

The Colonial Nursing Association.

The Annual Meeting of the Colonial Nursing Association, a society which grows annually in usefulness and importance, was held at 10, Carlton House Terrace on Wednesday, June 24th, by the kind permission of Viscount and Viscountess Ridley.

Lord Ampthill, G.C.S.I., President, who presided, said that it was the duty of the Executive Committee at the annual meeting to render their account of their stewardship. They had met under very auspicious circumstances, as they were honoured by the presence of H.R.H. Princess Henry of Battenberg, Patroness of the Association, who had shown such a deep interest in its welfare.

Then, thanks to the kindness of Lord and Lady Ridley, they had a delightful meeting place, and they had with them the Secretary of State for the Colonies and Leader of the House of Lords. Those who understood the multifarious duties of this dual position would realise their indebtedness to Lord Crewe for arranging to be present.

He would say no more, but call upon the Earl of Crewe to move the adoption of the report and re-election of officers.

Lord Crewe said that he felt it not merely a duty, but a very distinct pleasure, to be present at the meeting. The general work of the Association must appeal to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the Colonial Office came into still closer contact with the Association, as it selected the nurses for the Crown Colonies. Lord Crewe spoke of the heavy responsibility which rested on those who selected the nurses, and of the arduous nature of the work of the nurses in climates conducive to lassitude and weariness. He also referred to the new badge for the nurses issued by the Committee—a bronze medal bearing the figure of Britannia suspended from a bar. The same badge has also been struck in silver, and is to be conferred on nurses belonging to the Association who have completed five years and upwards of meritorious service.

Lord Ridley, who seconded the adoption of the report, spoke of the progress of the Association, and referred also to the loss the Scottish branch had sustained by the death of Miss Louisa Stevenson. He also drew attention to the map published at the end of the report, which shows in a graphic way the distribution of the work, which corresponds to the sphere of the British Empire.

The next speaker was the Rev. Douglas Ellison, M.A., head of the South African Church Railway Mission, who said he

had had personal experience of the work of nurses sent out by the Association, Nurse Pearn and Nurse Ross, and he was grateful for an opportunity of testifying to its great value. He spoke of the appalling isolation of the white men and their families along the line of rail. They were often ten miles from the nearest neighbour. The railway medical officers had to attend to the sick on 100 miles of rail, and there never seemed to be a train running when it was wanted. When sickness came there might be loss of valuable lives, especially those of the wives and mothers. The nurses carried their own commendation with them, and found a way straight to the hearts of the people. The only opposition came from the local gamps, but the moment one of the nurses undertook a case it was "all over except the cheering."

The speaker said how very much he appreciated the kind of spirit brought by the nurses to the work, which made heavy demands upon them. It was not an easy matter to settle down in a platelayer's cottage, and there was a great deal of running to and fro on trains under most uncomfortable conditions. It was a life to set nerves hopelessly on edge, but the nurses never grumbled, and always came up smiling, and this added to the value of their presence and of their unselfish labours.

Miss I. M. Cowie, Superintendent of Nurses at the Public Hospital, Georgetown, British Guiana, said that some of the native nurses were inclined at first to resent the introduction of Europeans, but now they were on excellent terms. Three years ago there was no scheme for training native nurses in Georgetown, so there was nothing to replace the older material. The old nurses of 40 or 50 years of age had consequently to be trained with the probationers. They were not a very intelligent class of women, and needed supervision after passing out of hospital. There are now twelve probationers, and the first examination for certificates is to be held this year.

The adoption of the report and re-election of officers having been carried, Sir Alfred Jones, K.C.M.G., the most generous supporter of the Association proposed a vote of thanks to H.R.H. Princess Henry of Battenberg for her presence. As an instance of the value of good nursing, he said that in places where the death-rate had been 30 to 40 per cent., it was now 3 to 4 per cent. The nurses were heroines, and no words of his could be adequate in praise of them.

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