

Royal British Nurses' Association.

THE ANNUAL MEETING.

THE annual meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association was held on July 21st, at 12.30, at the Pavilion, Brighton; a special train conveying a large number of members and friends from London. Dr. Hollis presided over the meeting, and among those present were Dr. Bezly Thorne (Hon. Secretary), Dr. Bedford Fenwick (Treasurer), Miss Wood (Secretary), Mrs. Fenwick (late Matron St. Bartholomew's Hospital), Miss Cartwright (sister of Gordon House Home Hospital), Miss Fitzpatrick (Ryde Infirmary), Mrs. Harbin (Children's Hospital, Glasgow), Miss Mackey (Throat Hospital), Miss Ridley (Paralysis Hospital, Regent's Park), Miss Ross (Fever Hospital, Fulham), and Miss Scott (Matron Sussex County Hospital).

THE ANNUAL REPORT.

Dr. BEZLY THORNE (Honorary Secretary) read the annual Report as follows:—

"The General Council has much pleasure in presenting its annual Report to the fourth general meeting of members. The total number of medical men and Nurses now on the roll of the Association is 2,818. The numerical growth of the Association has been of necessity, in some degree, checked by the more stringent conditions which have been imposed on candidates for membership, by the rule which came into force at the commencement of the present year, making it obligatory on members to fulfil the same conditions as to training which already obtained with regard to admission to the Register. By this step, the Association has adopted one and the same standard of efficiency for all those who may desire to share in the various advantages which it offers to the members of the Nursing profession; and what it may lose in numbers it will doubtless gain in quality. Since the last annual meeting, the Association has lost the services of two Vice-Presidents, Sir Prescott Hewett and Sir William MacCormac, the one by death and the other by resignation. The General Council has, however, the pleasure to announce that the office of Vice-President has been graciously accepted by her Grand-Ducal Highness Princess Louis of Battenberg, the daughter of an illustrious English Princess, whose devotion to the sick and suffering and to the advance of Nursing will long be remembered. The following gentlemen have also been elected Vice-Presidents: Dr. Octavius Sturges, Dr. John Williams, Dr. Mitchinson of Lincoln, and Mr. Sibley."

The annual Conversazione, which was held on the 4th of December last, will be memorable in the annals of the Association as having been honoured by the presence of Her Royal Highness the President, who made the first distribution of badges to the members. On that occasion, a small charge was made for admission, with the result that the expenses of the gathering were completely covered instead of having to be partially met, as on former occasions, by private contributions. The Council entertains no doubt that this arrangement will commend itself to the members of the Association. On the 18th of March, a large and influential meeting was held in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House, under the presidency of the Lord Mayor, in support of the application for a Royal Charter. A resolution in favour of the petition, proposed by Sir William Savory, and seconded and supported by other speakers, was carried unanimously. It having become apparent that the efficiency of the Executive Committee would be enhanced if the office of Treasurer were held by an active member of that body, Dr. Bedford Fenwick was elected to fill that post at the meeting of the General Council held on the 8th of April, and he has continued in that capacity to

exercise the chief oversight of the finances of the Association with the ability and success which had marked his efforts during his tenure of the office of medical honorary secretary. Dr. Bezly Thorne was, on the same occasion, elected to fill the position vacated by Dr. Fenwick. The General Council have much pleasure in reporting that her Royal Highness the President has been graciously pleased to accept the first award of the Princess Helena Medal for conspicuous services rendered to the cause of nursing, and that it has been decided to bestow that distinction this year on Sister Henrietta, of Kimberley Hospital, South Africa, in recognition of the efforts which she has made towards bringing about the legal registration of Nurses in Cape Colony. (Loud applause.)

In pursuance of the benevolent schemes of the Associations, pensions of £20 a year have been awarded to Mary Ann Sandford and Mary Reeves, members of the Association, who, having become disabled by age and infirmity from pursuing their calling, and having no other means of support, had fallen into indigence. Grants amounting in all to £18 have been made to members who have been temporarily disabled by illness, and in another case the Committee defrayed the cost of temporary residence in a convalescent home and the railway expenses incurred in the journeys to and fro. There is ample scope for extending the usefulness of the Association in this direction, whenever the funds available for the purpose may justify increased expenditure, and it is largely with this object in view that the Association is seeking to be incorporated. The institution of a sick pay and benefit fund, as proposed at the last annual meeting, is one of the projects which the Council desires to see fulfilled, but the initial difficulties which beset such a scheme have not yet been overcome. The subject is still engaging the attention of the Executive Committee.

In the last Annual Report it was stated "that the General Council proposes during the coming year to adopt such measures as may seem advisable to increase public interest in the question of Registration and to bring about the legal incorporation of the Association." In order to attain these objects a petition has been presented to the Queen in Council, by her Royal Highness Princess Christian, as President of the Association, praying for the grant of a Royal Charter of Incorporation; and the Council deem it incumbent on them to express the gratitude which every member must feel for this gracious act on the part of her Royal Highness. The petition is now under the consideration of the Privy Council. It meets with strenuous opposition on the part of certain London and Provincial Hospitals, and is supported with no less energy by a still greater number of other Hospitals and Nurse-training Institutions. The arguments for and against the petition will be publicly heard by the Privy Council in due course. The General Council desires to express its appreciation of the untiring labours which the Treasurer of the Association has devoted to the furtherance of this object.

The establishment of the Home of Rest for Nurses in this town, which was one of the aims of the Association, was, as reported to the last Annual Meeting, effected by an independent body of its members, to whom the cordial thanks of the Association are due. This meeting will be glad to learn that the scheme has met with a measure of success which passes expectation. A great number of Nurses have gladly availed themselves of the benefits of the Home during the past year, and it is satisfactory to know that it is in a prosperous condition with regard to its finances. Its doors will be generously opened this afternoon to any members of the Association who may desire to inspect the arrangements and to partake of its hospitality.

The Register of Trained Nurses, which bears the names and qualifications of 1,829 Nurses, has this year engaged

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