

A NURSES' TRADE UNION.

MEETING AN IMMENSE SUCCESS.

"An immense success" is the verdict on the meeting held in the Mortimer Hall, 93, Mortimer Street, Great Portland Street, W., on Saturday, October 25th. Those nurses were well advised who were early in the Hall, for it was crowded to overflowing, and a number of those present had to stand throughout the meeting.

The spirit of enthusiasm and determination which pervaded the audience was admirable, and augured well for the success of the new venture, as did also the fact that the proposal to form a trade union has come from the rank and file of the nurses themselves.

The chair was taken by Miss MacCallum, a private nurse and a member of the Nurses' Co-operation, 22, Langham Street, W., who, in opening the meeting, said: "Fellow Nurses, this meeting has been convened to consider the proposal to form a professional union of trained nurses on trade union lines." She then called on Mr. Theodore Goddard to explain the proposals to the meeting.

THE PROPOSALS.

Mr. THEODORE GODDARD said, your Chairman has asked me to explain to you the scheme for the formation of a professional union of nurses on Trade Union lines, because I have been associated with those nurses who have been interested in the proposition for the last few weeks. The merit of the proposals to be put before you is entirely a matter for you.

Every Trade Union has certain defined objects, and I will read to you the Objects, Regulations and Rules which it is proposed shall be those of this professional union of Trained Nurses—in all some nineteen Articles:—

OBJECTS FOR WHICH THE ASSOCIATION IS ESTABLISHED.

1. To promote and protect the profession of Trained Nurses.
2. To promote State Registration of all Trained Nurses.
3. To establish an Employment Agency and act as Agent for members.
4. To secure a minimum rate of remuneration and maximum working hours.
5. To provide benefits for members when totally incapacitated.
6. To regulate the relationships between Trained Nurses and Employers.
7. To secure unity of action by organisation or otherwise, in order to maintain the position and status of Trained Nurses.
8. To abolish all abuses detrimental to their welfare and economic independence.
9. To promote industrial peace and progress by amicable means, but when difficulties arise to obtain an equitable settlement.
10. To accumulate from the contributions of the members funds adequate for the protection

of their professional interests and provision of the benefits specified.

11. To provide legal assistance to members so far as the law allows.

12. To secure, or assist in securing, legislation for the protection of the Association's interests.

13. To provide fire and other insurances and to make small loans to members for special training, as provided by the rules.

14. To provide clubs, hotels and residential flats for members at special rates.

15. To provide beds in hospitals, nursing homes and sanatoria for nurses.

16. To arrange for medical and dental advice.

17. To provide a sick and accident fund.

18. To provide (when the funds of the Association permit) a scheme for the establishment of annuities.

19. To take any lawful action the Council (as the Governing Body) may deem advisable to protect and advance the interests of the members of the Association.

Rome was not built in a day, said Mr. Goddard, and all these objects are not going to come into action at once, but there is no reason why they should not all be achieved. What is wanted is a large membership and thoroughly well organised arrangements.

The first Council will be arranged by delegates from various institutions, after which each year there will be an election by ballot.

THE ADDRESS OF THE CHAIRMAN.

The Chairman then said:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

Within the last five years, a tidal wave has inundated the civilised world, now that it is beginning to recede, we who survive look round upon changed and ever-changing conditions. Old landmarks are gone, new ones are quickly taking their place, nothing remains the same.

In 1914 we were earning a living—bread and butter and occasionally a little jam, not at any time spread too thickly, however. In 1919 not even the world-renowned plum and apple remains to us, we are scarcely earning our bread and margarine. I thought I would point this out to you in case you had not noticed it.

Now, this may be due to two factors: In the first place, many hospitals are increasing their private staffs; some, it is even said, are turning them into co-operations. Owing to the fact that hospitals have at their disposal buildings erected by public or private subscriptions, they will be able to house their staffs at very little expense, and will thus be in a position to undersell us in the labour market. One large hospital is already sending out nurses at two-and-a-half guineas per week, while we, who belong to private associations, having to house ourselves, cannot do the work under three guineas per week.

Also it will be possible for hospitals to circularise their post-graduate men asking them to send to the hospitals for their nurses; thus A hospital

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