

WOMEN'S SECTION

British Columbia Women's Institutes

Motto—"FOR HOME AND COUNTRY"

INSTITUTE "DORMICE" SERIOUSLY DISCUSSED.

Closing Session of Women's Institutes Conference Discusses Many Problems.

A most successful session of the Vancouver Island Women's Institutes terminated Sept. 8th with the final meeting of the delegates in connection with the second annual conference. The meeting convened at the Y. M. C. A., Miss Ravenhill, who made such a splendid chairman throughout the conference, making time and opportunity for the discussion of many of the outstanding problems which are common to all institutes, and for the outlining of some suggestions for their alleviation.

One of the principal matters debated in this connection had reference to non-attendant and non-working members, the "dormice" of the movement. The general expression of opinion was that such members, who paid subscriptions but took no further interest in the institute in their district, were a drag on the organization to which they belonged. Something had to be done to make them realize their responsibilities as members, and to encourage them to attend the meetings.

Miss Ravenhill was of opinion that in the first place the work must be organized so that there would be interest for women of all types. But in becoming members women should also have it made clear to them that they in their turn assumed a responsibility.

Finally, it was agreed, and a resolution passed to this effect, that the superintendent of institutes and the advisory board be asked to draw up a member's application form which would impose on the intending member some obligation toward the organization with which she was affiliating.

The matter of associate members was also brought forward, and the suggestion made that a recommendation be made to the advisory board that girls be eligible for membership of the Women's Institutes at the age of 18.

After a resolution favoring the methods of the Consumers' league, as set forth by Mrs. Kemp in her able paper of the previous day, the meeting adjourned, delicious refreshments being served in the Y. W. C. A. dining hall before the conference left the building. Miss Jones, Miss Steed and Miss Kennedy, who are to visit the Women's Institutes in the Island respectively to lecture and give demonstrations in home nursing work, were present at the meeting, a model equipment being demonstrated to the members.

Problem of Nursing.

"The Nursing Problem in Rural Districts and Its Solution" formed the topic of a very interesting address given at the afternoon session by Miss Ard MacKenzie, head of the Victorian Order of Nurses, who is at present visiting in the city. As the establishment of nursing homes in the rural districts was now one of the most pressing undertakings of the order, the opportunity

to address the conference of Women's Institutes was of mutual satisfaction. Miss MacKenzie outlined the rural nursing scheme which has been so favorably viewed in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, bringing to the isolated farming communities, as it does, a much-needed institution for the care of maternity and other cases.

One of the first things to be done, the speaker pointed out, was for any district considering the question of having a nurse to decide first whether the nurse was really required. The summoning of a public meeting to discuss the matter would be the best way to decide such a matter; if it was felt that there was an imperative need, then a committee should then be formed to debate further the question of ways and means. Victorian Order nurses in the country operated over districts up to twenty miles. Headquarters, therefore, had to be as central as possible, and in their work the nurse had to combine with her care of a continuous case very often district nursing as well, staying with the continuous case two or three weeks if need be.

"The district nurse is for the greatest use of the community," said the representative of the order. "The nurse is a public servant, and is intended for the greatest use of all the people in her district."

Financing of Nursing Home.

Referring to the expense of establishing a nurse in a district, Miss MacKenzie pointed out that the nurse's salary was \$45 per month. There would be in addition to this an initial expense to any district in furnishing the nurse's bag at a cost of \$17, in addition to which would be the cost of fitting out with bandages, dressings, etc. Roughly estimated, between \$700 and \$900 a year would cover everything. Transportation was not a heavy expenditure. Districts undertaking to establish a nurse should have a committee who would fix the nurse's fees for continuous or visiting cases, the scale to be fixed in accordance with the needs of the district. In cases where the people were poor, the fees should be remitted. Masonic lodges, Elks, heads of industries, the municipalities, and other bodies were nearly always ready to give something toward the establishment of the nurse.

In one place in Saskatchewan the nurse was supported entirely by the municipality, which had seen the great need for her services. Annual subscriptions among the settlers made one of the preferred means of raising the necessary funds. There was also the Duchess of Connaught's fund. The Victorian Order of Nurses was a mutual aid association. There was no charity about it. The Duchess of Connaught fund belonged to Vancouver as well as to any other parts of Canada, the Order being the guardians with the responsibility of seeing that the fund got back to the place where it was most needed. If any district feeling the need of the nursing home was faced with the problem of maintenance the Victorian order was ready to consider assisting from the Duchess of Connaught fund.

In concluding, Miss MacKenzie referred to the help which she had received through

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