. Beginning with long hours she combatted the "obstinate fallacy" that overwork was good for output, and said that to double hours did not double output.

Reforms were not won by one class of women working for themselves, but through a Federation such as the Women's Trade Union League, through which they could have behind them the whole force of organized labour. The Trade Union Congress was a splendid sounding board whatever Government was in power, and, when it came to relying on the offices of kindly members, they were more kindly, and there were more of them.

She could not help feeling a little sorry that all that power—that enormous power—was not at the disposal of the nurses. Labour was their best friend, and labour was ready to help. Professional societies occupied a useful place; but, in addition to the centre, there was an extraordinary advantage in having a left wing. A trade union of trained nurses would be able to bring to the whole movement force and strength, and persons in charge of legislation would be alarmed when they realized that if undemocratic legislation for nurses were carried, organized labour would be seriously annoyed.

If any of you, said Miss Lawrence, were one of us, the whole machinery of organized Labour would be set loose on your behalf. The labour movement was strong; it was waking up; it gave a feeling of solidarity; and every woman ought to help every other. She thought the nurses should harness to their chariot the great forces which had done so much for other workers.

Miss Eden, who proposed a cordial vote of thanks to Miss Lawrence, which was most warmly acclaimed, said that she had just returned from the North, where she had been struck by the different attitude of people of two types of mind. Those in organized societies who were looking to the future, and the unorganized who were looking backwards.

Miss Helen Pearse, who proposed a vote of thanks to the chair, spoke of the extreme need for nurses to safeguard their interests at this crisis if they did not wish to go under.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, in seconding the motion,

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