

Nurses should also be represented on the Council of King Edward's Hospital Fund for London.

Such instances could easily be multiplied.

In such cases let me commend the policy of the British College of Nurses, which is to decline invitations to give evidence before a Committee on matters concerning trained nurses when there is no nurse upon it to help to weigh the evidence.

It is only eighteen years since trained nurses were constituted a profession by Act of Parliament, but now it is our duty to make ourselves felt and heard on matters concerning which we have knowledge of special value.

I desire, in conclusion, to place before this great International Congress of Nurses the following points:—

1. That those of us who possess the Parliamentary Franchise should exercise our privileges as citizens with care and a sense of responsibility.
2. That we endeavour to secure the return to Parliament of State Registered Nurses.
3. That we endeavour to secure the election or appointment of Registered Nurses on public bodies and departmental Committees concerned with nursing and Public Health, and by all means to make their expert knowledge and influence available for the benefit of the community.

DISCUSSION.

The Chairman, after thanking Miss Breay for her paper, invited its discussion.

Miss Wilson, of New Zealand, speaking as the representative of a very young country, said that the franchise for women in New Zealand had proved useful to the Nursing Profession, where the Act for the Registration of Nurses was passed in 1901. Quite a number of Nurses were on Hospital Boards, and with their professional knowledge they had been able to do useful work.

Miss Lambie, of New Zealand, said that she had been very interested in Miss Breay's paper. She agreed that Nurses could do useful work in Parliament and on public bodies. It was also very necessary that those persons standing for election to Parliament should be interviewed by Registered Nurses in the constituencies in which they were candidates.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, speaking of representation of Nurses in Parliament, said that they could not do better than prepare themselves for such representation. When the Nurses' Registration Bill was before the House of Commons it took years of hard work in the lobby before they could get members to understand the question and the Nurses' point of view in regard to it. Moreover, only a comparatively few Nurses—some 3,000 out of at least 50,000—joined the Society working for this reform, and organised to obtain it, a proportion of whom did most valuable work in the Lobby.

The House of Lords was easier to deal with than the House of Commons. The members appreciated the points put to them quickly. They were free men unhampered by economic pressure, they realised the implications of the Nurses' Bill, and when it was introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Amptill (in 1908) they carried it without a division at any stage.

Nurses would do well to study the example of the medical profession who organised to get medical members returned to Parliament and then arranged a Committee within the House to make their influence felt. So long as Nurses were without representation in Parliament, legislation affecting their profession might be introduced of which they disapproved and there was no one in the House to influence members from within, and thus undesirable legislation might be carried through unopposed, as had recently been done in connection with the Midwives Act.

Nurses should also endeavour to obtain representation on public bodies. On two occasions the British College of Nurses had endeavoured to get a Registered Nurse co-opted on to the Hospitals and Medical Services Committee of the London County Council. That Council is an elected body; but the chairmen of committees have the right to co-opt persons to fill vacancies, and it seemed only reasonable that as this Committee deals with many thousands of Nurses that a Nurse should be co-opted when the opportunity arose. On neither occasion, however, was a Registered Nurse co-opted.

Mrs. Fenwick expressed the opinion that it was the duty of members of the Nursing Profession, as good citizens, to safeguard the public interest. Nursing was now a Statutory Profession. The clergy, doctors, and members of the Bar, were all represented in Parliament, and Nurses should be also; but they would get nothing until they organised with the special purpose of obtaining such representation. She hoped that in the near future this matter would receive support from intelligent Registered Nurses in England.

Miss Garnsey, Australia, said it was very necessary to get Nurses interested in their own profession; they could not persuade people to act effectively on matters affecting it if they were content to sit back and take what was given them. What was needed was a number of Nurses as Members of Parliament. Women had to learn to stand on their own feet. Nurses, in Australia, were not represented on hospital boards. She had spent a great deal of time in thinking about these problems and would be very glad to help in solving them.

Mrs. Stewart Moore, Great Britain, a retired Nurse, thought that there was a demand for Nurses on hospital boards. On her local hospital a Nurse would only have to say she was willing to act upon the board to be welcomed.

Miss S. A. Villiers, Great Britain, said that after retiring from active hospital work she was invited, on the recommendation of the High Sheriff for Hertfordshire, to serve as a Justice of the Peace. She was on the bench when the Children's Act came into force, and women were needed to help to administer this. Women were also needed as visitors in mental hospitals and in prisons. There was a great need for them in some counties, and she thought that any suitable women who volunteered for this work would be much welcomed.

Miss Woodall, Great Britain, said that in Public Health work, Nurses were faced with many questions, including the wages and housing problems. If only they asked a little harder they might, perhaps, ask directly through Parliament concerning their solution. They should try to get their own representative in Parliament.

Miss Adine Wood then gave a résumé in French of the points made in the discussion, after which a resolution of thanks was passed to the Chairman for presiding, and the meeting then terminated.

At the close of the meeting the nurses hurried away, some 400 to the House of the Royal British Nurses' Association where the President of the Association, the Princess Arthur of Connaught, herself a State Registered Nurse, charmed all the guests with her gracious interest and kindness. Later there were Receptions at the College of Nursing, Henrietta Street, W., at the Victoria Hotel, Northumberland Avenue, given by the School Nurses' Social Union, of which we give an account in another column, and at 10 p.m. the most enjoyable Reception of which we published an account in our last issue, given by Sir Kingsley Wood, Minister of Health, on behalf of the Government, at Lancaster House, with its lovely gardens attended by over a thousand Congress Members.

So ended the first day of the Congress.

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