

best coin for the exchange of service is not a pound note or a golden sovereign but the coinage of dignity, respect, fellowship, and companionship. We can put that before us as a great ideal that will be fruitful in society perhaps after we have gone, but it is our duty to do our best to make it more real in our social relationships than it is now. Status is just as important for the mental, moral, and spiritual health of the Nursing Profession as pay. (Applause).

The Labour movement is not a pettifogging thing as some imagine. It is not solely a question of factories, mines, and workshops, important and essential as these are. We want to re-adjust social services, we want a new spirit, a new mentality, and a new courage in relation to the great professions and public Services. I leave you in the hope that when you have finished your deliberations the result will prove to be of great benefit to the whole community whom you have served with such conspicuous goodness of heart. (Prolonged applause).

#### A QUESTION OF GREAT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE.

The President of the Session (the Right Hon. Frederick O. Roberts, M.P.), said that when those responsible approached the question before them, they tried to understand that the questions they were dealing with were of great public importance.

Some people were afraid of the application of Trade Union principles to the Nursing Profession, but the principle of collective bargaining was well established, and some of the highest professions had accepted it for a long time. There need be no fear.

Mr. MacDonald had referred to the very devoted service of the Nursing Profession. Generally speaking the Nurses had been rendering A1 service: they had no right to expect that service to be rendered under C3 conditions.

Mention should be made at this Conference of one no longer with us, Miss Maude MacCallum, who had passed away before she saw the full fruition of the devoted work she had done according to the principles which were in her heart.

#### SICK NURSING SERVICES.

Dr. Somerville Hastings, who opened the discussion on "Sick Nursing Services," said that the Labour Party was using the interval while it was out of power in perfecting the system of its policy for the future. It might be asked why the Labour Party without a request from any large or representative body of nurses to interest itself in the Nursing Profession thought fit to do so. There were many indications that all was not well with the Profession.

The Report from the Select Committees on the deficiency of recruits showed that there were very few people who had not passed through some illness, and they must realise, therefore, how important is an efficient supply of nurses.

There was a need for Preliminary Education. In proof, however, that the problem was not peculiar to this country, the Dean of Yale University School of Nursing had asked for 6,000 recruits, and had only secured 115 with a College education. The Report was a consumers' report to a large extent. Those who took the matter up did so because they felt that the work needed to be done. It was impossible for any party concerned with matters of public health to overlook the importance to the community of an adequate supply of trained and efficient nurses.

Mrs. Paul (Professional Union of Trained Nurses) said that in organising a Trade Union Miss MacCallum gave rise to criticism, but it was her Christianity which impelled her to take this step so that the strong might help the weak.

Dr. Salter, M.P., paid a high tribute to the work of Queen's Nurses, but submitted that the system was entirely inadequate to meet the needs of the community. In some districts the nurses were grossly overworked and entirely incapable of meeting the needs of the situation. Most

Committees were harassed for lack of funds, with the result that undesirable methods might be adopted to obtain them.

He, himself, had been asked to associate himself with gambles, draws, low-class variety concerts, street processions, with grotesque representations, and passing the hat round in public houses. These methods debased and degraded the work, and he believed the time had come when district nursing should be transferred from a voluntary organisation to the more adequate control of the Local Authorities. Then these disgusting methods of raising funds could be abolished, and there could be public recognition of collective responsibility for the sick.

There was a growing demand for massage available in the home. That home massage service did not exist, and he saw no prospect whatever of its doing so under a voluntary service.

Mrs. Richmond, Q.V.J.I., thought that the question of raising money had been somewhat misunderstood. It was always open to a public authority to help support a District Nursing Association by giving grants. The support of the nurses depended upon the goodwill of the community.

Dr. Marion Phillips here interposed to beg the delegates to give their opinions on the specific points in the Report.

Mr. G. Deighton, of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers, said the Conference was getting away from the points under discussion, and strongly advocated a protected uniform (which he evidently did not know that Nurses have under the Nurses' Registration Acts). It would, he said, give the dignity and status for which Mr. Ramsay MacDonald pleaded. He related a case known to him, in which a kitchen-maid left a private mental institution on a Friday, and returned the following Monday as a nurse. Of another in which a girl had been a cleaner for three years, and the Matron told her it was quite time she was made a nurse. When she replied that she would not be competent for this, the Matron informed her that it did not matter. She would be doing just the same sort of work, only she would have a few patients to look after.

He pleaded for Preliminary Education, better pay, shorter hours.

Miss Cowlin, General Nursing Council, said the profession was up against the problem that at present there was not sufficient accommodation in the hospitals. They could not fulfil their obligations. How many schools which called themselves training schools had, she asked, separate appropriations in the hospital budget.

Mrs. Atherton Earp said she would be delighted to see a 48 hours' week. When she trained it was mostly an 84 hours' week.

Miss Isabel Macdonald, Royal British Nurses' Association, spoke of the generosity of nurses in support of their demand for self-government, and for better conditions, and instanced the fact that when Miss MacCallum obtained £500 damages against a paper for libel, she threw the whole amount into the work for nursing organisation.

Dr. Bygott, M.O.H., emphasised the need for the very best nurses in Rural Areas and said they were not getting them. The women educationally, intellectually, and physically were not what were required.

Miss Beatrice Kent, President Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council, spoke of her experiences as a Borough Councillor and said that when it was their duty to select women for health work, it was quite usual for the one with the lowest qualification to be chosen.

Mr. Arthur Hayday said there was general agreement in the Conference that the supply of nurses was inadequate, and the conditions under which they worked were bad. They had no right to impose upon the young woman who entered on a career of nursing because of her gentle nature.

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