I find that there is the greatest amount of confusion about the work of the American women's hospitals in foreign countries. There is an idea that the work represents a chain of hospitals in the United States and little is generally understood of what is meant. I find that, owing to our great modesty and lack of publicity, a small group of women from New York City—some four or five—have been advertised throughout the United States through the Publicity Department of the National Suffrage Association, and that everybody thinks that the American Women's Hospitals' Service is attached to that group of five women. A great many people don't want me to mention the fact—but these women should be connected with the American Women's Hospitals. They belong to the National Association, and, instead of cooperating with it, they want to get ahead of the National Association and their War Service Committee and have adopted the name, "Over Seas Hospitals," which term I rather think was suggested by the Publicity Department of the National Suffrage Association. They have determined to get "over seas" first. They call themselves the Over Seas Hospital and everybody thinks we are tributary to the Over Seas Hospital. They advertise that they are going to have a chain of hospitals, and it is absolutely untrue. They are not going to have any chain of hospitals, and they have not hospitals now. They have one hospital, a civilian relief hospital for refugees, twenty miles southwest of Bordeaux. This unit was split. The women did not cooperate, because of lack of leadership, and only half of the members are working.

I belong to the Suffrage Association, and therefore have a right to say that I think this thing was fastened upon the National Suffrage Association without their clearly understanding what it represented. I do not think it represented a small group of dissatisfied doctors who wanted to outstrip their sisters. I, as a suffragist, say that I do not think that the National Suffrage Association should raise money throughout the United States and not have control of the expenditure of that money. I do not think
it is a fair or a square deal, and I would not hesitate to say it to
the President of the National Association or to the Honorary
President. I believe Dr. Shaw, the National President, would
agree with me that it is an unwise policy for a small group of women
to raise money as the Red Cross would raise money. Some women
on that unit are good women, but I believe they were deceived
when they joined the unit. This is particularly true of two for
whom I had the pleasure of writing their credentials. Twice she
has said in my office that they were going to do surgical work
among the wounded soldiers. I said, “You absolutely are not.
I have been to the same source as you have in Washington; I
have heard from the same authority that no such thing as our
doing military work at the present time is contemplated. You
have absolutely no right to represent yourselves in such service.”
Then she came back a second time and said they were going to
work under the French Government, that they had commissions
and rank and were going. I said, “Will you please show me your
commission? I don’t believe you have it or ever will have it.”
The fact is that that “Over Seas” unit which the Suffrage Asso-
ciation has advertised so largely—these women—have absolutely
no rank in any French Army or American Army and have absolute-
lly no commissions. Even in the Red Cross some of the
women do work which is quite equal to that of the men, but have
not the same position or rank. We hope, however, that this at
least will come about before long.

Now the National Association of Medical Women is an associa-
tion which, as Dr. Anna Shaw, the President, said, met with
obstacles every inch of the way in its formation. I will not stop
to give you the arguments against the Association. One was that
we separated ourselves from the men, working separately from
them. One condition for membership in this Association is that
we are members of the American Medical Association, in which
men and women work together. Each year we took up work
especially interesting to women. Every important thing that we
should know, we know. The object of the Association, I think,
is a good one and I personally did not hesitate to join it.

Just a year ago this Association was asked what the women
physicians would do, what war service they would render. Imme-
diately after that they thought they would be given the medical
and surgical work for which they had trained. They formed
what they called a “War Service Committee.” In order to shorten
the name the Committee was called The American Women’s
Hospitals, rather suggested by the Scottish Women’s Hospitals.
We thought we would do similar work. The President of the Asso-
Caroline M. Purnell

Association chose the Chairman of this War Service Committee, Dr. Rosalie Slaughter Morton. She chose certain members to form an Executive Committee. This Executive Committee mostly resided in New York City—they had to be together in order to transact important business—and then they formed a number of sub-committees. I think I am correct when I say that we have about twenty committees. I have been very closely associated with the Executive Committee. I was chairman of one of the sub-committees and it was necessary for me to report to the Executive Committee often. I think Dr. Morton had a very clear vision and she surrounded herself with very able women. Some of them I had not known before, but I certainly had the most unbounded respect for and confidence in that Committee. Dr. Crawford is one of the secretaries of the Committee. These women have sacrificed themselves incessantly for the cause of women physicians.

Now this War Service Committee stands for several things. One of their principles was the recognition of women physicians for equal service with men. They felt that civilian work was an important thing at home and abroad. They appointed committees to take care of the civilian relief work. They entered into their work more quickly because they were willing to do what they were permitted to do. Much of this work was among soldiers' dependents and in sending supplies abroad to the hospitals. There has been very little publicity of the work done. Lots of people ask, "Have you done anything?" We have done a great deal. We are a year old and I think we have a right to tell what we have done and to have a little publicity. We have organized in, I think, thirty-four States. That was a tremendous work. You would not realize how much opposition we met with in trying to organize for war service something that was going to help win the war. Some women said they were going to do one thing and nothing else. We have to have funds for administrative as well as for relief work, and Dr. Gertrude A. Walker, who is a famous woman for raising funds, came to our rescue and helped us arrange for a campaign the result of which was a neat and tidy sum. Out of this money the American Women's Hospitals will launch its first unit for civilian relief work. This unit is made up now and is complete with the exception of one or two nurses. It is very difficult to get nurses, since the Red Cross takes so many. We hope within the next week or two to get these women off, and they will comprise the American Women's Hospital Unit No. 1. We have found that the small unit is most in demand at the present time. When we first went into the work—and I think the Red Cross had the same idea—we felt that the need was for the large hospital; but, as a country
has been devastated, leaving homeless from 800 to 1000 people, it is better to have a small hospital with twenty-five or fifty beds and to have a chain of dispensaries from which the hospital can be fed. I believe we shall do much good in that way. Besides this unit we have Dr. Tallant, Professor in the College here; Dr. Getty, who graduated at the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania; Dr. Laura Hunt, of Bangor, Me., a graduate of Vassar and Johns Hopkins; and through the service we have some 345 women who have offered themselves for work, representing nearly every State in the Union. When the present unit leaves we will have sent over about 64 women to do civilian relief work. Dr. Dean, I believe, has gone; she is attached to a military hospital, but has no commission. Many of the women have distinguished themselves in their work. The American Women's Hospitals have sent over splendid women and their work is being recognized as first class. I feel that we have accomplished a great deal and we shall still do much more. We expect to have more units. Our Association coöperates or affiliates with the Red Cross, as the Red Cross tries to have all associations and committees doing war service come into close coöperation with them. Among our women are specialists in all diseases. Dr. Lapham, who was sent out by the Red Cross, I understand, is now working under the Rockefeller Institute. We have many who are doing welfare work, for which there seems to be the greatest demand; many are doing just general medicine; some gynecology and a few obstetrics.

We expect to call upon every American woman in the United States to help support the American Women's Hospital.

One other thing which I think is to the credit of the American Women's Hospitals is that the Women's Committee of the General Medical Board was formed because of the existence of this War Service Committee of the National Association. Dr. Martin saw what we were organized to do, and while he thought our plan was very comprehensive and probably too elaborate, there is no telling what we might have to do before the war is over, and it is just as well to have a fine plan and to find out all our capabilities, etc., and to register them. Of this Committee we have two members on the General Medical Board. The rest of the women associated with them are really in an advisory capacity and have no vote in the General Medical Board. The Woman's Committee is limited in its function. The American Women's Hospital War Service Committee is unlimited, and is more independent. The Women's Committee of the General Medical Board is naturally limited in its function because it has not the clerical staff; we are so closely under the rule of the men that we cannot even write a letter without
having a man's name at the head and at the end of the letter; and we are told that women physicians had better just register, and then go back and sit down and wait until they are needed—that is, for military work; and that when we are needed we shall probably be given rank and commission and equal pay with the men; but that if we do anything now our chances will be jeopardized. So, there is nothing to do but to register and wait—sit down. They also sent to us an opinion (it was an interpretation by the Adjutant-General) saying that women were not permitted to belong to the medical reserve corps on account of their sex. I have read the law and there is not one word about sex, and I do not believe for one minute that the law keeps us from the medical reserve corps. The only reason given is that which is no reason—that we are not permitted to be in the corps because we never have been. It is just like voting; the vote is denied because women didn't use to vote.

You have doubtless heard about the Volunteer Medical Corps, which is meant for men over fifty-five years of age, but which women are permitted to enter, no matter how young or how old. I think this is a little sop because women are not admitted to the Medical Reserve Corps. Personally, if I were younger, I would not belong to this Volunteer Medical Corps. If I were younger and physically strong I would reserve myself for the medical reserve corps, and have all the rank and all the honor belonging to it; but I think that the older women ought to take their place beside the older men and do whatever they find to do to help win this war. I may be put off the Women's Committee in Washington because I have said this, but I do not go back on my words at all. I think that the younger women ought not to be placed in this corps for older people. I think a woman of twenty-one ought to have enough self-respect to keep out of the Voluntary Medical Corps and let the old folks be in it.

One thing that I want to leave with you is the plea that you support this National Association. We have at least 1500 women registered for service, and women of all ages may register for service, although we would not want to send women over fifty-five overseas. All, however, may register with the American Women's Hospital and give this organization their moral and financial support. Please remember that this Association is not the overseas organization of the Suffrage Association.
DISCUSSION

Dr. Mary Wilcox: I should like to ask Dr. Purnell where the money is coming from to finance the American Women's Hospitals in Foreign Service?

Dr. Purnell: From the same place as the Red Cross obtains their funds—right out of the people's pockets and the banks.

Dr. Mary Wilcox: I asked Dr. Shaw if she thought any recognition would be granted medical women by the Government. She said, not in this war; that possibly this would occur in the dim future. I think such is a very unfortunate state of affairs.

Dr. Frances R. Sprague: There is a campaign on for nurses to be given some recognition in the medical reserve. The Western States have organized politically and in their various women's organizations to bring pressure to bear to this end upon the President and the Surgeon-General. The college alumnae associations in California and some of the federated clubs have united in asking that women be given equal rank and pay for equal work in the United States Government and in the Medical Reserve Corps. If it is in order, I think it might be well to pass a resolution to such effect concerning the women of the East and have it forwarded to the Surgeon-General's office.

Dr. Kate W. Baldwin: In regard to the meeting to be held at the City Club tonight, with Dr. Purnell I would like to urge that women under fifty-five be very careful how they sign up with the men over fifty-five in the Volunteer Medical Service Corps. I feel that women under fifty-five should maintain their right to register with men under that age.

Dr. Frances C. Van Gasken: I think I have signed up for "The American Women's Hospitals in Foreign Service." I have signed for so many things that I can scarcely recall them all. I heard Dr. Edward P. Davis last night, and I interpreted his remarks to mean that every doctor who has a leg to stand on will be obliged to sign up for service; that there were to be no medical slackers. Now, I don't know that I am taking issue with Dr. Baldwin—I don't mean to—but what I understand is that we are obliged to fall into line. I have an ever-increasing respect for "Uncle Sam," and I expect that if before this war is over he wants my shoes I shall give them to him. I am quite sure, if I did not give them he would take them if they were needed. I believe that everybody will have to register and have to register as we are wanted to.

Dr. Martha G. K. Scheyk: There is no reason why we should not protest against the signing up when we are not given the privilege of doing the work we are capable of doing. While we are loyal we can still protest against the injustice of regarding sex as the only test of whether or not we are fitted to do this work. I think that if we go to this meeting tonight we ought to voice the sentiment that we do not think it fair that we are to be again classed among the old men and children, the insane and the idiots, as we practically always have been.
Dr. Annie Bartram Hall: I have always believed that old men liked to train young women. Young women who are well equipped should have given them that which is their right.

Dr. Mary R. Wilcox: Is there not some way in which we can, as a body of medical women, bring this matter before the House of Representatives or Senate, asking for recognition in the Medical Reserve Corps?

Dr. Frances R. Sprague: The Western women are taking this matter up through their representatives in both houses of Congress; also through women's clubs, and the last account I heard of the movement was that they were working through their county and State medical societies, endeavoring to have the matter taken up in Chicago at the meeting of the American Medical Association. The more pressure is brought to bear upon General Gorgas the sooner will the recognition we ask be granted. I would offer the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the Alumni Association of the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania put itself upon record as asking that women physicians be eligible for admission to the Medical Reserve Corps; and, when so admitted, that they receive the rank and pay given to men for equivalent work.

Following some discussion, it was agreed that the sense of the resolution be adopted, and the President suggested that Drs. Sprague, Tracy and Walker consider the question and put the resolution in the best possible form.

Dr. Martha Tracy: In connection with the Volunteer Medical Service Corps, I should like to express my opinion that I would consider it unwise to take the attitude that we do not care to enroll at present in that corps. For my part, I should feel very sorry to have such action construed as meaning that we are waiting for the Surgeon-General to admit us to the Medical Reserve Corps, and that until that time we are unwilling to do anything that should turn up in the medical service that we might do. I am entirely willing to enroll, and I think I shall state, under the Section indicated, that I belong to the female sex, but that I do not consider that to be ground for ineligibility. I shall fill out the blank and be ready for anything that comes. I feel that this is a better attitude to take while waiting for this other resolution to be received and acted upon.

Dr. Parnell: The Women's Committee, which met in Washington about four weeks ago, recommended that this blank sent out by the Volunteer Medical Service Corps be brought to the attention of women. They made no protest as a women's committee against it. My remarks were expressive of my personal ideas. I would not like to fasten such an opinion upon the Women's Committee of the General Medical Board of the Council of National Defense, because we did pass favorably upon this paper. The most of us are registered for all sorts of service, but this action, of course, would organize service throughout the United States, and, as Dr. Davis said, the ability of everybody would be registered.

Dr. Evelene Douredoure: I have been looking over this blank of the Volunteer Medical Service Corps, and at the end I read: "I pledge myself, in signing, to apply for a commission in the Medical Reserve
Corps if at any time I become eligible." Perhaps that means it may not be long until the reason of ineligibility will be removed.

Dr. Belle A. Schisler: It seems to me that in other instances the recognition of women physicians has come after they have demonstrated their ability to perform the work in question. It may be that, in asking for this tabulation, it is desired to see the quality of the material available before admitting women to the Medical Reserve Corps.

Dr. Kate W. Baldwin: In reference to the argument just made, I see no reason why American medical women should have to demonstrate to the world their ability to do certain work. The Scottish Women’s Hospitals, at home and abroad, have already demonstrated what women can do, and what other women can do the American women can do.

Dr. Gertrude A. Walker: I propose that the resolution which we have adopted be sent as a communication to the Medical Women’s National Association, which meets at Chicago next week, that the Association may know our attitude upon this important subject.

The suggestion of Dr. Walker was accepted and a resolution adopted to forward the communication.

Dr. Frances C. Van Gasken: I think we might say that the woman physician is asked to join the Volunteer Medical Service Corps not so much to demonstrate her ability, but her patriotism, as a woman doctor. This is one of the things to which we must be resigned, and we demonstrate our patriotism by falling into line.

Dr. Purnell: As a woman and as a physician and as a surgeon, I think our days for crawling are over. It has been said to me in Washington that some of the finest men were contract surgeons and were afterward invited to come into the Medical Reserve Corps. The question was asked, why we would not take contract work. This would mean our ability to be under the cook, the head nurse, or others, and be ordered around. I know positively that there are a number of lay workers registered with the American Women’s Hospitals—x-ray technicians and laboratory workers—who are doing contract practice for the War Department at the present time.

I cannot see why women should demonstrate their patriotism in any different way from men. If the men respect themselves and demonstrate their patriotism according to their training and experience, why should not the women do the same thing? Why should we have to have a different way when our ability is just the same? We would be more self-respecting if we should stand upon this. The American Women’s Hospitals Service does not refuse to do civilian service just because the members do not get the military service. When we do civilian service we do it just as does the Red Cross, except that we want rank. We have done what our hands found to do according to our ability and our experience, and we do it with dignity and respect. The Red Cross is given just as much pay and respect as the men. Why should we do our war service in any other way than the men do. Our brains are not in our sex.

Dr. Frances R. Sprague: The men who are in the Medical Reserve Corps find they are much hampered because they have not the authority
that the men in the Regular Army have. They have to push this thing through Congress. It depends upon “whose ox is gored.” They are determined to get their commission. I do not see why we should not have the same chance. Recognition is all we ask.

DR. FURNELL (closing): The Women’s Committee made up a directory of the women physicians in the United States. We sent out notices to each woman, asking her to register her age, name, address, dependents, and what she felt she was fitted to do in this war work. A very small number registered at first, because they did not understand about it. A great many women had received notices sent out with reference to the Medical Reserve Corps. These were filled out, returned, and then the women were told they could not be admitted to the Corps. They, therefore, did not pay attention to the notice which we sent out from Washington. We have at present about 1900 women physicians registered with the Women’s Committee in Washington for war service. The American Women’s Hospitals helped this Committee very materially in this work. The War Service Committee is a Committee of the National Association. If one belongs to the National Association it is necessary to be a member of the American Medical Association, but one does not have to belong to the American Medical Association in order to register with the War Service Committee. In the American Women’s Hospitals are registered the workers throughout the United States—physicians and lay workers. The American Women’s National Association membership, however, is made up of women who necessarily must be members of the American Medical Association. To register, however, you do not have to be a member of any association.

Of course, there is always an underlying cause for the lack of recognition on the part, I may say, of our Government or our Administration—which are two separate things—and sometimes it is not very polite to mention the cause for our rejection. The cause we know perfectly well; we cannot mention it, and we probably shall have to wait. I have enough confidence in my Government and in this present Administration, however, to believe that when we are called we shall be fairly treated. I believe that we shall get the same rank, commission and pay as the men. But there is a reason why we are not called at present. It is that the men are not just ready to give us the ground yet. They got in on the ground floor first; they are going to get all out of it that they can for the sacrifices that they have made. They have enough men physicians at the present time to serve the army of the present size, and we will not be called until they feel that we are needed. I see lots of places in the Medical Reserve Corps at the present time in which women could serve really better than men. As long as the number of men is sufficient we shall not be called. I don’t think men call upon women until they really feel that they need them. I believe we shall be justly treated when the time comes. I am not like Dr. Shaw in thinking we shall not be called in this war. In view of the loss of physicians by death from wounds and disease, I think that women physicians will be needed and will be called during this present war.