

Letter from Secretary B.C.N. on its behalf to Miss Lloyd Still.

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

February 17th, 1927.

DEAR MADAM,—Your letter in reply to the letter of the President, asking that a meeting might be held at St. Thomas's Hospital, to inform the nursing staff of the aims and constitution of the British College of Nurses, was read to the Council on January 29th, and I was instructed to thank you for it and to draw your attention to the fact that the British College of Nurses is a Corporation of Registered Nurses associated together for professional purposes, giving expression to the opinion of the nursing profession as such.

The British College of Nurses disclaims any rivalry with the College of Nursing, Ltd., which is a Corporation of persons not necessarily professional, of which the executive power is largely in the hands of non-professional persons, and in expressing an opinion on nursing does not necessarily put forward professional conclusions.

Now that the nurses have been granted legal status under an Act of Parliament, my Council consider they have as much right to associate themselves in a vocational association as medical practitioners, barristers, and other professional classes, and they hope that the Matrons of large training schools will in the future realise and encourage this right on the part of the Registered Nurses of whom they form part.

I am, yours faithfully,

(Signed) GRACE REYNOLDS HALE,
Secretary.

Miss Lloyd Still, C.B.E., R.R.C.,
Matron, St. Thomas's Hospital, London.

Letter from Miss Lloyd Still to President B.C.N.

St. Thomas's Hospital, S.E.1.

February 18th, 1927.

DEAR MADAM,—I have received a letter, dated February 17th, from the Secretary of the new organisation known as "The British College of Nurses" in acknowledgment of one I wrote to you in answer to yours of January 10th, wherein permission was sought to address a meeting of the nursing staff at St. Thomas's Hospital.

I feel sure the communication of the 17th inst. could not have been sent with your sanction, as it seems to betray an ignorance of the status of the College of Nursing with its professional membership of over 25,000. We have a few doctors and laymen on our Council and Committees, but they act in an advisory capacity only and have no power to vote.

I need not remind you that the College of Nursing is affiliated to the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain. I beg you therefore to refer to Article III of the Constitution of that Council. In paragraph 3 of that Article it is clearly stated that among the societies eligible for affiliation are:—

"Professional Association of Nurses formed for the benefit of nurses, the members of which hold qualifications of training acceptable to the Council."

It is because the College of Nursing fulfils these conditions that it was "acceptable to the Council" for affiliation.

Therefore the statement made in the Secretary's letter of February 17th that the College of Nursing is

"a Corporation of persons not necessarily professional, of which the executive power is largely in the hands of non-professional persons, and in expressing an opinion on nursing does not necessarily put forward professional conclusions"

(I quote from the Secretary's letter), is inaccurate and misleading.

I am happy to note that the Authorities of your new organisation state that they disclaim any rivalry with the College of Nursing. I hope, therefore, that the constructive suggestion which I made in my former letter to you may materialise, so that this unhappy division in nursing politics may be healed, to the lasting honour and advantage of our nursing profession.

I propose, in order that the nursing profession and the general public may not be misled by inaccurate statements, to publish this correspondence, and I am sure you will agree with me as to the advisability of this action.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) A. LLOYD STILL,
Matron.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, S.R.N.

Letter from the Secretary B.C.N. on its behalf to Miss Lloyd Still.

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

March 1st, 1927.

DEAR MADAM,—Your letter dated February 18th addressed to the President was brought before the Meeting of my Council on February 26th, and I was directed to convey to you their considered opinion upon your communication, and to assure you that my previous letter contained official instructions.

My Council took exception to your statement that my letter "is inaccurate and misleading" "as it seems to betray an ignorance of the status of the College of Nursing."

1. With all due deference, it appears that the inaccurate and misleading statement appears in the second paragraph of your reply when you state that:

"We have a few Doctors and laymen on our Council and Committee, but they act in an advisory capacity only and have no power to vote."

Upon referring to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the College of Nursing, Ltd., it is provided under the heading of "Members," page 12,

"The subscribers hereto shall be Members of the College."

The names of these subscribers are printed on page 33 and are those of seven laymen.

And it is provided that any person appointed to be a Member of the Council, shall by virtue of such appointment become forthwith a Member of the College, and so long as he is a Member of the Council he enjoys the privilege of the vote.

Thus my statement in my previous letter "that the College of Nursing, Ltd., is a Corporation of persons not necessarily professional, of which the executive power is largely in the hands of non-professional persons, and in expressing an opinion on Nursing does not necessarily put forward professional conclusions" was perfectly accurate, as from its inception the Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd., has consisted of lay men and women, medical practitioners and nurses, and of its executive officials four are lay and medical men, and one an unregistered nurse.

2. Before accepting the request of the College of Nursing, Ltd., for affiliation with the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain you omit to record the fact that an amendment was previously adopted by the National Council making it imperative that all delegates to be accepted to represent the various Nurses' Organisations must be Registered Nurses.

This amendment was incorporated in the Constitution of the National Council to exclude lay and medical delegates being nominated by any affiliating Association, as might have been done by the College of Nursing, Ltd.

3. My Council are quite in sympathy with the organisation of one vocational Association of Registered Nurses, and hope that the time is not far distant when the Nursing Profession will be accorded complete freedom for this purpose, a principle so successfully adopted by other bodies of professional persons.

This unity in our profession cannot be accomplished until the laity and the medical profession recognise the basic right of nurses to self-government, a power which we feel would be utilised by them in the very best interests of the community.

My Council desires to thank you for sending our previous correspondence to the press as it seeks the widest publicity for the work which it hopes to accomplish for the benefit of the Nursing Profession and the Public.

I am,

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) GRACE REYNOLDS HALE,
Secretary.

To,
Miss Lloyd Still, C.B.E., R.R.C.,
The Matron,
St. Thomas's Hospital, London.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)