

The three points to be considered by the meeting were: Is a Defence Union necessary? What should it do? How should it be done? They should also consider whether all certified midwives should be eligible for membership, or only those who could give evidence of training, and whether the scheme should include insurance against suspension.

Dr. St. Aubyn Farrer, who then addressed the meeting, considered that the formation of a Midwives' Defence Union was essential, both for defending and preventing legal actions. If doctors found such a Union a necessity it was more necessary for the protection of the Registered Midwives of England and Wales. The position of doctors was well established, whereas midwives were still only feeling their way.

Mrs. Louisa M. Lee, Secretary to the Midwives' Defence Union of the Royal Maternity Charity, then invited all midwives to unite, to determine to work together, and to pay their subscriptions. Even those midwives who were not themselves likely to need the assistance of the Union should join it for the sake of others. The strong should help the weak.

Major Killick, Secretary to the Royal Maternity Charity, laid stress on the importance of business habits. He would like to see business training included in the education of both doctors and midwives. He thought the time over-ripe for the formation of a Union such as was suggested. There was this difference between the position of midwives and nurses. Midwives came to some extent into competition with doctors, while nurses worked under their direction. The midwife, therefore, did not receive the same sympathy and support as the nurse.

The opinion of the meeting was then invited, as to the desirability of enlarging the Committee already formed by the Royal Maternity Charity so as to make the Union more general.

Mrs. Owens (Kentish Town), Mrs. Hutber (King's Cross), and Miss Worrall (Fulham) were much in favour. Miss Amy Hughes thought the question as to whether the Union should include bona fide midwives or only those who had had training an important one.

Miss Breay said that if it was decided to include the bona fides it would be necessary to have a larger subscription than would otherwise be required. She also remarked that the Chairman had said midwives must combine to defend their rights, but it did not appear to her they had any. They had to obey laws which they had no voice in making. She considered one of the objects such a Union should work for was direct representation of midwives on the Central Midwives' Board.

It was then proposed by Miss Hall, of Camberwell, and carried unanimously, "That a Certified Midwives' Union should be formed."

The next question to be considered was "What should it do?"

Mrs. Locke (City Road) thought it should provide legal aid for midwives when in difficulties. Mrs. Forman, that it should assist midwives to be

represented at inquests. Mrs. Malcolm (Manchester), that it should work for direct representation on the Central Midwives' Board. Another midwife considered that it should work to obtain a law providing for the payment of doctors when called in. The midwife should not be left to pay.

The Chairman said that the medical profession were already endeavouring to obtain an amendment to the Midwives' Act in regard to this point. For this reason it was important that the midwives should combine, or they would not be able to make their views heard. The suggestion of the medical profession was, he believed, that the district Poor Law Medical Officer should be called in, and the fee subsequently be recovered from the husband.

Miss Buchanan inquired whether midwives could be insured against bad debts.

Names were then suggested of ladies who should be added to the Committee already formed, which should consider the possibility and desirability of forming a Midwives' Defence Union, and report at as early a date as possible. Ultimately it was proposed by Miss Buchanan, and carried unanimously, that the following twenty-four ladies, with Dr. St. Aubyn Farrer as Chairman, and Mrs. Lee as Secretary, should form the Committee.

*Members of the Royal Maternity Charity:* Mrs. Bryon, Miss Dawson, Miss Grant, Mrs. Hodgkins, Mrs. Hutber, Miss Hill, Mrs. Locke, Mrs. Macdonald, Mrs. Owens, Miss Steward, Miss Webb, and Miss Wright.

*Added by the meeting:* Miss Davies (Matron of St. Mary's Hospital), Miss Park (Matron of York Road Lying In Hospital), Mrs. Messenger (York Road), Mrs. Christopher, Miss Burnside, Miss Elsie Hall, Mrs. Forman, Miss Alice Gregory, Miss Macqueen, Miss Worrall, Miss M. Breay, and Dr. Victoria Bennett.

Miss Amy Hughes thought it important to add someone acquainted with the conditions of the work of midwives in the country, which differed from that of those in London. Miss Breay suggested that all known Associations of Midwives should be communicated with, which was agreed to. The question of space in the Press having been brought up by Major Killick, Miss L. Maule, in the absence of the Editor, undertook that *Nursing Notes*, which was the official organ of the Midwives' Institute, would devote a column to the affairs of the Defence Union. Miss Breay said she felt sure the Editor of the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING* would be pleased to allot space for this purpose, and the Chairman remarked that they had "got the Press."

In responding to a vote of thanks, the Chairman reminded the meeting that when legal action was decided upon there must be no compromise, the battle must be fought to a finish.

Miss Wilson, in her concluding remarks, said that she hoped very much the representation of midwives on the Central Midwives' Board might be strengthened.

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