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EDITORIAL.

THE PREVENTIVE SIDE OF DISEASE.

Lord Provost Hutchison, who presided on the afternoon of January 16th at the annual meeting of the Scottish Branch of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses in the City Chambers, Edinburgh, after expressing the appreciation and gratitude of the citizens of Edinburgh for the work done by the nurses of the Institute during the past 34 years, said it was obvious that to carry out the objects of an organisation of that nature a large annual revenue was required, and it was a matter of grave anxiety to the Council of the Institute that, on the ordinary revenue account for the past year, there was a deficit of no less than £6,125, which, after having been met to some extent from legacies and other sources, still stood at £1,213. The plain fact was that to maintain the work of the Institute at its present standard the revenue must be increased by at least £5,000 a year. The annual subscriptions all over Scotland amounted to £567, a sum which he thought might be very greatly increased.

Professor T. H. Bryce, of Glasgow, who moved the adoption of the Report, said that not until recently had he realised, and he did not think the people of Scotland realised, that the Institute was a national organisation, and that they had progressed so far towards the ideal at which they were all aiming—a national universal domiciliary service of home nursing. It was encouraging, and satisfactory, that the Institute could pursue its philanthropic work under the sympathetic eye of the Scottish Board of Health, and had behind it all the scientific and administrative resources of the Board. He thought if the people of Scotland recognised the immense benefits afforded to the community by its work that there would be no difficulty about money.

Sir Norman Walker, Edinburgh, who seconded the adoption of the report, said that domiciliary nursing, properly carried out, would prevent a great deal of disease, and that

was one of the most important points of nursing work. They wanted to arouse a healthy conscience in every section of the community. From the millionaire to the dustman everyone benefited from their hospitals, and from Nursing Services.

Captain Walter Elliot, M.C., M.P., Under-Secretary for Health for Scotland, supporting the adoption of the report, emphasised the importance of domiciliary work, which, from his own knowledge, was, he said, often the turning point between sending a patient to an overburdened hospital or keeping him at home.

He referred with special interest to the fact that the Institute had been able to work in with the Scottish Board of Health, and in the curriculum of lectures, which enable the nurses to qualify for the Health Visitors' Diploma. That curriculum was very thorough, and if they felt the strain heavy it was important to remember that what they were working up to was the preventive side of disease. The essence of preventive work was voluntarism, not compulsion. To carry out preventive work the co-operation of the people in the home was necessary, and it was therefore essential that the health visitor should be welcome when she went in.

After referring to the scheme for the nursing of insured persons, Captain Elliot pointed out the great advances made in preventive medicine in the last few years, and in which they would make greater advances in the years to come. It was given to few people to see the immediate results of their work as had been done in regard to infant mortality and tuberculosis. The expectation of life had been increased by ten years since 1870. That was a tremendous figure, and the reduction of infant mortality was mainly responsible, and was in itself all the justification required for the demand which the Institute might make in laying its case before the public.

It is one of the joys of district nursing that so much can be done not only to nurse the sick, but to raise the standard of the health of the community.

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