

## ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

## ANNUAL MEETING.

The Annual Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association was held at the Rooms of the Medical Society of London, 11, Chandos Street, W., on Thursday, June 13th, at 4 p.m. Her Royal Highness Princess Christian (the President), who presided, was received by the Hon. Officers on her arrival, and presented by Miss Cattell, in the name of the Association and its affiliated societies, with a beautiful bouquet of pink carnations.

## THE ANNUAL REPORT.

The Secretary, Miss I. Macdonald, having read the notice convening the meeting, the Medical Hon. Secretary, Mr. Herbert J. Paterson, presented the report for the year ending December 31st, 1917, which stated that the principal business of the Corporation during 1917 was concerned with the negotiations with the College of Nursing, Ltd., and the application of the Corporation for a Supplemental Charter; that certain alterations in this Charter were made by the Privy Council—alterations which seemed to the Council of such vital importance that they felt it was not to the interest of the Association, or to that of the nursing profession, to accept them. The action of the Council was approved at a special general meeting with only three dissentients.

The report stated further that the Council are of opinion that in any Bill for State Registration of Nurses three cardinal principles should be embodied, namely, a uniform curriculum, a minimum standard of three years' training, and a one-portal examination. The alterations in the Supplemental Charter did not safeguard these principles, and, although the alterations were acceptable to the College, it appeared to the Council that these negotiations would have affected adversely the ability of the Conjoint Body to keep the pledges which had already been given by the College of Nursing. Therefore, in justice to the College, no less than in justice to the Association, which would have been bound by these pledges had the amalgamation been accomplished, the Council considered it undesirable to accept them.

The report recorded with regret the resignation of Mr. Comyns Berkeley as Hon. Treasurer of the Corporation, and reported with sincere sorrow the deaths of eight members, including Mrs. Milton, Lady Consul in Cairo, and Miss Dawson, who made the supreme sacrifice when the *Salta* went down.

It concluded with a tribute to the splendid work done by many of the members for their country throughout the year which has passed, and expressed the hope that ere long Parliament would "recognize this sterling work by passing a Bill for the State Registration of *fully* trained nurses, a measure long overdue, and which justice to the public no less than to the nurses demands. The passing of a just Bill would not only encourage them in their arduous work, and secure them

economic independence, but would protect the public, raise the standard of nursing and improve the status of the fully trained nurse."

Mr. Paterson said further that it had been the custom at the Annual Meeting to present the report up to the end of the previous year. Since the end of 1917, however, matters of such importance had happened that it was like the play of Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. He referred to the affiliation of important societies of nurses with the Corporation.

Her Royal Highness the President had issued invitations to these societies to a Conference and the result had been most gratifying. The following societies had now become affiliated with the Association:—The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, the National Union of Trained Nurses, the Fever Nurses' Association, the Irish Nurses' Association, and, it was practically settled, the Scottish Nurses' Association.\* Such affiliation would be a great advantage to the Corporation, and he hoped to the Societies, and certainly to the profession at large. It had also been arranged that the Affiliated Societies should nominate representatives for election on the General Council, and the following nominations had been received:—The Matrons' Council, Miss M. Heather-Bigg, R.R.C. They were specially glad to welcome her as they greatly admired her independent spirit. She was almost alone of the Matrons of the large Nursing Training Schools in standing firm for vital principles.

They also had the pleasure of welcoming Mrs. Bedford Fenwick as the nominee of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses. Mrs. Fenwick was known to them all as the earliest protagonist of the State Registration of Nurses, and her name was as well known on the other side of the Atlantic as on this. The National Union of Trained Nurses had nominated Miss Helen Pearse, the Irish Nurses' Association Miss M. Huxley, and the Fever Nurses' Association Miss Drakard. The addition of these ladies to the Council would strengthen its deliberations and promote the unity they so much desired.

As a result of the deliberations of the Conferences between the affiliated societies a Consultative Committee had been formed which would keep the societies in touch with the Association and with one another, and with current events and developments in the nursing world.

Mr. Paterson concluded by saying that much as he admired Trained Nurses, he thought them woefully indifferent to their own interests, but that attitude could not continue if nurses were to hold their professional position and maintain their economic stability in the face of the efforts made to undermine them.

His Majesty the King had once given advice which had now become classic, when he said "Wake up, England." He ventured to adapt it and to say, "Wake up, Nurses, and fight for your economic independence."

\* The S.N.A. has now affiliated.

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