

practitioner, is a proceeding in direct contravention of the spirit of the Medical Act of 1886, and one which will be liable to be visited with the condemnation of the Council. The President is therefore requested to repeat a warning, already given, to certain Institutions, and to urge on the registered practitioners connected with the Institutions granting these certificates to Nurse midwives to reconsider the terms in which they are framed, and to bring them into harmony with this resolution."

Mr. BRUDENELL CARTER said that to pass this resolution in its entirety would be trades unionism run mad. The President had well said that there were ten or fifteen thousand midwives practising in the United Kingdom, and to pass a resolution of this kind would be to strike a blow at the whole of them. He would suggest that as the Council had already sent one notice to those medical practitioners who granted these diplomas, that the Council should now issue a second note of warning.

Dr. WILKS would have nothing to do with a resolution of this kind, and proposed to leave matters as they at present stood.

Dr. MACALISTER said he was certainly in favour of the education of midwives, and that these certificates should not be granted except to those who had a certain amount of practical training, but, referring to the diplomas before them, he could not help admitting that such certificates as these were calculated to mislead the ignorant. One bearing a large red seal upon it was specially objectionable.

Dr. ATTHILL could not vote for the original motion. He was strongly in favour of the education of midwives, and objected strongly that any such certificates or documents should carry with them the right of the holder to practise midwifery or diseases of women. Generally in a course of two or three months' training it was quite impossible that anybody could obtain a competent knowledge of that science, and such certificates were a gross deception and calculated to do injury to the public.

After pointing out to the Council the very strong feeling that was growing up in the profession on the subject of the creation of a new and inferior order of practitioners, Mr. WHEELHOUSE drew attention to the diplomas conspicuously displayed in the room, and reminded the Council that they were issued by various bodies, some of whom had, perhaps, a chartered right to undertake the duty of examining candidates, but many of whom had no such right. The Medical Act of 1886 declared that no one should be admitted to the Medical Register who had not passed a qualifying examination in Medicine, Surgery, and Midwifery, and the regulations of the Council and of the constituted authorities, were such that no one could do this without having spent five years in acquiring the necessary knowledge, and yet, in direct contravention of this Act, and of all such regulations—here—if the issue of these diplomas was to be permitted—a door was opened by which women were to be permitted to practice midwifery only, without any knowledge of either medicine or surgery; and this, he argued, was in effect either a direct repeal of the Act, or a means, at any rate, by which its provisions might be evaded. The documents, which to the public were calculated to give rise to the impression that they were really "diplomas," gave the same impression to those who

held them, and who had paid for them. Are the public sufficiently educated to draw a distinction between such documents and real "diplomas"? It would be in the memory of the Council, that two years ago the President was requested to point out to such bodies as were known to issue these documents, that they were calculated to deceive the public and to mislead their holders as to the powers thus conferred, and to point out that they needed very serious modification. This had been done, but the bulk remained unaltered, and some further step had become imperatively necessary. He desired emphatically to assure the Council that he would use every effort in his power to further any steps that might be taken to advance the education of those women who followed the calling of midwifery nurses, for he was fully alive to the necessity of doing this, and of giving the educated any and every possible advantage over the uneducated nurse, but he could never consent to the institution of an inferior order of practitioners authorised to act on their own responsibility, even in so-called natural labours.

Sir JOHN BANKS said that as consulting physician to a lying-in Hospital, he certainly could not agree to the resolution as it then stood.

Dr. TUKE wished to know whether it was seriously contended that every midwife should have a knowledge of surgery and medicine.

Sir W. FOSTER said the Council could not possibly pass a resolution that every midwife must have a knowledge of midwifery, surgery, and medicine. If they passed the resolution, they would create a class who would be to all intents and purposes regular medical practitioners.

The PRESIDENT thought there were two questions in reference to this matter—one the education of women, which the Council had advocated, and had passed a resolution to that effect, and appointed a committee to consider the question; the other question was, What shall be done with these documents? Perhaps the best thing to do would be to summon the authors of one or two of the worst and tell them that they were guilty of infamous conduct in using such documents.

Sir W. TURNER read an alternative resolution (which was carried) and suggested that notice should be sent to medical practitioners and institutions that the form of the certificates should be altered so as to remove the objections.

Dr. McVAIL agreed with the President that the better plan would be to bring some offenders before the Council and caution them.

Dr. MACALISTER said that a fallacy underlay not only Mr. Wheelhouse's speech, but also some of the other arguments that had been laid before the Council in the form of memorials. The medical Acts to which reference had been made did not purport to prevent the practice of medicine, surgery, or midwifery by unregistered persons. Any man or woman was in this country free to practice any one of these arts so long as no pretence was made of being registered.



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