

which shall in the first place help to build up Nurses' Councils in those countries which do not now possess any nursing organisation at all, which shall afford to those countries the information acquired in England and America in the progress and development of our work, aiding them with our experience, helping them to avoid the difficulties which we have met.

"I beg, therefore, to propose:—

"That steps be taken to organise an International Council of Nurses."

This was seconded from the chair by the late Miss Isla Stewart, then Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, and President of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, supported by Miss M. Huxley, the pioneer of higher education for Nurses in Ireland, and carried by acclamation.

The nucleus of a Committee was then formed, and at its meeting on the following day a very representative Committee, representative of nurses in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, New South Wales, Victoria, Holland, Cape Colony, and Denmark was formed.

A Draft Constitution was subsequently drawn up and submitted to members of the Provisional Committee unable to be present, and adopted in 1900.

Professional Membership Basic Principle.

From the first membership has been open to any National Council of Nurses, formed of representative societies and institutions of nurses, provided that their constitution be in harmony with the basis of the Constitution of the International Council of Nurses, that is that they are composed of professional nurses. The National Councils, in their turn, gather up the Associations of Graduate Nurses, and thus is formed a strong body of representative nursing opinion wherever nursing is organised, as each National Council has the right to send four delegates to the Triennial Meeting of the Grand Council of the International Council.

Further, the Constitution provides that "in all countries where a National Council of Nurses is not already organised or federated with the International Council, some representative nurse shall be elected by the Executive Committee to represent her country as Hon. Vice-President of that country in the International Council, until such time as a National Council shall be fully organised and eligible for membership in the International Council."

No Rule is laid down as to the extent of the training which nurses must have before their National Councils are eligible for admission to the International. Provided that the National Councils are composed exclusively of Trained Nurses, and their Constitution is in harmony with that of the International Council, each National Council is left perfectly free to decide its own professional and domestic problems.

The provisions in the Constitution of the International Council referred to above will, when

understood, provide an answer to points raised by Miss Olmsted in the course of her article as to the power of the International Council of Nurses to meet the need of many European countries for better nursing, and fuller organisation of nurses recognised since the Great War.

Miss Olmsted writes: "What an immense step forward would be realised if all the knowledge and experience available could be brought to bear upon the creation of a more perfect understanding between nurses of all nations with a view to the development of a more efficient nursing service for the peoples of the world! If a simple and effective organisation could be devised to carry into the remotest corners of every country a word of stimulation to the friends of nursing, and a message of hope and encouragement to the pioneers of the profession, what an increase, not only in numbers but in efficiency, would accrue to our world-wide nursing strength. The services which members of our profession can render in countries which are now for the first time demanding trained nurses need be limited only by their own vision."

She goes on to speak of the International Course in Public Health Nursing organised by the League of Red Cross Societies, which has already trained 48 nurses from thirty-one different countries in its International Course in Public Health Nursing. "Each one of them has the same aim, to build up a better nursing service for the people of her country. Those who have watched this experiment can have no doubt of the need and value of a strong international link between nurses of all countries, irrespective of the present strength of the different national nursing associations, which are naturally weaker in the countries which most need help."

She refers to the increasing number of international organisations which are now assuming responsibility for the development of schools for nursing, and for public health nursing, in various countries, but says, "No machinery exists for combining their different experiences, and co-ordinating their activities. There does exist, however, an International Council of Nurses. . . ."

Here, let it be said, that the machinery for which Miss Olmsted is seeking is ready to hand.

1. It provides 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.

2. In cases where a National Council of Nurses is not organised it provides for the appointment of a representative nurse to represent her country as an Hon. Vice-President in the International Council.

3. Although membership of the Council is restricted to trained nurses, and voting power in the Grand Council and at Congresses is naturally limited to those in affiliation with it, the widest opportunities have always been afforded not only to trained nurses to attend as fraternal delegates, but to doctors, and others interested in nursing to participate in these gatherings. At the last Congress, held in Cologne in 1912, the nurses of

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