

NURSES' ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR IDEALS.

MEETING AT THE PRINCE OF WALES' HOSPITAL.

At the Prince of Wales' Hospital, Tottenham, on the 21st inst., speakers from the Royal British Nurses' Association, the College of Nursing, Ltd., and the Professional Union of Trained Nurses, addressed the members of the Nursing staff, and a considerable number of other nurses not connected with the hospital also attended. Mr. Carson, F.R.C.S., was in the chair.

The remarks of Miss Macdonald and Miss Sheriff-McGregor (representing the R.B.N.A. and the College respectively) were very similar to those given in our report of the meeting at the Temperance Hospital, except that at the close of her remarks Miss Macdonald pointed out that, although the Membership Roll of the Association would still continue, it had closed its Register because it would not be for the benefit of the State Register to run any voluntary Register, and to do so would tend to mislead both nurses and the public.

Miss MacCallum pointed out that a Limited Company, such as the College, was a Trade Union of Employers and it was therefore inevitable that, if such a federation were formed in the Profession, a Trade Union of the workers must follow. She stated the reasons why she, a College Member, had with her friends started the Trade Union, and spoke of the benefits which membership of the Union could give.

DISCUSSION.

Free discussion followed, Councillor Beatrice Kent strongly deprecated the methods of the promoters of the College in appropriating the laurels which belonged by right to those who had led the nurses to victory in the long fight for State Registration, a reform to which many of those, now sitting on the College Council, had offered, in the past, the strongest opposition. Her adherence to the old motto "Steadfast and True" of the Association to which she was so proud to belong, caused her to feel that she must ever protest against the lack of truth with which the College constantly claimed that there was no organisation in the profession until it was founded.

Miss Jessie Holmes was not in favour of a Trade Union for Nurses, but Mrs. Paul said that she was convinced of the necessity for one if the nurses' interests were to be adequately protected. Miss Sheldon pressed for unity in the profession, contending that there was room for all the existing bodies.

Miss Carter enquired whether the College only admitted nurses with a three years' certificate of General Training, and another member of the audience enquired as to why the College provided nurses, removed from the Register, with no right of appeal.

Miss Sheriff-McGregor explained the existing regulations governing the admission of nurses to the College Register, and with reference to what other speakers had said in connection with charity, stated that if their methods of raising money were not right the Charity Commissioners would interfere. There was a right of appeal for the College nurses.

A MONOPOLY OF POWER.

Miss Macdonald said: "There is no *right* of appeal. By an act of grace your Council might permit a nurse to appeal, but there is no *right* of appeal. I will read to the meeting a clause in the Memorandum and Articles of the College to prove what I say." The

clause, which provides that the Council of the College has power to remove a nurse's name from the Register at will and without even notifying the nurse, was read. Miss Macdonald then continued: "As to what Miss Sheldon has said in support of unity, she is not more anxious than I am to see unity in the profession, but unity can be bought at too great a cost. So long as the College is out to grab everything for itself there can never be unity. If Miss Sheldon is so anxious for unity let her see that her hospital (Guy's) treats the nurses' organisations with the same fairness that the Prince of Wales' Hospital has done to-night, and grants the hospitality of its platform to the three organizations represented here, which it has refused to do. The College has sought only its own interests from the beginning. It has attempted to govern the whole profession—it has tried to become the law-making authority for the profession by asking for incorporation through a Nurses' Registration Act; it has tried to be the almsgiving authority through the Nation's Fund; it claims to be the educational authority, and to be the body in relation to nursing analogous to the General Medical Council in the medical profession. If, with an immense power of money behind it, it had been able to achieve all this for itself it would have gained such a drastic monopoly of power as to make the members of the profession literally its serfs. Again, it has used pledges which it had no right to give in order to swell its membership and Register; pledges unfair to organisations adopting more scrupulous methods.

Again, it uses methods to obtain its money of which we strongly disapprove. Take, for instance, the "Juliet" case. Supposing you went to the next house from here, said you had a sister, formerly a manequin, who had gone to the war as a V.A.D., was, as a result of this, in a broken-down condition of health, with no money, was going about with goggles and a shawl over her head, presumably for need of clothes; and for these reasons you begged for money to help her. Supposing, when challenged in the Press, you could not produce that sister! Where would you be likely to find yourself then? If it is wrong for you to take money through a faked appeal, is it less wrong for a Company to do it? I say it is infinitely *more* wrong for it to set such an example to the nursing profession. No, while such things happen there *never* can be unity in the profession. For there are other money changers besides those in the Temple at Jerusalem, and we should be false to the Christian faith if we did not imitate the example set to us there and fight for all we are worth to overthrow the tables of the money changers who introduce such methods of obtaining money into the profession of nursing; false, too, did we not fight with all the strength that is in us to keep our profession clean and true, and its honour above reproach." (Loud applause.)

At the end of this free expression of opinion the guests were entertained with coffee, and left well satisfied with the opportunity for an exchange of ideals.

Mrs. Campbell Thomson, O.B.E., presided at the Annual meeting of the Royal British Nurses Association on Monday, June 21st, at the rooms of the Medical Society of London. A report of the proceedings will appear in our next issue.

The Annual Conference of the I.S.T.M. is being held in London this week, from June 24th to 26th inclusive, opening at Mortimer Hall, 93, Mortimer Street, at 11 a.m. on June 24th, with an address on "The Art of Healing," by Professor Arthur Keith.

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