

cumulative pressure would have strength to right all wrongs.

Who had not heard the question, "What good will a Union do me?" History taught us that the individual was best helped by that which raised and strengthened all. United we had a power which could not be withstood if we chose to make use of it. It had been said that "Power in its highest expression is the science of organising the individual mind to the service of the Universe."

At present our profession was at a very critical stage, and without real, self-sacrificing, devotion, backed by individual organisation, we might be left struggling in shackles for another generation, while the People were supplied with a shadow for a substance.

There could be no evolution without effort. Other professions told us that Trade Unionism had proved to be to the interest of the workers and the community alike.

Did our hope of influencing legislation lie in joining this Union? Unions registered under the Trade Union Act had proved time and again that they could bring public pressure to bear upon any Government which had ever existed. (Applause.)

DISCUSSION.

The Chairman then invited free discussion.

Dr. J. A. C. Macewen remarked that a number of nurses thought that if they joined a Union they would be immediately blackballed; he believed that was quite erroneous, but he would like further confirmation.

Miss Paterson replied that she thought Councillor Mitchell would bear her out when she said that a Trade Union Roll was confidential. If a Matron asked a nurse if she were a member of the Union—well, she could refuse information, and if, in consequence, she were bullied, let her report the matter to the P.U.T.N.

Councillor Rosslyn Mitchell confirmed what Miss Paterson had said, stating that from the legal point of view the names were confidential, and from the public one (in reference to public hospitals) every member of the Corporation was in favour of trade unionism, and every hospital in Glasgow had representatives from the Corporation on its Board. His Corporation's experience had been so universally favourable to Trade Unions that the members were delighted to find that all those employed in Corporation work were members of a Trade Union.

A nurse rising at the back of the hall remarked that Miss Paterson had said it was only in the South that hospital committees ran private staffs, but she had reason to believe that in at least one town in Scotland this was the case.

Miss Paterson was sorry to learn the evil was spreading—all the more need for a Union.

The representative of Lanarkshire School Nurses expressed their unanimous approval of the Union.

A Matron of a fever hospital asked whether she would be eligible for membership, and Miss Paterson replied that all fully trained nurses were eligible, but Matrons could not sit on the Council.

In reply to some questions as to what constituted a trained nurse, Dr. McGregor Robertson explained that it was the work of the General Nursing Council, not of the Professional Union of Trained Nurses, to define this.

Miss McAra here read the following telegram from Miss E. Maude MacCallum, Hon. Secretary P.U.T.N. :—

"Professional Union of Trained Nurses sends best wishes to the Scottish Nurses and hopes to welcome them all as members. Union is strength."

A nurse remarked that the attitude taken up by the two Matrons who denied a hearing to Miss Paterson showed right away what nurses had been up against all these years with no Union to protect them. She herself was still a member of the College, but her faith in that body had been much shaken for some time, and the attitude of these two Matrons, who were members of the College, only tended to shake it further.

Miss Paterson said numbers of College nurses were members of the Union, who were drawn from all branches of the profession for mutual protection.

Dr. McGregor Robertson, referring to his previous statement that, in order to promote frank expression of opinion there would be no resolutions, announced that if there was only one opinion there was no reason why an expression of opinion should not be given. Would any one present propose that it was desirable to support this Professional Union? Those who would prefer not to express any opinion at present could also indicate their feeling. It was agreed (with two dissentients) to express an opinion at the meeting, and the following Resolution was proposed and seconded :—

"That the Meeting of Nurses here assembled support the Professional Union of Trained Nurses."

There was loud applause when, on a show of hands, the Chairman declared the Resolution carried unanimously.

The Chairman said that as the meeting was so unanimous he hoped they would get to work quickly. He had taken an impartial stand, and had not intended to sway the meeting in any way, but now they had come to a decision he would say he considered it a wise one. His experience when working for the Nurses' Registration Bill had been that a strong Union was necessary to enforce the nurses' wishes. As a member of the Scottish Nurses' Association he also had had a difficulty in getting a hearing in hospitals when he wished to address the nurses on matters concerning their profession. He also referred to the difficulty of getting a hearing in the press.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)