

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.*

In presenting the First Annual Report of the British College of Nurses to its Annual Meeting, it is well to recapitulate briefly the origin and foundation of the College. The Council, therefore, reminds the Fellows and Members that on April 29th, 1926, the British College of Nurses was founded by an anonymous Donor, who most generously gave Investments for £100,000 for its Endowment, on condition that Dr. Bedford Fenwick should act as a Trustee and Treasurer of the College for life, and for objects and methods of working, which were embodied in a Trust Deed.

In the May issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, an explanatory Article was published, concerning this great gift, and in June, this Article was reprinted and sent by post to the majority of Nurses on the General part of the State Register of Nurses, excluding those registered under Rule 9 (1) (g), informing them of the terms upon which during the customary "Period of Grace," they could obtain Fellowship or Membership of the College.

On July 20th, September 25th, and October 23rd, the Trustees elected in all 14 Fellows and one Member, and appointed them as Officers and Council of the College. On the latter date, the Council, being then fully formed, the Trustees handed over to them the management of the affairs of the College; and the Council and its Committees have held frequent meetings during the past year.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING was at once chosen to be the official Journal of the College, and it was arranged that in order to keep its Fellows and Members acquainted with all the proceedings of the Council, and with all necessary Notices of its work, a copy of the Journal should be sent by post to every Fellow and Member each month.

The Council then devoted its energies to the organisation of the College, and its future work, and has now placed these on a firm foundation. Much time has been required for the careful scrutiny of the large number of Applications received for Fellowship and Membership, and the Council has much pleasure in reporting that by June 30th, 1927, it had elected 613 Fellows and 316 Members of the College. These are resident in every part of Great Britain, in Canada, Australia, India, Africa, New Zealand, and the West Indies, so that they are eminently representative of the Nurses of the British Empire.

The Council devoted much time and attention to the design for the College Seal, and the colours and form of the Academic Gowns and Caps to be worn by the Council, and are pleased to learn that the latter have been much admired by all who have seen them.

The designing, preparation, and final production of the College Diplomas demanded most careful and prolonged consideration, but the universal pleasure which has been expressed by those who have received these handsome documents has fully repaid the Council for the trouble taken over this important matter.

The Draft Bye-Laws, defining the Constitution, Objects, and methods of working of the College, and its Council, demanded and received most careful consideration first by the Trustees, then by the Council, and finally by the Solicitor of the College, and a leading member of the Chancery Bar, and are now to be considered by this first Annual Meeting of the College.

In November, the Council arrived at the conviction that the College required definite Headquarters in London. After prolonged negotiations, Dr. Bedford Fenwick suc-

ceeded in obtaining for that purpose the important premises in Portland Place, into which the College moved in the beginning of May; and which have received the warm admiration of all who have visited them. It is needless to emphasise the large amount of trouble which the decorations and the furnishings of the house have involved, and which have been almost entirely carried out by the President.

It is the duty of the Council to add that the very large expense incurred in the purchase of the Lease, in structural repairs, in the decorations and in the furnishing and fitting up of the premises, amounting to more than £3,700, could not have been met out of the income of the College in its first year of working, except for the fact that the Trustees have most generously lent the College £2,000 for that purpose.

On April 29th—the anniversary of its foundation—the College held its first Public Meeting. This took place at the Church House, Westminster, and was attended by nearly 400 Fellows, Members and their friends. The proceedings were opened by Prayers, on this occasion read by the Rev. H. Lewis Donaldson, Canon of Westminster. Addresses were given by Dr. Bedford Fenwick, Sir Richard Barnett, M.P., the President, Mrs. Strong, and Mrs. Lancelot Andrews, and then more than 300 Diplomas were handed by the President to those Fellows and Members who were able to attend, for that purpose. Finally, the Audited Accounts, which will be brought before this Meeting, show that the Council has set aside out of this year's Income, £2,000 towards the foundation of the College Pension Fund. The same amount will be set aside and invested each year, for ten years, so as to accumulate a Capital of about £25,000, which will grow by the yearly addition of £2,000 each year in future. In 1935, and in each future year, one Pension of £52 a year for life will be awarded by the College to Fellows, and one Pension of £26 a year for life will be awarded to Members who are in urgent need of such help. It can, therefore, be easily calculated to what a large amount the Capital of the Pension Fund will grow in future years, and how many Pensions the College will be able to bestow. For the first time, then, an Association of Nurses has established a real Pension Fund, free from any suspicion of charity or patronage, and able in future years to relieve much of the poverty and distress from which so many nurses have suffered in their old age, in the past.

The Legal Protection of Fellows and Members is also one of the benefits conferred by the College in cases in which the Council considers action to be desirable. One such case has occurred during the past year, and Counsel's opinion has been obtained on behalf of a Fellow in peculiarly hard circumstances.

A Club Room has also been arranged at 39, Portland Place, W., open from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., where tea can be procured from 4 to 6.

The Report is an historical record of the events of the past fourteen months, a record which shows that the foundations of our College have been well and truly laid; the superstructure has yet to be raised on these foundations, and in its erection the energy, the enthusiasm, the wisdom, the idealism, and the vision of every Fellow and Member should have full scope. The Council, in its Report, has so far dealt mainly with the material aspect of the College, but it believes that deep in the hearts of its Fellows and Members is the hope that through its means the education of Nurses will be placed on a broader and more complete basis.

Preliminary and Post-Graduate courses of instruction will no doubt appeal to, and be desired by, our future nurses, for, in the past, many nurses have paid considerable sums to supplement and make more complete the training they

* Presented to the Annual Meeting of Fellows and Members of the British College of Nurses (39, Portland Place, London, W.) held at 11, Chandos Street, London, W., on July 15th, 1927.

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