

THE LABOUR VIEW.

The Labour Party aimed at securing the most effective service for the community. If it could be proved that this was best given by the voluntary hospitals then it would not demand State control, but he questioned the soundness of a hospital system on a voluntary basis with support from public funds, but outside public control.

The openers of the debate on Monday—Dr. Somerville Hastings, M.P., in the morning voicing the Labour view, and Lord Knutsford in the afternoon the voluntary hospital view—both put forward the opinions which they represented in speeches on a very high level. Dr. Hastings contended that experience has shown that when a social service has passed the experimental stages, and become a proved public necessity, it is best undertaken by a Public Authority.

THE VOLUNTARY HOSPITAL VIEW.

Lord Knutsford, with equal earnestness, pleaded that the only failure of Voluntary Hospitals is that they have not sufficient beds, or sufficient money to run sufficient beds, and that the best plan is to strengthen the voluntary hospitals so as to make their organisation capable of giving the best treatment to all who cannot afford to pay for what they need.

APRIL 29TH.

Mr. G. P. Blizard, who presided at the Morning Session on the second day, said that the Labour Party did not object to doctors who attended patients in hospitals receiving State pay. They wanted efficient management, and they would go far in the direction of placing the management of the hospitals in the hands of the doctors themselves. He hoped one result of the Conference would be the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the Hospital Problem.

THE DOCTORS' VIEW.

Mr. Bishop Harman, F.R.C.S. (Chairman of the Hospitals' Committee of the British Medical Association), stated that there were only two bodies with defined policies in regard to hospitals—that of the Labour Party, which was revolutionary; and that of the British Medical Association, which was evolutionary. That of the B.M.A. was the development of the existing practice of State Aid where it could be best employed, and local, independent and voluntary action in that part which came closest to the daily life of the people. The policy of the Labour Party had met with little support amongst doctors, who were so saturated with the triumph of evolution in physical and mental development, both in the individual and the race, that revolutionary methods had little charm for them.

THE STATE AND RATE-AIDED HOSPITALS.

Dr. John Buchan (Medical Officer of Health for Bradford), who opened the afternoon discussion, said that fifty years ago there were no State Aided Hospitals, whereas they now formed 75 per cent. of the hospital accommodation of the country. Without a reform of the Poor Law, long overdue, they could not have a satisfactory solution of the hospital question.

Resolutions were carried, declaring that the accommodation, equipment and finance of hospitals were inadequate, and must be supplemented; that the geographical distribution of hospitals was uneven, leading to overlapping and lack of co-ordination; that there should be closer relationship between the voluntary hospitals and hospitals provided by local authorities and between the hospitals and private medical practitioners; that some form of public assistance was essential; and that the development of the hospital system should be directed to preserving what was best in the voluntary system. Also the Conference demanded that Poor Law Infirmaries should be thrown open to all citizens and all taint of the Poor Law removed.

GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

The Forty-sixth Meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales was held at the Ministry of Health, Whitehall, S.W., on Friday, April 11th, Sir Wilmot P. Herringham, K.C.M.G., C.B. (Chairman of the Council), presiding.

CORRESPONDENCE.

LETTER FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

The minutes of the last meeting having been confirmed, a letter, signed by Mr. L. G. Brock, from the Ministry of Health, dated March 28th, 1924, which appeared on the printed Agenda, was received. Mr. Brock wrote:—

"I am directed by the Minister of Health to refer to your letter of the 24th March, from which he regrets to learn that the Council are not in a position to submit their proposals regarding the permanent staff as was contemplated in the correspondence of the 17th and 18th October last. In view, however, of the considerations set out in your letter of the 24th, the Minister is prepared to agree to this matter being deferred for a further period of three months. I am accordingly to state that the sanctions given to the present staffing arrangements of the General Nursing Council are extended to July 1st next, but I am to request that the Council will submit their proposals for the permanent staffing of the office well before that date, in order that the position may be fully reviewed and the new arrangements settled without fail by July 1st."

REBATE ALLOWED.

THE CHAIRMAN reported a letter from the Solicitor to the Council stating that the assessment made on the Council, as income tax, for 1923 and 1924, against which the Council had appealed, had been withdrawn. The Chairman congratulated the Council on the success of its appeal, and stated that the rebate obtained was £417 18s.

LABOUR PARTY AND THE HOSPITAL PROBLEM.

A letter from the Executive Committee of the Labour Party inviting the Council to appoint four representatives to attend a Conference to be held on the Hospital Problem on April 28th and 29th at the Caxton Hall at 10 a.m. was considered, the chief question to be discussed being whether further State aid should be given for hospital accommodation.

THE CHAIRMAN said there was no question that representatives should be appointed. He suggested that two doctors and two nurses should be sent.

MISS DU SAUTOY, who apparently considered that the medical profession should be represented at the Conference through nominees of its own governing body and societies, and not through the General Nursing Council, inquired whether the General Medical Council had been invited to send representatives.

THE CHAIRMAN said that no doubt it would be, and mentioned also that invitations had been sent, amongst others, to the Federation of Medical and Allied Societies, the British Hospitals Association, and the British Medical Association.

MISS SEYMOUR YAPP thought it very important to accept the invitation, and moved that this be done. The motion was seconded by Miss WISE. Miss Musson considered that the representatives chosen should represent the voluntary hospitals. The motion was carried, and the CHAIRMAN and SIR JENNER VERRALL (who was not present) were appointed, and, failing one of them, the REV. G. B. CRONSHAW, together with Miss E. M. MUSSON and Miss A. M. BUSHBY, and failing either Miss G. COWLIN.

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