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EDITORIAL.

A FAMILY OF NATIONS.

It is of the highest significance that the signatory Powers to the League of Nations Covenant should have recognised that interest in matters affecting the health and welfare of their peoples is of vital importance; and that Dr. Addison, as Minister in the first country to establish a Ministry of Health, should have been asked by the Council of the League to summon a Conference and prepare proposals for the establishment of an International Health Organisation.

This is the conference which took place last week at the Ministry of Health, in connection with which the Minister of Health presided at a luncheon at the Carlton Hotel given by the Government to meet the delegates to the International Health Conference. Lord Astor was chairman of the conference, which was attended by Delegates from France, Italy, Japan, the United States, and Great Britain, and the League of International Red Cross Societies, the International Labour Bureau, and the Office International d'Hygiene Publique were represented.

The outcome of the Conference was that it was decided to submit to the Council of the League of Nations a proposal to form a permanent International Health Council, concerning which the Minister of Health expressed the opinion that it would be one of its most important branches.

One of the results of the recent war has been to prove to the countries affiliated in the League of Nations that they are all inter-dependent, and that what affects one is of vital moment to the others. Thus the International Health Conference last week conferred and co-operated in advising on such measures as are possible to combat typhus in Poland, and thus prevent its spread throughout Europe. In considering this question the Conference had

the advantage of the presence of the Polish Vice-Minister of Health, Dr. Chedzke, and of his medical expert, Dr. Rajehmann, a practical proof of the value of international co-operation. Another pleasant feature of the conference was the opinion voiced by M. Brisac, the senior French delegate, when he said that the barriers which had separated the countries had now been broken down, and that when the French delegates came to this country they felt that they were amongst their own family.

In connection with the international organisation of health workers it is interesting to remember that the first to organise on international lines were the trained nurses, who, just twenty years ago, on the initiative of the Editor of this Journal, founded the International Council of Nurses, which adopted the following Preamble to its Constitution:—

“We nurses of all nations, sincerely believing that the best good of our Profession will be advanced by greater unity of thought, sympathy, and purpose, do hereby band ourselves in a confederation of workers to further the efficient care of the sick, and to secure the honour and the interest of the Nursing Profession.”

The objects of the Council were thus defined:—

(a) “To provide a means of communication between the nurses of all nations, and to afford facilities for the interchange of international hospitality.

(b) “To provide opportunities for nurses to meet together from all parts of the world, to confer upon questions relating to the welfare of their Patients and their Profession.”

Such opportunities were provided in Buffalo (1901), Berlin (1904), Paris (1907), London (1909), and Cologne (1912), when representative nurses from twenty-three countries were present, and the transactions of these conferences show the value of their deliberations.

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