

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

The Ninth Meeting of the Council of the British College of Nurses was held at 431, Oxford Street, London, W. 1, on Saturday, March 26th, at 3 p.m. The President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, was in the Chair, and the following members were present:—Miss M. Brey and Miss H. L. Pearse, Vice-Presidents; Miss G. Allbutt, Mrs. Lancelot Andrews, Miss A. M. Bushby, Miss M. S. Cochrane, R.R.C., Miss D. K. Graham, Miss I. Macdonald, Miss E. L. Macaulay, O.B.E., R.R.C., Miss A. Reeves, R.R.C., Miss S. A. Villiers, Fellows; and Miss E. J. Haswell, Member.

Prayers having been read by the Secretary, the Minutes of the last meeting, which had been previously circulated, were taken as read, and confirmed.

Statement re Headquarters.

Arising out of the Minutes the President reported progress at the new Headquarters, 39, Portland Place, W., and said it was hoped that it would be ready in a few weeks.

Method of Obligation for Those Unable to Attend at Headquarters.

The question of Fellows and Members at a distance taking the Obligation had been raised at the last Meeting of the Council. The President reminded the Council that before any Fellow or Member of the College can receive her Diploma it is necessary that she should take the Obligation and sign the Roll of the College.

In most cases, therefore, this Obligation is taken, and the signature made, in the presence of the President, or of Members of the Council, in the Offices of the College in London. To meet the convenience of many Fellows and Members who live far from London, she placed the following Regulation before the Council for its consideration:—

"Fellows or Members of the British College of Nurses who are unable to attend at the Headquarters House in London for the purpose, may take the Obligation in the presence of a Magistrate, or a Justice of the Peace, or a Commissioner for Oaths. She will read this standing, and then sign her name on the accompanying slip of paper, taking an oath, or making an affirmation, that she will observe the Obligation and that she has written the signature. And the Magistrate, or the Commissioner will then sign the accompanying form No. 3 as witness to this, for which the usual fee is half-a-crown. This signed form, and the accompanying slip with her signature thereon, which is to be pasted into the College Roll, must then be forwarded to the Secretary at the College House in London, in the enclosed envelope, registered, with the copy of the Obligation which is sent for her to read."

The Regulation was approved, and it was directed it should be placed on the Minutes.

Correspondence.

LETTER FROM THE PRIVY COUNCIL.

A letter from the Clerk of the Council was read enclosing a copy of the amended Draft Charter for which the College of Nursing, Ltd., has applied, stating that Petitions for and against the grant of the Charter must be received not later than May 3rd. Action was taken in regard to it.

Professional Self-Government.

The following letter was received from Miss A. Lloyd-

Still, Matron of St. Thomas's Hospital, in continuance of the Correspondence published:—

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

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

March 4th, 1927.

DEAR MADAM,—I have received a letter from Miss Hale dated March 1st, in reply to one I wrote to you on February 18th.

Once more I have to point out that your secretary has written without the knowledge of the facts which I believe you to possess. Her quotations from the Articles of Association of the College of Nursing are correct, but I believe you are aware that the procedure of the College is governed by Article 42 of the Articles of Association, under which only nurses on the Register of the College are entitled to vote for the election of members to the Council of the College.

As the Council is the Governing Body of the College, and as it is elected by the votes of the nurse members only, it follows that the College is a self-governing association of nurses, and therefore, as I said in my previous letter, any statement to the contrary is inaccurate and misleading.

So far as I am concerned, this correspondence is now at an end.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) A. LLOYD STILL,

Matron St. Thomas's Hospital,
Superintendent Nightingale Training
School.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, S.R.N.

The Council directed that a reply be sent to Miss Lloyd Still.

OBJECTION TO THE NAMES OF PERSONS PROVED GUILTY OF THEFT BEING RETAINED ON THE REGISTER.

The following letter was read from Miss Beatrice Kent, F.B.C.N., and it was agreed to thank her for it:—

Letter from Miss Beatrice Kent, F.B.C.N.

To the President The British College of Nurses.

DEAR MADAM,—I have followed with interest, devoid of pleasure, the correspondence between the British College of Nurses and the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, in respect of Elizabeth Shand, who was in October, 1925, proved guilty of theft, and placed on probation for 12 months. As I desire that State Registered Nurses should not allow themselves to be lulled into a sleepy indifference in a matter of such vital importance to the honour of their profession, and the purity of their Register, I would like quite briefly to refer to the letter I sent to the Council of the British College of Nurses in that connection, and which was read and discussed by the Political, Economic and Legal Protection Committee on November 9th, 1926. I then said—and I repeat it—that stern discipline in respect of offences so grave as stealing, should actuate the minds of the members of the General Nursing Council, and that the name of any nurse who has *once* been guilty of theft, should not be retained on the Register.

The Council—upon the recommendation of this Committee—communicated with the G.N.C. asking what steps they intended to take to remove the name of the wrong-doer from the Register, pointing out that it was their *duty* to do so. This as we know they have refused to do, and, adding insult to injury, have declared that their decisions cannot be discussed *with an outside body*.

To call a Council of State Registered Nurses an outside body is as ungenerous as it is untrue, and shows quite an astonishing lack of sense of responsibility, and professional good fellowship. In a subsequent meeting of the G.N.C., we learn that Sir James Verrall stated that the responsibility (in connection with the retention of the name of E. Shand on the Register) *was theirs and theirs alone*. That I emphatically deny. The responsibility of maintaining the Register "pure and undefiled" belongs to every one of its members. Moreover, to claim responsibility and at the same time to repudiate it is a contradiction in terms.

Would the Medical Members of the G.N.C. consent to the retention of the name of a thief on the State Register of the Medical Profession? I challenge them to give me an answer.

I assume that the present position is this, and let us get the facts by heart, in view of the near approach of the Election (G.N.C.).

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