

## MIDWIVES FOR CANADA.

A meeting convened by the Colonial Nursing Association, with the active support of the British Women's Emigration Society, was held on November 3rd. at Sunderland House, Mayfair, by the kind permission of the Duchess of Marlborough. Princess Henry of Battenberg, President of the Association, was present, and Lady Piggott, founder of the Association and Chairman of the Canada Committee, a sub-committee of the Association which has co-opted non-members, was in the chair.

The Chairman said that the great object before the Association was to co-operate with the Dominion—not to initiate, but to follow Canada's lead, right away into those outlying districts where the need for adequate midwifery and care of child life was so well known. The solution of the problem might not be easy, but neither was it impossible, for where mother and child could and did go, there the trained nurse, the certificated midwife, must surely follow. It would be against the spirit of our race if this difficulty, once realised, were not adequately met.

### MOTHER NURSES.

In their scheme it was proposed to ask V.A.D. workers to take up the work after the war, and to encourage a certain number of women whose homes had been broken up by the war—preferably officers' widows, or dependents of sailors and soldiers in a similar position—to train at once in maternity work and qualify as midwives, so that they would be capable of undertaking maternity work under central medical supervision.

The first speaker was Miss Elsie Hall, who said that the word midwife conveyed to many people the idea of an old-fashioned gamp, but since the passing of the Midwives Act in 1902 the term had had a definite significance under the law. She then described the training necessary for a midwife and the scope and influence of a midwife.

Miss Amy Hughes said that Lady Piggott had referred to the Royal Victorian Order in Canada. She herself had visited the Dominion twice, and six years ago came across it when the harvest was going on in the prairies, and could estimate something of the need of those regions. A special type of woman was wanted. She must be strong and healthy, morally as well as physically, with initiative and common sense. Also the strain of the work and conditions on a woman's nerves must be realised.

Mrs. McDonnell spoke not as a trained woman, but as a Canadian whose husband's work took her into the West summer after summer. She had seen the women in the log cabins, and mentioned one—expecting to be a mother—brave and industrious, who was forty miles from the nearest settlement, and twenty-five from any other woman. She said that on the Canadian side the idea was that Englishwomen might need extra training in domestic science, as they should be able to turn their hands to anything; but the

need of skilled assistance for the women on the prairies was appalling.

### THE CALL TO THE SPORTING WOMAN.

The Hon. E. Akers Douglas said she knew nothing of nursing, but she felt the call of the proposal to the sporting woman, and in this connection to the V.A.D. Nurse. The Colonial Nursing Association was stretching out its hands to other organizations, and proposed to plucky women to lay the foundation of new homes in Canada. Many would go with broken hearts, but they should not go alone. A very special class of women—country-bred, sporting women, who liked new conditions and braced themselves to meet them—were needed. On the prairies they could make their own homes. There were women in this "cosy garden home," to whom the appeal of large spaces was real. After the war, there would be the problem of the three-quarters of a million women at present engaged in war work. Here was a chance to make the way of the V.A.D. nurse. Once she had found her vocation, she was not going to give it up.

Could they help to serve a young nation? Women at home must organize, and they needed to hear from Canada what was wanted. There would be empty places in Canada after the war, and a woman might take the empty place. A woman's love for her horse was a very real thing. There was a free life for a horse, and a woman's spirit answering to the call—there where women were wanted. They might go out with sad hearts, but trained—sacred thought—through the gift of sympathy. The nursing spirit was one of self-abnegation. Noble service was asked of them—a service of self-expression.

Lady Drummond (head of the Selection Board of the Canadian Red Cross), wrote, in a letter read by the Chairman, of the nursing requirements of the Provinces of Canada, and said the women were as much entitled to a nurse as to a doctor. The pick of English girls were now nursing the wounded behind the lines in France and Serbia. You could get girls to do anything if you put the appeal high. Once they understood the need they would go out, and every woman in Canada would get nursed in her hour of need.

### "HELP THE MISSUS."

The Chairman pointed the moral with a story of an emigrant leaving this country, who was asked if the enquirer could do anything for him, and who replied, as he wrung her hand, "Help the Missus."

### RESOLUTION.

The following resolution was then carried:—

"This Meeting wishes to express its deep-felt desire to co-operate with the Dominion, in her efforts to place adequate midwifery within the means and within the reach of pioneer settlers in outlying districts."

We wonder if the Canadian National Association of Trained Nurses has been approached concerning this scheme.

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