

Royal British Nurses' Association.

(Incorporated by Royal Charter.)

GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING.



THIS was held at the offices of the Corporation on Friday, the 9th inst., the Chair being taken by Sir James Crichton-Browne at the request of Her Royal Highness Princess Christian, in her unavoidable absence. The minutes of the last meeting having been read and confirmed, Mr. John Langton read the following:—

REPORT OF THE HON. TREASURER.

My financial report for the year ending 31st March, 1897, presents at least one feature of interest, inasmuch as special efforts have been made to reduce the liabilities of our Association.

These efforts have been attended with much success and our financial position has undergone a marked change for the better. Much, however, remains to be accomplished, for our finances still demand the serious consideration of the members of the Association.

It will be remembered in my last yearly statement, that the liabilities of the Association amounted to £342 18s. 8d., with only £98 15s. 4d. in the bank to meet them. This year we have a balance at our bankers of £144 10s. 6d. after having discharged all our debts with the exception of about £5 due for small accounts not yet presented.

Our friends, to whom I am deeply indebted, have responded most generously to my appeal, with the result that we have received in donations the sum of £581 18s. 4d., in addition to £75 7s. 6d. obtained from the Sale of Work, which was initiated, and presided over, by our Royal President, the Princess Christian of Schleswig Holstein.

The expenditure of the year appears larger than the preceding one, and in explanation I wish to direct the attention of this meeting to the fact that the Association has during this period paid five quarters' rent, printing, and Journal expenses; it has, moreover, paid for two editions of the Register, and Messrs. Elkington & Co. their account for the last two years.

I regret to inform you that the receipts for the Journal and Registration accounts still fall considerably short of their expenses; on the former there is a deficit amounting to £100 1s. 3d., and on the latter to £214 12s. 6d.—both of which have to be defrayed from the General Fund Account.

The amount advanced by the General Account to the Registration Board amounts now to £1,354 12s. 6d. This yearly increasing deficit occasions me much anxiety; and I hope some scheme may shortly be devised which may relieve the Association of this serious financial outlook.

My statement of income and expenditure shows that the receipts have exceeded the expenses of the Conversation and the Cookery Lessons.

I cannot conclude my Report without drawing attention to our heavy legal expenses, which amounted to £205 16s. 9d.; a heavy burden for such a young Association as ours to bear.

Great efforts are now being made throughout the kingdom, for the benefit of nurses, to commemorate the Sixtieth Anniversary of the reign of Her Gracious Majesty; and I would suggest that this is a fitting opportunity for our Association to raise a fund to replace the invested capital which was expended in obtaining our Royal Charter in 1893.

JOHN LANGTON,
Hon. Treasurer.

April 2nd, 1897.

The adoption of this report having been proposed and seconded, Dr. Bedford Fenwick called attention to the fact that it proved most conclusively the justice of the criticisms which he had frequently felt compelled to make upon the financial affairs of the Association. In doing this, he had been accused of exaggeration, of inaccuracy, and of being lugubrious. He thought nothing could be more lugubrious than the Treasurer's report now before them; nothing could more plainly show that he had understated the seriousness of the case rather than exaggerated it. He protested on behalf of a considerable number of the best nurse members of the Association against theatrical entertainments on behalf of the Association. The Association was founded by women who respected themselves and their profession, in order to improve their work and to be of mutual benefit to their fellow-workers. They strongly disapproved of being held up to the public as objects of charity, especially when this was only rendered necessary by the extravagant management of their finances. The audited accounts showed the facts which were not stated in the Treasurer's reports, that the Association last year spent £800 more than its reliable income—viz., that derived from the subscriptions of the members—and that this year the excess had been even greater. They could not go on begging indefinitely, and he wished to ask the Council if they realised where such extravagance must necessarily end.

Sir James Crichton-Browne said that the Association was not yet bankrupt as Dr. Fenwick had predicted it must become, and that the reliable income of the Association was just precisely the income which it could obtain.

Mr. Mark Hovell asked whether the late Treasurer left the funds of the Association at a very low ebb, and Dr. James Calvert, who was the official referred to, stated that this was the fact, and that ever since he had known the Association it had been the fact.*

The Honorary Medical Secretary, Mr. Edward A. Fardon, of the Middlesex Hospital, read the following:—

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The Executive Committee beg to report that 37 Nurses have been registered, 36 new Members have been elected, 8 have withdrawn during the past three months, and that an old and valued Member has been lost to the Association in the late Sir Spencer Wells, who died in January of this year.

The Committee desire to record their best thanks to Lady Duckworth and to those ladies and gentlemen who most kindly assisted her in promoting the success

* [* Dr. Calvert was elected a member of the Association half an hour before he was nominated as Treasurer.—ED.]

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