

nurses, such as the Red Cross societies of other nations possessed. In spite of this, the War Office delegated to them the great responsibility of organising the nursing of auxiliary hospitals and the diluting of skilled work. The consequence was that the supply of trained nurses available and keenly desirous of serving in the early days of the war was never given its opportunity, that V.A.D.'s were allowed to undertake work for which they were unfitted, and that trained women were put under the command of amateurs. The result was that, in spite of the splendid devotion of all grades, the work of the Nursing Service has not been carried through with the unflinching enthusiasm and efficiency which comes from skilled organising.

Is it too late to hope that the War Office may yet shoulder the responsibility which it can never morally lay down, and organise an Auxiliary Service to assist in the work of hospitals, which shall be controlled by experts and be thoroughly representative of the nursing profession? Such an organisation would be just to the profession which it undertakes to temporarily dilute, as well as to the workers in its ranks and to those whom they serve.

Private generosity will always find ample scope in the provision of comforts, but the financial responsibility (from which control is necessarily inseparable) must remain in the hands of the State.

We should much like to hear what our professional sisters have to say on this suggested scheme. The present organisation as a supplementary Nursing Service for War, organised by amateurs has failed, as was inevitable.

A *sine qua non* of any such organisation must be professional control, and until that fundamental principle is conceded, muddle and waste will continue.

AFFILIATION OF THE TRAINED NURSES' ANNUITY FUND AND THE BENEVOLENT FUNDS OF THE R.B.N.A.

An arrangement has been made whereby the Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund and the Helena Benevolent and Settlement Funds of the Royal British Nurses' Association will be managed by a Conjoint Committee; the Council of the Royal British Nurses' Association and that of the Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund still retaining control of their own Funds.

The Council of the Trained Nurses' Annuity Fund have received with deep regret the resignation of Dr. Ogier Ward as Hon. Secretary. Miss Isabel Macdonald was appointed Hon. Secretary at a recent meeting of the Council, and donations to any of the above-mentioned Funds should be sent to her at 10, Orchard Street, Portman Square, W. 1. Subscribers should state to which they wish any amounts sent to be allocated.

THE MATRONS' COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

By the kindness of Miss Heather-Bigg, the President, the quarterly meeting of the Council was held in the Nurses' Home, Charing Cross Hospital, on Saturday afternoon, October 19th. Thirty-five members attended, and many sent letters of regret at inability to be present. In her opening remarks from the Chair the President said that she desired in the name of all present to assure Mrs. Fenwick of the pleasure they all felt to see her with them again after her recent severe illness. All felt deeply indebted to her for her strenuous and devoted work of many years for the preservation of the rights and liberties of nurses, which a just Bill framed by the Central Committee for State Registration would secure to them.

Miss Heather-Bigg then asked Mrs. Fenwick's acceptance of a beautiful bouquet of golden chrysanthemums, a gift for which Mrs. Fenwick expressed sincere appreciation.

The Minutes of the last meeting were then read and confirmed. A number of letters of regret were read by the Hon. Secretary from those unable to attend. A large amount of correspondence was dealt with, which aroused most interesting discussions.

NEW MEMBERS.

Nine new members were elected.

THE MIDWIVES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Among other matters of interest, the question of the Midwives Act Amendment Bill for England now before Parliament was brought forward. Mrs. Fenwick, who raised the question, said that she and Miss Breay had been in communication with members of Parliament, and had urged that the following Amendments should be proposed, if not incorporated in the Bill:—(1) Direct representation of the midwives on the Board; (2) legal assistance for midwives who may be required to appear before the Central Midwives Board, to enable them to defend themselves.

In Mr. Hayes Fisher's sympathetic speech, upon introducing the Amendment Bill into the House of Commons, he had stated that "it will be possible, if it is thought desirable, to give the midwives themselves direct representation upon the Board," and she gathered that Clause 7 in the Bill, which allows the Central Midwives Board to pay the expenses of any midwife who may be required to appear before the Board to defend herself, would include the expenses of a lawyer. The Board itself, when enquiring into accusations made against a

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)