

Hospital Association is fitting memorial to late local minister

"STRONGER than armies is an idea whose time has come" may well be applied to the spontaneous thought conceived by the late Rev. G. Renton Brown, minister of Stonehouse Congregational Church from 1948 to 1951.

This energetic youth leader quickly recognised a need for service among the young folks in the local hospital where he first formed a group of Cub Scouts in Ward 5 and later a Scout Troop.

His death in 1951 at the early age of 40 was deeply felt within his Congregation, throughout the village, and especially at the hospital where he was affectionately known as "Rikki".

The good seed of helpfulness having been sown

among the patients, especially long-term youngsters, it was decided by those known as "Friends of the Hospital", who appreciated his services that if at all possible Rikki's memory should be perpetuated.

To this end, an open meeting was held within the hospital later that same year when Stonehouse Hospital Welfare Auxiliary Association was born.

This Association, first of its kind in Lanarkshire, has now fulfilled 22 years of wonderful service to patients and staff and is still in excellent heart.

It consists of a Committee of interested hard-working

people drawn from Stonehouse and surrounding districts. At present there are representatives from Hamilton, Larkhall, Stonehouse, Strathaven, Sandford and Wishaw, together with the medical Superintendent, Dr. R. Pettigrew; Matron Mrs M. Barr, one member of the Board of Management for Motherwell, Hamilton and District Hospitals, with ex-officio members including the Parish minister, Dr. Alexander Gemmill and the Parish Priest, Rev. Father McCann. Meetings take place at the hospital once per month.

VOLUNTARY

Purely voluntary in character, the Association seeks to provide amenities not supplied within the framework of the National Health Service.

First chairman of the Association in 1951 was Mr T. Bryson Corbett (Avonholm, Glassford) who held this office for over eight years, and so far has been the longest serving member in this capacity.

Under his guidance the organisation flourished with great success, the main fundraising effort being the annual Garden Fete, held in the hospital grounds.

The Association was fortunate at that time to have the outside interest and assistance of the late Miss Greta Lauder (niece of Sir Harry Lauder of Lauder Ha', Strathaven) who was influential in obtaining "star" personalities to perform the opening ceremonies.

By personal appearances of Jimmy Logan, Jack Radcliffe, Jack Milroy and Rikki Fulton (Francie and Josie) as well as Stanley Baxter, the