

The Association for Promoting the Training and Supply of Midwives.

The seventh annual meeting of the Association for Promoting the Training and Supply of Midwives was held on Friday, March 10th, at 24, Park Lane, W., when H.R.H. Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein presided. The meeting was conducted by Mr. H. Cosmo Bonsor, President of Guy's Hospital. The re-election of Princess Christian as President of the Council, of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury as President of the Association, of Vice-Presidents and other officers, was moved by Mr. Cosmo Bonsor and seconded by Mr. Bryden Glendinning. The re-election of the Executive, Finance, and Advisory Committees was moved by Lord Brassey and seconded by the Duchess of Montrose. The latter stated that only a few days ago, in connection with a home in Glasgow for training midwives, of which she was President, a request had been received from one of the distant islands of the Hebrides for a midwife. There was no nurse in the island. It seemed best to train the local women, as Gaelic was spoken on the island and English was regarded as a foreign language. Both these motions were carried unanimously.

Mrs. Wallace Bruce, Chairman of the Executive Committee, moved the adoption of the Annual Report, which was in the hands of the meeting. She said that all through the country there was a vast growth in the organisation of midwifery nursing, which could never be cheap because it was good. Midwives still practised independently, but the development of organised midwifery was very striking. The attendance of a trained and certified midwife meant a healthy start in life for the baby, and, owing to the lessons inculcated, increased sanitation in the homes visited.

Mrs. Wallace Bruce referred to the amending Bill brought into the House of Lords by the late Viscount Wolverhampton when Lord President of the Council, and a further one by Lord Beauchamp. While the first amending Bill was before the House of Lords the Executive Committee sent a memorial to the Privy Council with regard to certain technical clauses. She also mentioned that the Association had memorialised the Privy Council on the subject of the necessity for the payment of doctors called in in cases of emergency to the assistance of midwives.

Unquestionably the labourer is worthy of his hire, but there appears to be no danger whatever of this fact being overlooked in the case of medical practitioners and the Midwives' Act. It is strange, however, that an Association dealing with midwives, when pressing the claim of medical practitioners to adequate remuneration for services rendered, should apparently have entirely overlooked the fact that certified midwives summoned in an emergency to a lying-in case have equally a right to a guaranteed fee.

The adoption of the balance-sheet for 1910 was moved by Mr. Arthur L. Leon, J.P., L.C.C., the Hon. Treasurer, who remarked that out of 400

candidates who presented themselves to the Association only some 20 proved suitable for training. He expressed the opinion that until adequate remuneration of midwives, when trained, was more certain they would never get the right kind of candidates. They would not come forward until there was a prospect of a living wage. He predicted that if associations were not able to offer proper remuneration, or something were not done to raise the payment of midwives, the sanitary authorities would have to step in. Trained women were necessary, and to get them proper pay was a necessity.

Sir Francis Champneys, who seconded the adoption of the annual report and balance-sheet, said that when he received it the previous evening, and found the strictures it contained on the action of the Central Midwives' Board in admitting a certain number of women to the Roll in 1910 without examination, he doubted whether he ought to second its adoption, naturally he was not going to move a vote of censure on his Board. He then explained that a certain number of women who, but for their failure to apply during the period of grace, would have been enrolled before April, 1905, had, after most careful investigation, with the consent of the Privy Council, and the approval of their Local Supervising Authorities, been so enrolled. Many were cases of undoubted hardship. Women, for instance, had forwarded applications to their Local Supervising Authorities, and they had been forgotten, or the medical man through whom they were forwarding them had died. With the reservation of his dissent from the clauses to which he alluded he seconded the adoption of the annual report and balance-sheet.

The meeting seemed entirely to accept and approve Sir Francis Champneys' explanation, but curiously enough no one moved the deletion of the clauses to which he took exception, and the report was unanimously adopted as it stood.

Miss Lucy Robinson then presented the report of the East Ham Home, in connection with which 1,209 births have been attended during the year, and 20,339 visits paid, 5,000 of these by the staff, the rest by the pupils. The average number of deliveries attended by each pupil had been 40, just double the requirement of the Central Midwives' Board. In that poverty-stricken neighbourhood they had to learn to make nothing do the work of everything.

Miss Amy Hughes, General Superintendent of Q.V.J.I., then gave a most interesting address, emphasising the educational side of the work, and the fact that not only the very poor needed educating in matters of hygiene, but all the working classes. She described also the excellent standard of midwifery training adopted throughout Australia, and gave details of her visit to that country in connection with Lady Dudley's scheme.

The meeting concluded with a cordial vote of thanks to H.R.H. Princess Christian, to Lord and Lady Brassey, and to the speakers.

The Princess, in acknowledging the resolution, said that she took a warm and deep interest in this work more and more every year. She had a little maternity home of her own, which she was glad to say was very successful.

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