

The audited accounts showed a balance in hand of £74 17s. The President pointed out that this was due not only to subscriptions, but to the generosity of many donors during the past year, and that all would be needed in connection with the promotion of the work of the Society.

The audited accounts were adopted.

#### THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The Executive Committee for the ensuing year was then elected, on the proposition of Miss M. A. Harvey, seconded by Miss A. E. Hulme. The new members are Mrs. Strong, President of the Scottish Nurses' Association; Miss Ramsden, President of the Irish Nurses' Association; Miss A. M. Bushby, President of the National Union of Trained Nurses; Miss Le Geyt, Delegate of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses' League; Miss Willes, Delegate of the Queen's Hospital Birmingham Nurses' League; Miss Pote Hunt, President of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Rochester Nurses' League; Miss Parker Spann, President of the Beckett Street Infirmary Leeds Nurses' League.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

##### REGISTRATION UP-TO-DATE.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said I propose to give a short *résumé* of the Nursing College scheme as it affects State Registration of Nurses, as I am fully aware how deeply interested members of the Society are in this vital question.

In December, 1915, the Hon. Arthur Stanley, M.P., Chairman of the Joint War Committee, issued a letter to chairmen of hospitals and others proposing to organize the Nursing Profession through a voluntary College of Nursing. In it he made the following statement *re* State Registration:—

##### VOLUNTARY OR STATE REGISTRATION.

"For something like 25 years there has been more or less active agitation in favour of the Registration of Trained Nurses, but for causes into which it is unnecessary here to enter, this movement and others of a similar nature have hitherto failed to attain the object sought.

"There is no unanimous feeling either amongst those responsible for the training of Nurses or amongst Nurses themselves in favour of any system of State Registration. Nevertheless, I am convinced that something should be done at once to co-ordinate the various interests involved, and, without prejudice to ultimate developments, whether by legislation or otherwise. My own view is that for the time at least we must rely upon a voluntary scheme of co-operation amongst the Nurse Training Schools throughout the country.

"With this end in view it is suggested that a College of Nursing shall be founded. This

College shall be a purely voluntary body, which will aim at securing the support and sympathy of the Governors of Hospitals to which Nurse Training Schools are attached, of the leading members of the medical profession, of the Matrons and Lecturers at these Nurse Training Schools; and last, but not least, of the Trained Nurses themselves."

At a meeting at St. Thomas' Hospital on April 7th, Mr. Stanley said: "He had heard two main objections to the scheme—the first, that it would postpone State Registration of Nurses; and the second, that it was not the right time to bring forward the proposal when so many nurses were away on duty at the Front and elsewhere. He came into this business with an open and entirely ignorant mind, and very soon discovered that the overwhelming feeling of the nurses, in whatever grade of the profession they were, was in favour of State Registration, and he had, therefore, been constrained to put State Registration as the first of the three fundamental principles upon which the College was founded."

On June 5th last I learned that a Bill had been drafted by Mr. Stanley's advisers for the State Registration of Nurses; so that the great principle for which the members of this Society have been working since it was founded fourteen years ago, the Registration of Trained Nurses by Act of Parliament, has borne the test of investigation. So far, so good. And just here I want to congratulate Mr. Stanley on having the courage to own publicly that he had failed in the first instance to grasp the strength of the almost universal demand upon the part of thoughtful nurses and others for legal status, and in less than six months to be ready to support it.

We will now return to the action taken by this Society and the Central Committee for the State Registration of Nurses, of which you form a constituent part, when Mr. Stanley's Letter was circulated. No copy was sent officially to either this Society or to the Central Committee for State Registration; nor, as far as I am aware, to any organizations of trained nurses known to have been in favour of legislation. Individuals received it; I was not amongst them. I am inclined to think that this apparent discourtesy was unintentional, in so far as Mr. Stanley was concerned—who has frankly said, "he came into this business with an open and entirely ignorant mind." Presumably he did not know of our existence; but we cannot exonerate his advisers upon this plea.

Naturally we proceeded to show that we were very much alive. Your Executive considered the Circular Letter clause by clause, on January 8th, and passed a resolution affirming: "That the proposed scheme was dangerous to the best interests of the profession of nursing, and that the delegates on the Central Committee should be instructed to oppose it and push forward the demand for legal Registration."

A meeting of the Central Committee was held

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)