

Royal British Nurses' Association.

Incorporated by



Royal Charter.

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT.

DEAR MISS MACDONALD,

Will you kindly, through the Official Organ of the Association, convey to all our members my warm good wishes for a very Happy Christmas. I hope that the New Year will bring very much good to every one of them.

I am,

Yours Sincerely,

ALEXANDRA,

President.

LECTURE:

THE LEGAL POSITION OF HEALTH VISITORS.

By DR. KING BROWN, M.O.H., D.P.H.

In commencing his lecture, Dr. King Brown said that, at first sight, the title might appear to give very restricted scope for remarks, as the legal position of Health Visitors might be said to be non-existent as compared with that of the Sanitary Inspector; but it was just this negative position and all that it involves, which was uppermost in the lecturer's mind when he chose the title, as he felt that it is often used, or rather, *was* often used, when the appointment of Health Visitors was first thought of by certain members of Sanitary Authorities, in order to get those authorities to appoint Women Sanitary Inspectors and not Health Visitors, because the former possess certain statutory powers; and also the Sanitary Authority could recover half the salary at one time from the Local Government Board. This anomaly has, however, been removed.

There are reasons why the Local Government Board and its successor, the Ministry of Health, were right in making a sharp distinction between the two. There is a great difference between their duties and there is the broad principle that Health Visitors must convince the public, and especially the women, that the adoption of certain health measures will benefit themselves and their children, whereas the Woman Sanitary Inspector comes to the factory or elsewhere, with legal powers (and right of entry) to *compel* the adoption of statutes, bye-laws and regulations, infringement of which is coupled with penalties. Now this distinction engenders a different mental attitude both on the part of the Health Visitors and Sanitary Inspectors, and in the women they visit. The one is a friend and confidant, the other is a government official prepared to use her powers. Each has her own sphere and while the power of the Health Visitor is boundless, the Sanitary Inspector is really restricted by her legal position. Some authorities have endeavoured to combine the duties of the two but, in the lecturer's opinion this is a fatal mistake

and conducive to the efficiency of neither. Dr. King Brown here gave a list of the ordinary duties of Sanitary Inspectors and of Health Visitors, in order to show the impossibility of one woman playing the dual rôle. He further enumerated the Acts which concern the relative positions of each, and commented on the provisions of these Acts.

Speaking of the qualifications required in Health Visitors, Dr. King Brown said that tact, power of appreciating the difficulties and trials of others, of seeing the other person's views, common sense, a good physique, good walking powers were all very essential. A Health Visitor should be possessed of a good general education—a leaving certificate, Senior Oxford or Matriculation Examination, are excellent guarantees. She should have a knowledge of such things as physiology and anatomy, physics (including light, heat and electricity), thermometers, relative humidity, climate, etc. She should possess a knowledge of sanitation, while hospital training, especially that connected with the nursing of children's diseases was, in the lecturer's opinion, essential. She should certainly hold the Central Midwives Board Certificate and have a knowledge of infectious disease and ante-natal work.

Dr. King Brown referred to many other points in connection with Health Visitors and their work, but, unfortunately for those who were not present at the lecture, we cannot enumerate them here nor report the somewhat lengthy and interesting discussion which followed. In referring to the lecture, the Chairman, Miss G. Lord, remarked that Dr. King Brown was one of the first medical officers in London to insist that his Health Visitors should be Trained Nurses.

THE RAMBLERS' CLUB.

We never had a more delightful ramble than that round old Chelsea. On the morning of the day fixed, we telephoned to Miss Law to ask permission to see the wards of the Royal Hospital, with the result that we were received with the greatest courtesy and kindness, and thereby were enabled to view the Royal Hospital under the best guidance available for each part. We shall always have very delightful memories of this beautiful place, and of our walk by the river reflecting the glories of the setting sun, of Carlyle's House and, last of all, the old Chelsea Church with its exquisite, old-world atmosphere.

CLUB FIXTURES.

We refer our Members to the Club Calendar on Page 1 for the list of Club fixtures. In connection with those for which tickets are to be sold, we would draw their attention to the fact that ticket holders will be given seats first, hence it is advisable to procure these tickets in good time.

The Secretary will be glad to have notification from those who intend to dine at the Club on Christmas night.

ISABEL MACDONALD,

Secretary to the Corporation.

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