

The Draft Petition to be presented against the grant was considered, clause by clause, and as amended the Draft was approved.

REPLY TO THE LETTER OF THE COUNCIL TO MATRONS OF HOSPITALS.

The President presented a tabulated statement of the replies from Matrons of Hospitals to the following letter:—

British College of Nurses,
431, Oxford Street, London, W.1.

DEAR MADAM,—I recently forwarded to you information notifying the munificent Gift of £100,000, from an anonymous Donor, for the benefit of Registered Nurses, to found a College of Nurses, to be administered by themselves.

My Council will esteem it a favour if you will inform me if a representative of the College may address a Meeting of the Nursing Staff at Hospital to lay before them the aims of the British College of Nurses, so that they may have the opportunity of availing themselves of its benefits if they choose.

Anticipating a favourable reply,

I am, Yours faithfully,

ETHEL G. FENWICK,
President.

To the Matron.

One hundred and thirty-two letters were addressed to the Matrons of leading Training Schools enclosing a stamped-addressed envelope for reply.

Result.

Accepted	27
Refused by Committee	4
Refused by Matron	48
Refused by Sister-Tutor	1
Not Accepted	3
Referred	5
No Reply	44
	132

The following letters as specimens of reasons for refusal were read:—

“In reply to your letter in which you ask to send a representative of your College to speak to my nurses, I must explain that it is compulsory for the whole of the Staff here to belong to the College of Nursing.

All the trained staff are College Members. Also we have a large branch of the Student Nurses' Association here, it being compulsory for every nurse to join on completion of the period of trial and the signing of her agreement.

I am not in favour of confusing them by asking them to join another College. When they have finished their training and drift away they may do as they choose, but if they gain promotion and remain in more responsible positions, then they must join up and pass automatically to the College Register.

Please understand that I am not unsympathetic towards the British College, but I fail to see how my nurses would benefit by joining a second one.”

“I am sorry to refuse your request for a meeting of the British College of Nursing [Nurses.—Ed.] to speak here. But the majority of those trained already belong to the College of Nursing, and those in training are always encouraged to join as soon as they are registered. It is unnecessary, therefore, for anyone to speak here on the British College of Nursing [Nurses.—Ed.], as the nurses are scarcely in a position to join both Colleges.

I am a Member of the College of Nursing, and I do not wish to see another College for Nurses started, therefore I shall not grant permission for the representative of any other College for nurses to address them.”

“In reference to your communication I, and practically all our Nursing Staff, are members of the College of Nursing. I have not yet been able to grasp the necessity of the establishment of a second College of Nursing [Nurses.—Ed.], and I think any propaganda should preferably be directed to enlarge the membership of the existing College, under the circumstances, I do not feel disposed to accede to your request.”

“As a Founder Member of the College of Nursing and a keen supporter of that body, I feel that the scheme to set up what must be a rival organisation is much to be deplored. Most of my nurses join the College of Nursing on completing their training, and I do not feel justified in allowing a speaker from the British College of Nurses to address them.”

A Sister-Tutor writes: “Matron has given me your letter for which I have to thank you. I am sorry to say the time of the nurses is very much taken up with their studies, and we have arranged other lectures for this year for them, so it will not be convenient to us that you send a representative to address a meeting of nurses at present.”

The autocratic tone of these letters, specimens of many other refusals, was severely criticised by the Council—proving as they do the deplorable deprivation of personal and professional responsibility of the Nursing Staffs, which must inevitably depreciate character and the tone of the Nursing Schools.

It was agreed to send thanks to the Matrons who had replied courteously and were prepared to make it possible for the Nursing Staffs to attend a meeting and judge for themselves whether or no they wished to support a self-governing institution of State Registered Nurses, and that the Secretary should consult their convenience concerning dates and speakers. Also to reply to certain Matrons refusing this right to Registered Nurses. It was also agreed to represent to the Matron who handed over the official communication from the Council to the Sister-Tutor for reply that she was delegating to this official a duty which was in the province either of the Matron or the Committee.

THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL.

The Draft of a Leaflet on the Work of the Council up to date was considered, and its publication sanctioned.

CONFERENCE ON NURSING, LABOUR PARTY.

It was reported that the four delegates of the Council to the Conference on Nursing, convened by the Labour Party at the Caxton Hall, on January 28th, Mrs. Fenwick, Mrs. Andrews, Miss Cochrane and Miss Allbutt, all attended, and the President and Mrs. Andrews took part in the discussion. There was a consensus of expressed opinion that a vocational, that is a self-governing Association of Nurses could alone form and express nursing opinion, the basic policy of the British College of Nurses. No resolutions were formally adopted for incorporation in the Labour Party's Final Report, but the discussion was of a very useful character, evincing as it did the determined demand of a group of

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)