

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,576.

SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 1918.

Vol. LX

EDITORIAL.

CONFERENCE ON NURSERY SCHOOLS.

The question of the establishment of Nursery Schools is one which is engaging much public interest at the present time, and the Executive Committee of the National Union of Women Workers having decided to support the principle of such schools embodied in Clause 19 of the Education Bill now before Parliament, called an informal Conference of representative women to consider further the details of the important proposals. The Conference took place on June 8th at 39, Victoria Street, S.W.

Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, D.Sc., Ph.D., F.L.S., President, in her opening remarks, said it was a link in the chain of a great scheme for the development and welfare of the child. It was essential, she stated, that there should be perfect continuity in this scheme of development. This was the fundamental idea, upon which all the speakers based their remarks. Four different aspects of the question were dealt with in ten-minute speeches by the following ladies:—"The Relation of the Nursery School to the Present Infant School," Miss Agnes Dawson, Women's Educational Union, and Miss Goodwin, National Union of Teachers; "Nursery Schools and the Health of the Children," Mrs. A. L. Sanford, Central Consultative Committee, Committee of Head Mistresses; "Nursery Schools from the Parents' Point of View," Mrs. Parker, National Adult School Union; "The Training of Teachers for Nursery Schools," Miss Hawtry, Darlington Training College.

Every speech made was of great interest and importance, but the exigencies of space will not unfortunately allow of any detailed description. The following *bon mots* culled from them might serve, with advantage, as maxims by those interested in, and working for "It!"

"Let us break away from the old tradition of teaching infants."

"Give us more floor space, and furniture light enough for the little ones to move about themselves, no fixed furniture."

"Nursery Schools must come under the Education Authority."

"Place the children in the hands of those who have studied the psychology of children from the beginning not of those who make speeches in Parliament."

Several speakers emphasized the importance of more floor space and sleeping facilities. Complaints were uttered that red tape was hindering many minor reforms.

"The Nursery School is no new thing, it exists now, in the Baby Room of the Infant School. Teachers have been spending their own money in buying necessary things for its equipment, at last the Local Authorities have made a grant of 2s. 6d. per week for this purpose." It was considered insufficient.

"Head teachers should be given freedom to exercise their own judgment."

"There must be plenty of facilities for play, plenty of sand, and everything that children like."

"Always listen to the poor woman's point of view."

"What is wanted is practical knowledge of the care of the children. I should like teachers of Nursery Schools to attend Infant Welfare Centres. Every teacher of a Nursery School should be fully trained and certificated."

That Nursery Schools should be consolidated in the great scheme of education under the new Bill is a further recognition by the State of the importance of the care of babies. The speakers spoke of the impressionable mind of the child between two and five. We may reasonably hope for a more healthy and a more moral race in the next generation, if the admirable schemes now being promoted materialise.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)