

tion of Midwives, the Midwives' Institute, and also read a letter from Miss Todd, Matron of the National Hospital for Consumption, Bournemouth, who was unable to be present to take part in the discussion. Miss Brey further reported that the Midwives' Bill which is down for its second reading on February 26th, would be obtainable in a few days.

RESOLUTION PASSED AT THE MEETING OF THE MATRONS' COUNCIL, HELD NOVEMBER 21ST, 1901.

"That as it has been publicly announced that a Midwives' Bill will be brought before Parliament next Session, providing that women who desire to practice as midwives must obtain an annual licence to do so from County Councils or County Borough Councils, and, as no women are eligible to sit upon such Councils, Midwives would therefore be placed under the control and supervision of entirely unprofessional bodies, composed moreover, of men only.

The Matrons' Council consider it necessary to point out that such legislation would place Midwives in a most anomalous and defenceless position; that this would undoubtedly deter trained nurses from undertaking such work, and that in various ways it would be most detrimental to the interests of the poor."

RESOLUTION PASSED AT THE MEETING OF THE MATRONS' COUNCIL, HELD FEBRUARY 8TH, 1900, AND FORWARDED TO THE LONDON OBSTETRICAL SOCIETY:—

"The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, an Association of Superintendents of Trained Nurses, while recognizing the work done in the past by the Council of the London Obstetrical Society in raising the standard of Midwifery education, desires to express its strong conviction that a three months' training is inadequate to prepare midwifery pupils for the responsible practical work which devolves upon them after obtaining the certificate of the London Obstetrical Society. It, moreover, considers that in the education of nurses a general education should always precede a special one, and asks the Council of the Obstetrical Society to henceforth require, of candidates for its examination, either the certificate of a General Nurse Training School, or evidence that they are bona fide pupils of such a school. The Matrons' Council further considers that the recognition and certification of specialists is calculated to professionally injure thoroughly trained nurses."

The Hon. Sec. then read the following letter:—
Letter from the Association for Promoting Compulsory Registration of Midwives.

DEAR MADAM.—Your letter, with copies of Resolutions passed by the Matrons' Council with regard to the proposed legislation for Midwives, has been duly laid before my Committee, and carefully considered.

In reply I am desired by my Committee to say that in their opinion, while there may be undoubted objections to Annual Licensing in the present case, yet it can hardly be said to "create a precedent," the principle being one already carried out in regard to many other professions. They would further point out that the Bill of 1900, practically identical with that now before the House of Commons, is not anywhere described as a "Bill for the Compulsory Registration of Midwives," but a "*Bill to Secure the better Training of Midwives, and to regulate their practice.*"

Referring to the Resolutions passed by your Council, my Committee would reply with regard to the objection that by the provisions of the present Bill Midwives may be placed under the "control and supervision of entirely unprofessional bodies," that this will only apply to the local license to practise; that midwives will be certificated, *i.e.*, admitted to the Midwives Roll, under a *professional* body, the Central Board, upon which women are eligible to sit. Further, that a clause in the Bill provides for the delegation on the part of the County or Borough Council, as Local Supervising Authority, of their powers to the District Council (for which women are at present eligible), or to a Committee consisting wholly or in part of its own members, upon which it is expressly stipulated that women shall be eligible to serve.

My Committee would also call the attention of your Council to the fact, a very important one, but frequently overlooked, that *no limit of time is laid down in the Bill with regard to the period of training*, which is thus left entirely to the discretion of the Central Board.

On the point raised that trained hospital nurses may suffer from the "recognition of specialists," my Committee would point out that the public interest must come before that of any one profession, and that it has been abundantly proved before a Select Committee of the House of Commons that "the services of midwives"—quite apart from those of nurses—"are a necessity," . . . "and of great advantage to the Community." Legislation which is admitted y needed for the good of the Community will be unlikely in the long run to injure any one class, such as trained sick nurses.

The desirability of providing every woman in childbirth with fully qualified medical attendance and trained nursing, is, of course, obvious; but is at present a counsel of perfection. The aim of this Association is therefore to secure that some minimum measure of protection shall be assured to the poor mother, now utterly at the mercy of the totally untrained Gamp, as soon as possible.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,

LILIAN A. MAULE,
Secretary.

Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK reported that having been requested to attend a meeting of the Legislation Committee of the National Union of Women Workers—in reference to the above resolutions—she attended and presented the views of the Matrons' Council. She was bound to confess, however, that those views did not appear to appeal to the sympathies of the non-wage earning and philanthropic gentlewomen, who with the kindest intentions towards the poor lying-in woman, were the energetic projectors of the Midwives' Bill.

LADY LAURA RIDDING who occupied the Chair ruled out of order, discussion on the Resolution dealing with the educational question, with which she opined they had nothing to do—so that Mrs. Fenwick confined her remarks to the present status of the Midwife, and the dangers of annual licensing by unprofessional bodies upon which women, including Midwives were ineligible to sit. Mrs. Fenwick pointed out that prior to 1886 legislation to regulate the practice of midwifery was reasonable—but that the medical Bill of that year made the triple qualification

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