

LEAGUE NEWS.

LEAGUE OF ST. JOHN'S HOUSE NURSES.

A meeting of the League of St. John's House Nurses was held in London on February 9th, the President, Miss M. Breay, in the Chair. The members present had the pleasure of welcoming Miss Mary Burr on her return to this country after her long absence abroad. Miss Burr was the first Hon. Secretary of the League, and its successful organization was largely due to her hard work.

It was agreed that a letter of sympathy should be sent to the Community of St. Margaret, East Grinstead, on the death of Sister Naomi, formerly President of the League.

RESOLUTIONS.

The following Resolutions, which were carried unanimously, have been forwarded to the Minister of Health :—

I.

The League of St. John's House Nurses in General Meeting assembled, has heard, with deep relief, that the determined attempt of certain members of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales to deprive nurses of the record of their certificates of training on the State Register has failed, and that the Council at its meeting on February 3rd voted, as agreed business, in favour of an amended Schedule explicitly providing that certificates, when possessed, shall be recorded. The League respectfully petitions the Minister of Health to sign this Rule as amended.

II.

The League of St. John's House Nurses also respectfully expresses its regret that, after members of the General Nursing Council had taken direct action, which held up the business of the Council for ten weeks, the Minister did not, as empowered by the Nurses' Registration Act, dissolve the Council, and give the Registered Nurses an opportunity of electing their own direct representatives.

The following Resolution, also carried unanimously, has been sent to those members of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, who, so far as practicable, carried on the business of the Council during the recent strike :—

The League of St. John's House Nurses desires to express its sincere thanks to those members of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales who, during the recent *impasse*, acted constitutionally, and carried on the duties they had undertaken, so that the nurses' interests might be prejudicially affected as little as possible. They assure these members that they have their present gratitude, as they will also have their future confidence.

After tea, during which the members thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity of meeting old friends, Councillor Beatrice Kent gave a most interesting address on Nursing in Prisons both in the United States of America and also in this country. She related how some years ago she had taken part in a deputation to the Home Secretary from the Penal Reform League, and had placed the need for a Prison Nursing Service before him, and her joy that this was now an accomplished fact.

NUNS AS NURSES.

The employment of nuns, who have only received a short training, as nurses, is one which occasions considerable feeling in Ireland, as does also the fact that they are not permitted to take their share of night duty; and recently letters from the Most Rev. Dr. Fogarty, Bishop of Killaloe, to the County Clare Board of Health, and from the Assistant-Secretary of the Irish Nurses and Midwives' Union, published in the *Clare Champion*, throw considerable light on the situation.

The Bishop wrote to the County Clare Board of Health :—

"I have no objection to the Sisters of Mercy assuming full control of the Central Home, but I cannot allow them to undertake night duty there, and for these reasons: (a) It is against a general regulation made on this matter by the Bishops of Ireland; (b) it makes impossible for the nuns certain spiritual exercises essential for the maintenance of their religious life; (c) there is no greater necessity for it now than at any time since the nuns took charge of the Workhouse Hospital. Therefore, the statement of your committee that there is no other alternative but dismissal is to me unintelligible.

"The desire of your committee to get rid of the nuns is, I fear, a bad omen. It is not for gain or pleasure nuns undertake the care of the poor and infirm, but for Christian charity. We know what these workhouse hospitals were, and the conditions of the sick poor in them before the nuns took charge. When the advisers of your committee have turned out the nuns, and staffed the place with young lay nurses, God help the poor helpless old people that shall be carted there from all parts of the county to rot neglected and uncared for by Divine love."

We do not presume to offer an opinion as to what spiritual exercises are essential for the maintenance of the religious life of the nuns. Of that the Bishop is the judge, but we do say that if those spiritual exercises are incompatible with the discharge of their duties to the patients—at night as well as in the day—then these should be relinquished. Moreover, we venture to remind the Bishop that he is the Chief Shepherd not only of the Religious in his diocese but of the young lay nurses also. What will the feelings of those nurses be when they read in the public Press the opinion of their Bishop of their work for the sick? It is certainly not calculated to inspire them with any high ideals. Moreover, if night duty is too difficult an ordeal for those who have all the support of the religious life, why should it be imposed exclusively on "young lay nurses." If the sick are to be efficiently nursed it is certain that some one must nurse them by night as well as by day, and the nuns should take their share of this duty.

The Irish Nurses and Midwives' Union protest against "the totally unjustifiable and uncalled-for insinuations against trained lay nurses" contained in the Bishop's letter. They consider that *all* nurses, whether religious or lay, should undergo

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