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One hundred years ago

Asylum workers' association

The annual meeting of this Association was held on March 28th at the rooms of the Medical Society of London. Sir James Crichton Browne, M.D., F.R.S., presided, and there was a large attendance. The annual report, which was presented by the Honorary Secretary, Dr. Shuttleworth, stated that the Association was founded in July, 1895, under the presidency of the late Sir B. W. Richardson, for the purpose of improving the status of asylum nurses and attendants, of providing a home or homes of rest for those requiring such help, and of enlisting public sympathy with a class of workers whose services, being performed in the seclusion of asylum life, were apt to be overlooked. Up to the close of 1897, 2,534 asylum workers had joined the Association; a journal, called the *Asylum News*, had been published monthly; and although this had been gratuitously sent to each member, a fair balance had been maintained at the bank. Three cases had been beneficially aided by the "Home of Rest" Fund. Representations had been made to the lord Chancellor and to the Lunacy Commissioners as to the pension provisions of the Lunacy Bill of 1897; and a petition, setting forth the view of attendants and nurses as well as of the principal officers (with upwards of 4,000 signatures from 40 asylums), had recently been presented to his lordship in view of contemplated legislation. The provisions of the Local Government Bill for Ireland, as affecting asylum interest, were under consideration. The adoption of the report was moved by Sir James Crichton Browne, who pointed out the utility of an Association including all ranks of asylum workers, proper *esprit de corps* being promoted by intercommunication between scattered groups of members, and the asylum service being welded into a compact whole. He deprecated trade-unionism, but showed how useful the Association might be in voicing the views of its members. Referring to certain disparaging remarks which had been made as to mental nurses, the Chairman urged the importance of their steadily maintaining their claim to be regarded "as a branch – aye, as the highest branch – of the great nursing profession," and spoke of the advisability of their having a period of training in corporeal nursing in addition to that in ordinary asylum duty. He mentioned with approval the high degree of attainment shown by many of the candidates in the examinations of the Medico-Psychological Association. In conclusion, Sir James paid a high tribute to the qualities of heart, as well as head, which he had found amongst the ranks of asylum nurses and attendants. Mrs. Creighton (wife of the Bishop of London) seconded the adoption of the report; and that of the financial statement (which showed a balance in hand of £95 18s. 4d.) was moved by Dr. Savage and seconded by Dr. Nicolson, C.B. A resolution in favour of the establishment of homes of rest for asylum workers was moved by Mr. F. D. Mocatta, and seconded by the Rev. H. Hawkins, and various formal resolutions and votes of thanks brought a very successful meeting to a close.

REFERENCE

British Medical Journal, 2 April 1898, 905–906.

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Corrigendum

Tyrer, P., *BJP*, 173, 359–360. The second paragraph, third column, page 359 was printed incorrectly, and should read:

The major finding of the PRiSM study that will reverberate uncomfortably in many quarters is that standard case management is at least as good as intensive case management in its general effects on symptoms and disability and for people with lower levels of impairment is sometimes superior (Wykes *et al*, 1998, this issue). As a natural consequence of this the cost advantages found in previous studies of intensive case management and assertive community treatment were not shown in the PRiSM study. As admissions were similar in both teams intensive case management was significantly more expensive than standard management and offered no apparent advantages whatsoever.