

## The Midwife.

### The 1910 Union of Midwives.

A Drawing Room Meeting in support of "The 1910 Union of Midwives" was held on Saturday last, the 19th inst., at 7, Delamere Terrace, Westbourne Square, W., by the kind permission of Mrs. Macdonald, who hospitably provided tea before the proceedings began.

The chair was taken by Miss Mary Macarthur, Secretary of the Women's Trade Union League, who, in opening the meeting, expressed her pleasure in presiding, as she was interested in every movement which affected the interests of women.

It was sometimes thought that the adoption of trade union principles was all very well in unskilled or semi-skilled trades, but they were beneath the dignity of educated and professional workers. That was the greatest mistake. The medical profession were one of the strongest trade unions, the legal profession and the school teachers had also strong associations. Organisation was a necessity, and women workers were underpaid because they were behind hand in this respect.

Miss Macarthur expressed the hope that the meeting would be productive of great results, and that those who looked back upon it in the future would be glad to think that they were present, and amongst the pioneers of an important movement. "The 1910 Union of Midwives" would be no half-and-half affair, but would be founded on democratic principles, and governed by its own members.

#### RESOLUTION I.

The first resolution, moved by Mrs. Maquay, on behalf of the *pro tem.* Committee, seconded by Miss Webb, and slightly amended by Miss M. Breay, was carried in the following form:—

"That this meeting of certified midwives, realising the necessity for the raising of the status of midwives throughout the United Kingdom, and the protection of their professional interests, and their direct representation on their governing body, the Central Midwives' Board, declares that the time has now come for the organisation of midwives on a trades union and national basis."

Mrs. Maquay, in moving the resolution, spoke of the necessity for raising the status of midwives. At present they were barely tolerated, and Sairey Gamp was still a favourite. She emphasised the need for direct representation of midwives on the Central Midwives' Board, and pointed out that the Municipal Corporations the Local Government Board and the British Medical Association were asking for representation on the Board, and why not midwives, who were the people vitally concerned.

As regards inadequate fees, midwives to a great extent had themselves to blame, because they reduced their fees, owing to competition, till there was no living wage for them. Women must learn

loyalty to one another, and there must be no black-legs.

Miss Webb said that midwives were a body of workers who could not be done without. She hoped those present would stick to their principles.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick remarked that the term nurse had been used by previous speakers as an equivalent for midwife, but midwives were not necessarily nurses, and the terms were not interchangeable. She thought that it was detrimental to midwives not to be known by the title of certified midwife, which they were legally entitled to use, and advised them to insist upon it.

A good deal of trouble arose in country districts because certified midwives were unfairly introduced as nurses instead of as midwives, the reason given for this practice was that doctors would often object to the introduction of a midwife, who was an independent practitioner, into a district, but welcomed her in the guise of a trained nurse.

In regard to direct representation on their governing body, the demand for one representative was very modest. Midwives ought to have the control of their own educational standards and professional discipline. They could have no personal liberty without it. Direct representation on the Central Midwives' Board was the only firm basis for professional organisation and reform.

Miss Green, Inspector of Midwives for Derbyshire, also supported the election of a direct representative of the midwives on the Central Board.

Mrs. Edith Robinson strongly advocated the election of a midwife on the Central Midwives' Board by popular vote, and the protection of the interests of midwives in order to make it worth their while to practice. At present many midwives were obliged to take up monthly nursing because they could not make a living in the former capacity. The work of midwives was worth an adequate fee. The speaker advocated State aid for midwives in localities where they could not make a living wage.

At present their work was mostly limited to the very poor cases, but she would like to see a better class of women employing midwives.

#### RESOLUTION II.

This was moved by Mrs. Robinson, and seconded by Mrs. Rowdle, and was as follows:—

"That this meeting welcomes the formation of the 1910 Union of Midwives, and pledges itself to do all in its power to extend and strengthen the membership, and further the objects of the Union."

#### RESOLUTION III.

This resolution, which was moved by Mrs. Hodgkins, was as follows:—

That Mrs. Edith Robinson, Editor of the *Midwives' Record*, act as President *pro tem.*, Miss V. Macdonald act as Secretary *pro tem.*, and Mrs. Carnegie Williams act as Treasurer *pro tem.*

That the following ladies form the Committee:

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