

Miss M. E. Sparshott (Lady Superintendent, Royal Infirmary, Manchester), considered that a probationer should not enter a general hospital for training before twenty-one years of age, as girls were immature before that. It did not matter what the social status of a young woman was, provided she had the mother instinct.

Mr. E. B. Turner, who said he could go back to the days when Sarah Gamp was hardly dead in her coffin, and anything female was good enough to hang a uniform upon, questioned what would happen if nurses, in a trade union, downed thermometers? He told of a girl seen by him in a Lock Hospital, and virulently infectious, who took her discharge, and the next time he came across her she was masquerading as a nurse of sick people.

Miss Cox Davies (College of Nursing, Ltd.), spoke of its numbers, and claimed that it had effected various reforms. She said further that trade unionism did not appeal to nurses, and their trade union had not a large membership.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick (President of the British College of Nurses), said that nurses had reason to thank the Labour Party. When the first Nurses' Registration Bill was introduced into the House of Commons in 1904 and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was appealed to, he at once consented to back it, and the Party supported Major Barnett's Bill in the House of Commons. What the nursing profession needed was self-government and self-determination; but it took thirty-two years to get the Nursing Acts passed, because of the opposition of Hospital Governors and their Matrons, and the opposition to this necessary reform cost the nurses £30,000. It was a scandalous record, and now, though a Nurses' Registration Act had been in force for seven years in this country, and provided for prescribed schemes of training, a definite scheme, to which all training schools must conform, had not yet been enforced. Also self-government had still to be realised. The General Nursing Council was weak and futile, and to a considerable extent was composed of medical big-wigs and leading Matrons of Training Schools not in sympathy with the Registered Nurses or prepared to consult with them. The purity of the State Register of Nurses was in the keeping of this Council, but they had not protected the public from a nurse proved guilty of theft, in a court of law, but persisted in retaining her name on the Register.

In summarising the Discussion, Dr. Somerville Hastings said it tended to show the necessity for bold and outstanding changes, and that the Nursing Problem was very much part of the General Problem of the country.

#### Afternoon Session.

Mrs. Sidney Webb presided over the Afternoon Session, and congratulated the Conference on its representative character. She was, she said, particularly delighted to preside over a Nursing Conference, for the public owed the greatest homage to nurses. The professional nurse was the kindest and best of women, and helped most when the trials of life were greatest.

The Report before them was essential to the producer, but she would like to take it up mainly from the point of view of the consumer. We refer in our Editorial to Mrs. Sidney Webb's proposal to substitute the words "purely vocational" for "Trade Union."

The openers of discussions in the afternoon were Mr. George Gibson (General Secretary, of the National Asylum Workers' Union) on "Nurses employed by the State," and Miss A. Sayle (Women Sanitary Inspectors and Health Visitors' Association) on "Public Health and Preventive Services."

Mr. Gibson laid down as axioms (1) that a profession is worth the value it sets upon itself; and (2) that if nurses wished for salvation they must get it for themselves. He did not mind whether it was stated that the nursing profession must be organised on Trade Union lines or on

purely vocational lines, so long as its Society was officered by nurses.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick emphasised the need for rank for Nurses in the Navy and Military Nursing Services. This had so far not been accorded them, and while an orderly must stand at attention when a medical officer came into the ward, he might, and had on occasions been known to, smoke in the face of the Sister.

Mrs. Fenwick was the last speaker in the Debate, and rose to make clear the position of nurses in their organisations. Some stood firmly for vocational associations, and others preferred to include the laity and medical practitioners in their organisations.

We consider that the Nursing Profession is much indebted to the Labour Party for organising the Conference, and for the care with which it has drafted the Report under discussion.

We note with surprise that, though a number of Associations sent Nurses as Delegates, eleven of whom took part in the discussions, *The Times*, which devotes considerable space to reporting the Conference does not even mention the presence of one nurse. Surely when a Conference is specially called to consider the affairs of a profession, the views of its members are worthy of mention.

The following trained nurses took part in the discussions:

The British College of Nurses.—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President, and Mrs. Lancelot Andrews, Member of Council.  
The College of Nursing, Ltd.—Miss R. Cox Davies, Miss Hester Viney.

The General Nursing Council for England and Wales.—Miss Gertrude Cowlin.

The Professional Union of Trained Nurses.—Mrs. Atherton Earp, Mrs. Winifrede Paul.

Royal British Nurses' Association.—Miss M. Breay and Miss Isabel Macdonald.

Royal Infirmary, Manchester.—Miss M. E. Sparshott.

The Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council.—Miss Beatrice Kent, President.

### CANADA HOUSE.

The present time, when so much interest centres in our Dominions beyond the seas, appears the psychological moment to give some description of the Empire's homes in London, where our colleagues from overseas naturally gravitate when they visit this country, and which are but little known to many Londoners.

If the fine courtesy and the kindness we met with at Canada House are, in any degree whatever, a reflection of what visitors and emigrants experience when they enter the confines of this great Dominion beyond the seas, then all we can say is that we look forward to the time when our good fortune shall make it possible for us to cross these seas to Canada.

The London administration makes a wonderful impression upon a visitor, very largely because of the perfect courtesy one meets with in every possible sense, but also because of the elegance and general artistic beauty of its setting: the feeling one gets everywhere is one of a harmony and beauty that bespeaks fine taste and fine perceptions, on the part of those responsible, as well as a knowledge, too, on their part, of the fact that the Dominion does not merely rely upon a great edifice, however magnificent, for the maintenance of its prestige in the Empire capital.

Canada House, which has been aptly described as the supreme model of present day "good manners in architecture" is located on the western side of Trafalgar Square, described by Sir Robert Peel as the finest site in Europe, and facing the Square, has a fine view of the National Gallery, the Nelson Monument, and St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

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