

the year 1927 amounted to 93,883 letters received (exclusive of 22,675 Election Ballot Papers), 172,085 letters despatched (exclusive of 53,287 Election Ballot Papers and Notices) (e) that the Interviews for the year numbered 1,946; (f) that 1,494 Permits for the State Uniform were issued.

#### Leave of Absence.

Supporting the recommendation of the Committee that Miss King, Stenciller in the Registrar's Department, should be granted three months' sick leave on full pay, the Chairman of the Committee (Miss COX-DAVIES) said that Miss King was one of the oldest members of the staff, that her health was in a grave condition owing to eye trouble, and it was hoped that three months' eye rest, with freedom from financial anxiety, would result in her restoration to health.

#### The State Uniform.

The Uniform Committee recommended that duplicate Permits to obtain the State Registered Uniform be issued to eight nurses, the loss of whose Permits was reported six months ago. This was agreed.

It further recommended the approval of five additional firms to make the State Uniform, and the renewal of the yearly contract with Messrs. Boyd-Cooper for the supply of washing overalls.

The recommendations were approved.

#### Date of Next Meeting.

The date of the next meeting was fixed for March 16th. The public business then concluded, and the Press withdrew.

## THE RECENT ELECTION TO THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL.

The following correspondence has taken place in the *Sunday Times* between the President of the British College of Nurses, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, S.R.N., F.B.C.N., and the Hon. Sir Arthur Stanley, Chairman of Council, College of Nursing, Ltd., Treasurer of St. Thomas's Hospital.

#### Lay Interference in the G.N.C. Election.

The *Sunday Times* has been asked by the Council of the British College of Nurses to publish the following resolution passed at a meeting of the Council:—

#### RESOLUTION.

The Council of the British College of Nurses desires to place on record its considered opinion that the action of the joint committee composed of members of the College of Nursing, Ltd., the Poor Law Matrons' Association, and the Association of Hospital Matrons, in accepting a large sum of money from a lay member of the Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd., for the purpose of financing the candidature of its nominees for seats on the General Nursing Council for England and Wales in the recent election, was unethical in a professional sense, subversive of self-government in the nursing profession, and contrary to the whole spirit of the Nurses' Registration Act.

The inevitable result of this action was to overload the General Nursing Council with the protagonists of one organisation, as the cost of circularising the electorate, to candidates who declined to submit to the dictation of the joint committee, was prohibitive.

The Council of the British College of Nurses is further of opinion that matrons and superintendents of nurses should scrupulously refrain from endeavouring to influence the votes of registered nurses who are under their control. Such influence must inevitably result in economic pressure being brought to bear upon what should be a free and unbiased election.

#### Nurses' Grievance.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President of the British College of Nurses, said yesterday to the *Sunday Times*:—

"Under the Nurses' Registration Act, the General Nursing Council for England and Wales is partly elected and partly nominated. The nominations are made by the

Ministry of Health, the Privy Council, and the Board of Education. The elected members are elected by the constituents in the different parts of the nurses' register. Our complaint is that the joint committee referred to in the resolution has accepted money for the purpose of circularising the whole of the constituency of between 40,000 to 50,000 nurses, and that by the exercise of what we regard as this undue influence, the College of Nursing, Ltd., has captured all the eleven seats on the Council open to elected members.

"Our organisation is wholly composed of registered nurses. We have no lay members and no medical members on our Council. Any opinion we express is that of nurses only. The British College of Nurses was endowed in 1926 by an anonymous donation of £100,000. The money was invested in a trust, and we are only permitted to spend the interest."

#### Action Defended.

The Hon. Sir Arthur Stanley, treasurer of St. Thomas's Hospital, stated in an interview with the *Sunday Times*:—

"The action of the joint committee is absolutely in conformity with the action of any other body in similar elections. In the political world it is the invariable practice for the different associations belonging to the different parties to recommend to the electorate the names of those whom they think best qualified as their representatives, and the same procedure is followed at any other election, such as for the Governing Body of the Profession, etc.

"In this case the money necessary to circularise the electors was found by members of all the three bodies mentioned. By far the greater part of the sum received for the purpose came from the nurses themselves, and not from any particular lay member. No money whatever was received from anyone who was not a member of one of the three organisations."

#### A Reply to Sir Arthur Stanley.

To the Editor of the *"Sunday Times."*

SIR,—On behalf of the Council of the British College of Nurses, I beg to thank you for publishing its resolution relating to the recent election of the direct representatives on the General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

Sir Arthur Stanley, the Treasurer of St. Thomas's Hospital and Chairman of the College of Nursing, Ltd., in his comment evades reference to the basic principle upon which that Council formed its conclusions when he says "the action of the Joint Committee is absolutely in conformity with the action of any other body in similar elections."

This statement is inaccurate. The British Medical Association, for instance, does not admit lay persons to power on its Council, and permit them to finance their selected candidates for election on to the General Medical Council. The Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd., is not composed only of members of the nursing profession, but includes wealthy members of the laity, and of the medical profession, and it is the financial influence brought to bear upon the election of our governing body by unprofessional persons on this Council to which we take exception.

I have been unable to verify the statement made by Sir Arthur Stanley that "by far the greater part of the sum received for the purpose came from the nurses themselves," although I have asked for a financial statement from the Chairman of the Joint Committee, with list of subscribers, antecedent to the election.

Sir Arthur Stanley had, apparently, no comment to make on our contention that "matrons and superintendents of nurses should scrupulously refrain from endeavouring to influence the votes of registered nurses who are under their control" because "such influence must inevitably result in economic pressure being brought to bear upon what should be a free and unbiased election."

The constant interference of persons who do not belong to the nursing profession in its ethical and economic affairs is strongly resented by those registered nurses who claim, as responsible professional women, self-government under the Nurses' Registration Acts.

ETHEL G. FENWICK,  
President, British College of Nurses.

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