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## EDITORIAL.

### THE VALUE OF COLLECTIVE STRENGTH WITH INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY OF OPINION.

Organisation gives the worker the bargaining power which is lacking in an individual. This power is weakened in proportion to the multiplicity of these organisations. If, however, these organisations, distinct and separate as they might be, unite in a federation with a common bond and aims, this weakness is turned to greater strength.

We possess just such a federation in the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland which was founded in 1904 by our own illustrious founder, the late Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, and has represented nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the International Council of Nurses for 43 years.

The National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland claims a federated membership of approximately 46,900. This would appear to be a very modest estimate of their strength which is presumably the combined strength of the trained nurse membership of its member bodies. According to the figures given by the Royal College of Nursing, an affiliated member body of the National Council of Nurses, their membership is 46,000 general trained nurses; while in the report from Great Britain in the National Reports of the International Council of Nurses published in 1947, the figures given of the nine new associations to have joined the National Council since 1937 total 2,339. Yet we hear there are 48 member bodies. It would almost appear that the figures published and the *per capita* membership given to the National Council are two different ones. Moreover, how many member bodies do in fact (as does one Hospital League to my own personal knowledge, though I am happy to state that this is to be rectified) not record their true membership for the payment of *per capita* fees to the National Council, thereby not only depriving the National Council of income, but depriving it also of the knowledge of its strength?

The duplication or even triplication of membership that seems such a menace in the eyes of many, is surely no worse than the boggy of childhood, chimerical when faced. If some wish to have their *per capita* fee paid more than once, then greater is the income of the National Council, and greater the individual's voting power, but her professional ideas and ideals do not alter. Surely there is no nurse who begrudges the National Council its extra shillings, and if she does then her own remedy is obvious. Let those who like to pay more

than once do so—they are invariably the more actively interested people and deserve the duplication of voting power that comes through double membership.

There are 188,352 trained nurses on the General Nursing Council's Register, so that even a generous estimate of the true strength of the National Council would show a very large proportion of nurses to be unconnected with any Association. It would be very difficult to estimate how many, since, no doubt, quite a large number on the Register are no longer actively interested, nor even, in fact, actively working in the profession.

A great deal of benefit would be derived by the profession if a clear picture could be obtained of the actual representation on the National Council, which has, probably, a far greater negotiating power than is realised. It is very important that it should be known and, when known, that it should be used.

An entirely new organisation has been formed by Administrative Officers called the National Federation of Hospital Officers. Its members are to be drawn from administrators, clerical and professional staffs in hospitals. Already almoners, physiotherapists and nurses have been asked to join. Since, by its very constitution, this new organisation could not affiliate to the National Council, it would be a very great pity if members of nursing staffs join, unless they join, in addition, one of the already existing associations having an affiliation to the National Council.

Let it be hoped that those members of the nursing profession, who have already been approached by the new organisation, have carefully considered the immense importance to the profession of the collective strength, with individual liberty of opinion, which lies in their federation of associations, the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

D. de M. W.

### OBJECTS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES:

1. To promote mutual understanding and unity between Associations of Nurses in Great Britain.
2. Through affiliation with the International Council of Nurses to acquire knowledge of nursing conditions in every country, to encourage a spirit of sympathy with the nurses of other nations, and to afford facilities for National hospitality.
3. To promote the educational, the economic, and other interests of the Nursing profession.
4. To increase the usefulness of Trained Nurses as a social factor.

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