

The Colonial Nursing Association.

The Annual Meeting of the Colonial Nursing Association was, by permission of the Secretary of State, held in the Library of the Colonial Office on Wednesday last. Lord Amptill, G.C.S.I. presided.

The first speaker was the Colonial Secretary, the Earl of Elgin, K.G., who said he was the first Secretary of State to have the pleasure of welcoming the members of the Association to a meeting held at the Colonial Office. The relations which existed between the Department and the Association were most cordial and intimate. It was now about ten years ago since Mr. Chamberlain, then Secretary of State, sent a prospectus of the Association to the Colonies with a despatch strongly recommending it to their attention. In 1893 he also sent a most important despatch to the Colonies in which he went into the whole subject of tropical diseases, and dwelt upon the importance of nursing and the value of the work done by the Association. It was worth while reminding the Association of this to show that the Department regarded the provision of nursing as part of the work in improving the conditions of health in the Colonies under its management. We had Colonies in every part of the globe, and in many of them the conditions were unfavourable to the health of the people, in such Colonies the trained nurse was an inestimable boon.

As a result of the action of the former Secretary of State to which he had referred, considerable interest was taken by the Colonies and by Colonial Governors in providing nurses. It was an enterprise in which it had been necessary to secure the cooperation of ladies, and from the beginning the Association had had the advantage of the interest of Mrs. Chamberlain. The Department was represented on the Committee of the Association by Lady Ommanney and Mrs. Antrobus, to whom its thanks were due. Lord Elgin concluded by saying that he was present to express the interest which the Colonial Office took officially in the existence and operations of the Association. Of this, the fact that the Annual Meeting was held at the Colonial Office, was the outward and visible sign.

Lord Amptill, after expressing his appreciation of the welcome the Association had received from the Colonial Secretary, proposed the adoption of the Annual Report, which was in the hands of those present. This was a formality which he said served an important and twofold purpose. It enabled the members to endorse the action of their Executive during the year, and to offer suggestions, advice, and

criticisms. He hoped they would approve of the work done; any advice and suggestions which might be offered would be received with gratitude; and he trusted there would be no serious criticism.

Before the foundation of the Colonial Nursing Association it had, said Lord Amptill, been the duty of the private secretaries to the Secretary of State to select such nurses as might be required. As a private secretary this work had fallen to his share. They did their best, but those present would understand that the haphazard methods employed would not compare with the careful selection of nurses now, and it was a great relief to the private secretaries when this work was taken over by the Association, which owed its origin to Lady Piggott's far-sighted realisation of the need for nurses in the Colonies. But if the private secretaries felt it to be a relief to be rid of a difficult and responsible task, it was an even greater relief of our fellow countrymen in the Colonies to have a highly efficient organisation to which they could turn for advice, and there was another gain which was even more important—namely, that they got into sympathetic touch with the general public at home, which indeed was the whole point of the Association.

The Report, said the speaker, was a clear, concise, and business-like account of work and a satisfactory record of progress and improvement. One point was not so satisfactory—namely, that the funds were not increasing as the Committee could wish. Although the claims on private benevolence were varied there were always people willing and able to give money if a cause commended itself to them. The work of the Colonial Nursing Association had a claim on the sympathy of everyone before that claim was based on the cause of a United Empire. Everyone approved of the Empire, but few realized their duty to take an active share in maintaining it; the maintenance of an imperial policy was not only a question for statesmen, but demanded the active sympathy of every citizen. In thinking of the Empire people were somewhat apt to forget the Crown Colonies, and to think only of the great self-governing Colonies to whose voice we were bound to listen, but in the smaller Colonies, were courageous and dutiful men often doing their duty in outlying and unhealthy parts, under trying and arduous circumstances with no one to see and applaud them. Their work meant incalculable gain to the Empire, through a single speech in the House of Commons could gain more notoriety and applause than twenty

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)