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## EDITORIAL.

### NEW HEADQUARTERS FOR QUEEN'S NURSES AND MIDWIVES.

Queen's Nurses and Midwives foregathered on October 25th, at 57, Lower Belgrave Street, S.W.1, for the opening of the new Headquarters of the National Birthday Trust Fund, the Queen's Institute of District Nursing, and the Midwives Institute. It was indeed an epoch making day for both Institutes, for the National Birthday Trust Fund, being convinced that the provision of a new Headquarters for the Midwifery Services of the country was an urgent necessity, placed at the disposal of these two bodies accommodation in this spacious mansion rent free, and its Chairman, Sir Julien Cahn, generously undertook to equip and decorate the house throughout.

On the Opening Day the large hall was crowded to capacity when Sir Julien Cahn took the Chair, noticeable amongst those present being Miss Rosalind Pager, the first Queen's Nurse and the senior member of the Midwives Institute. He traced the history of the Fund, founded by the Lady George Cholmondeley and emphasised the support it had received from Mrs. Stanley Baldwin and Lady Williams, and thanked the medical profession for their interest in its work.

Mr. Geoffrey Shakespeare, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, who was deputed by the Minister to represent him as he was detained at a Cabinet meeting, emphasised the improvement in the health of the country during the existence of the two Institutes, as evidenced by the lowering of the general death-rate, which had fallen from 21 per thousand in the seventies to 12 per thousand in 1932; the infant mortality rate had also dropped from 149 to 72 and last year to 65 per thousand, but the maternal mortality rate remained obstinately high at 4 per thousand, and it was a major concern of the Minister and his Chief Medical Officer that this rate should be reduced. On behalf of the Government, Mr. Shakespeare said that it would follow the work of the three institutions with interest and Government support. He then, as the representative of the Minister of Health, declared the building open.

Mrs. Stanley Baldwin then performed the pleasant ceremony of presenting to Mr. Louis Carnac Rivett, M.A., M.C., F.R.C.S., on behalf of the National Birthday Trust Fund, for his services in connection with obstetrical anaesthesia, his portrait in oils, suitably inscribed. In so doing Mrs. Baldwin said that what she had endeavoured to do for 25 years Mr. Rivett had done in less than half as many months when he took the matter in hand. Mr. Rivett in warmly acknowledging the

gift said that he had felt that something should be done to bring to poor women alleviations during labour which were freely used by those who could pay for them. He hoped that soon all women, rich or poor, would have the opportunity of the same alleviations.

Sir William Hale White, on behalf of the Queen's Institute, in proposing a vote of thanks to the chair expressed the regret of the President (the Earl of Athlone) who was in Ireland, for his absence, and Miss E. M. Pye, President, on behalf of the Midwives Institute, in thanking the Chairman for the beautiful gift of the National Birthday Trust Fund said there was something more important even than the gift itself—the opportunity carried with it for increasing, through co-operation, the power of relieving human suffering.

The meeting then concluded, and those present dispersed, to inspect the new premises, notably the fine lecture hall, the comfortable Club Room of the members of the Midwives' Institute, charmingly furnished, the tasteful bedroom accommodation for eight midwives wishing to spend a few nights in town, and the convenient offices of both Institutes. Over the welcome tea provided many expressions of appreciation were heard of the generous gifts of the National Birthday Trust Fund and its Chairman.

Work which the Fund is actively pursuing is to discover some means of alleviating pain in that large proportion of maternity cases in which continuous medical attention is out of the question, and extensive experiments have been made, with financial help from the Fund, in obstetrical anaesthesia at Queen Charlotte's Hospital under the direction of Mr. Carnac Rivett. The result has been that a safe method of administering chloroform by means of crushable capsules was discovered, and full tests carried out at Queen Charlotte's and the Middlesex Hospitals, with great success. Again with help from the National Birthday Trust Fund, which supplied the capsules in 15 Maternity Hospitals under the control of the London County Council, and since then in many hospitals at home and abroad, successful results have been achieved.

The Medical Committee appointed to report upon the results of these further tests have stated that while the reports received were on the whole extremely favourable, more tests were required before an adequate expression of medical opinion could be made.

The experience already gained, however, affords substantial ground for hope that by this means the pain of women in childbirth may be greatly reduced. The peril of childbirth through scientific medicine and nursing has been extraordinarily diminished; now it seems that, by the same means, its pain may also be minimised.

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