

Royal British Nurses' Association.

Incorporated by



Royal Charter.

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRESIDENT.

Members of the Association have learnt with great pleasure that Her Royal Highness the Princess Arthur of Connaught is making good progress after the serious operation which she underwent some time ago. We trust that before so very long the Princess may be able to go, as is her custom in summer, to her beautiful residence in the Highlands and no doubt the surrounding loveliness and fine air there will restore her to complete health again.

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL.

The General Council held its first Meeting subsequent to the Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 23rd. Very long reports were presented on Finance and on the work of the Executive Committee since the last meeting of the Council. In accordance with the By-laws the election of the Honorary Officers and Executive Committee took place. The following were elected to the Hon. Offices provided for under the By-laws:—Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Miss Bickerton, R.R.C., Miss F. Campbell; Hon. Treasurer, Mrs. Hamilton Gibson; Medical Hon. Secretary, Mr. Herbert Paterson, C.B.E., F.R.C.S.; Nurse Hon. Secretary, Miss Cutler. Except Mrs. Hamilton Gibson all these held office last year. Miss Farrant now lives in the country and at a considerable distance from a railway station, and she felt that it was not fair to the Corporation to accept nomination for such an important office unless she could attend the meetings of the Executive Committee with some degree of regularity. Mrs. Hamilton Gibson is well known to Members of the Association and for many years she has taken a great interest in its welfare; also, as she has considerable knowledge of matters relating to finance, her election is likely to prove a popular one. The following were elected Members of the Executive Committee:—Lord Horder, Sir Alfred Rice-Oxley, Dr. Armstrong, Dr. MacIntyre, Dr. Cran, Dr. Rice-Oxley, Dr. Dunn, Dr. Browning Alexander, Dr. Burnett Rae, Mr. Michael Smyth; Matrons and Superintendents of Nurses:—Lady Mitchell, Misses Bedwell, Solomon, Gray, R.R.C., Villiers, Gooding, Northover, Bryson, Marshall, Elma Smith; Sisters and Nurses:—Mrs. Berens Dowdeswell, Mrs. Eeles, Mrs. Mousley, Mrs. Temple, Misses B. Treasure, E. MacIntyre, A. Schuller, E. Williams, G. Anderson, Agnes Barclay.

A long discussion took place on the Midwives Bill to which different Members contributed. The main criticism of this discussion was the recognition, implied in the Bill, that "Nurse-Midwives" who do not possess the qualification of State Registered Nurse can (when not employed as midwives) undertake general nursing if the Local Authority so decides. The Bill may be said actually to give what may be regarded as Governmental authority, or at least approval, to the system that local authorities shall be permitted to employ women, for the nursing of the sick

poor in their own homes, who do not possess the minimum nursing standard of qualification recognised by the State. It was also pointed out that a certain danger was involved in connection with the midwifery done by those women as, without a thorough training in general nursing, they were not likely to recognise all the cases which it was inexpedient for them to nurse when attending upon midwifery cases. Criticism also arose on the use of the term nurse-midwife to the effect that it indicated a kind of hybrid branch of the nursing profession which was without definite legal recognition and yet was accorded a pseudo recognition in the Bill which was likely to lead to confusion in standards. A vote of thanks was passed to Miss Breay for the help which she had rendered to the Executive Committee in drafting the letters to the Minister and for all the assistance she had given in connection with the position raised by the projected measure.

THE MIDWIVES BILL.

We reported last month that the Association had asked the Minister of Health to receive a deputation from the Association (with reference to the Bill to amend the Midwives Act 1902-1926) in order that we might place before him the reasons why, in the opinion of the Association, it is important, both in the interests of the sick poor and for the greater protection of the qualifications of State Registered Nurses, that State Certified Midwives, employed under local supervising authorities, whether directly by them or indirectly through voluntary organisations, shall, if engaged in nursing duties, hold the qualification of State Registered Nurse. We regret that Sir Kingsley Wood has declined to receive a deputation as he considers it to be impracticable to include the provisions suggested.

The Association has addressed the following letter to the Minister which we reproduce here, as it will explain to the Members our reasons for suggesting amendment to the Bill which, admirable as it is in many respects, is in others likely to serve as a means of perpetuating the nursing of the sick by inadequately qualified women, although the Nurses' Registration Acts have been in operation since 1919.

Letter to the Minister of Health.

Royal British Nurses' Association,
194, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7.

June 17th, 1936.

The Right Hon. Sir Kingsley Wood, P.C., M.P.,
Ministry of Health,
Whitehall, S.W.1.

SIR,—

We beg to acknowledge receipt of the letter of 10th inst. from your Private Secretary, conveying your reply to our communication of 2nd June. I am to express the disappointment, which will be felt by Members of the Royal British Nurses' Association, on learning your decision not to include, in the Midwives Bill now before Parliament, any provision which will safeguard the interests of the sick poor in regard to general nursing. May we respectfully place before you the reasons for our apprehensions of injury to those, and to State Registered Nurses, unless the Bill provides that, when the duties of the whole-time employees of local authorities or voluntary organisa-

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