

4. Letter from Miss Nina D. Gage, introducing Miss Manongdo, from the Philippines, one of the delegates to the Montreal Convention from the Filipino Nurses' Association, who since the Convention has been studying public health nursing at Teachers' College, New York.

Other communications were dealt with.

ELECTION OF FELLOWS AND MEMBERS.

All the applications received were approved and the candidates elected.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The President presented a satisfactory financial statement, £122 17s. had been received during the month.

REPORT OF THE DEPUTATION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY MEDICAL COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The President reported that she had introduced the Deputation of representatives of the College, the Royal British Nurses' Association, and other Nurses' Organisations, which was received by the Medical Parliamentary Committee at the House of Commons, on February 11th, to lay before it their considered opinion in opposition to the retention on the State Register of Nurses found guilty of theft and other misdemeanours.

The Deputation had been very courteously received by the Committee in Room 15, and she had addressed them as follows:—

Gentlemen:

As President of the British College of Nurses, I beg to express to the Parliamentary Medical Committee of the House of Commons the gratitude of its Council for consenting to receive a Deputation of Registered Nurses to place before it their opinion on the retention on the State Register of Nurses by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales of the names of Registered Nurses proved guilty of theft and other misdemeanours.

It will be within the memory of this Committee that the movement for the State Registration of Nurses in this country, which was strenuously opposed by the large majority of the Nurse Training Schools for a quarter of a century, before the Nurses Registration Acts were placed upon the Statute Book, had a twofold object:—

1. The improvement and standardisation of Nursing Education.
2. The maintenance of discipline in the ranks of Registered Nurses.

In the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, authority was conferred upon the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and the duty imposed upon it, of carrying these objects into effect.

It is of the highest importance that the nurses whose names are included in the State Register shall, in the words of the Act, be persons of "good character."

Firstly, because at the present time a sufficient number of candidates of an educated and desirable type are not applying for admission as probationers to the Nurse Training Schools. If it is realised that there is a laxity in retaining on the Register the names of undesirable characters, the supply of suitable probationers will be still further diminished, to the depreciation of the Nurse Training Schools, and the detriment of the Nursing Profession and the public.

Secondly, because Registered Nurses are admitted to the houses of the public on confidential and intimate terms in times of sickness and extremity.

We submit that a member of the public who engages a Registered Nurse should be able to do so with full assur-

ance that no name of a Nurse proved guilty of theft is included in the Register. At present this is not the case.

In addition to the interests of the public those of the Medical and Nursing Professions have to be taken into account.

In their association with Registered Nurses it is imperative that the Medical Profession should be protected in the sick-room from women of doubtful character, such as thieves and drunkards on probation.

In our opinion the General Nursing Council has on three occasions failed in its duty in this connection.

The first case in point is that of a Sister proved guilty of theft at Great Marlborough Street Police Court in November, 1925, bound over in a sum of £5, and placed on probation for twelve months.

The General Nursing Council for England and Wales postponed judgment for the same period, but we maintain that a Registered Nurse proved guilty of theft in a Court of Law, whether sent to prison or not, should *ipso facto* be removed from the Register by the General Nursing Council.

In connection with this case the name of this nurse, under police supervision during 1926, appeared in that year in the published Register of Nurses, which is a guarantee to the public of the integrity of those so registered. In fact, the General Nursing Council was covering a thief, to the danger of the public and the degradation of the Nursing Profession.

The action of the General Nursing Council in connection with this case is the more to be deplored because there appear to be no extenuating circumstances in connection with it. The nurse in question held a position of responsibility as Sister in a large hospital, and was in receipt of an ample salary and emoluments.

The General Nursing Council in making its enquiries did not interview the Matron of the hospital (who is a member of this Deputation), otherwise she could have informed the Council that the delinquent, who spent the night in the cells of a police station, added to her fault by accounting for her absence by very unscrupulous untruths.

We had hoped that the indignation expressed by Registered Nurses would have influenced the General Nursing Council to a keener sense of its responsibilities in this connection, but since the condonation of the first offence a second case of theft has been condoned, and one of confirmed intemperance, and as three more Registered Nurses have quite recently been found guilty of shop-lifting, they will presumably be reported to, and dealt with by, the General Nursing Council at an early date.

It may be asked by the Parliamentary Medical Committee, why we have petitioned it to receive our Deputation, knowing as we do that the General Nursing Council, acting under Rule 22, has power to decide, outside legal decisions, whether or not persons proved guilty of crime can have their names retained on the Nurses' Register.

Our reply is that we attach much value to the powerful opinion of the Parliamentary Medical Committee, which doubtless carries great weight with Parliamentary colleagues and the public, on questions of nursing status and morality.

A gesture of disapprobation by the Committee at the leniency with which the General Nursing Council elects to treat some criminal offenders would have a very salutary effect, and would be sincerely valued by the self-governing Registered Nurses' Organisations, whose members claim their right under the Nurses' Registration Act to be protected from association with persons of criminal character.

Miss I. Macdonald, representing the Royal British Nurses' Association, also spoke as follows:—

Gentlemen:

I do not think I can add much to what has already been said, but I can speak from everyday experience of what the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)