

## THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

### REPORT OF THE COUNCIL MEETING.

The eighty-second Meeting of the Council of the British College of Nurses was held at 39, Portland Place, W.1, on Saturday, November 18th, 1933.

The President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, was in the Chair, and there were present: Miss A. M. Bushby, *Vice-President*; Miss M. G. Ailbutt, Miss M. S. Cochrane, R.R.C., Miss G. Le Geyt, Miss I. Macdonald, *Fellows*; and Miss H. G. Ballard and Miss E. J. Haswell, *Members*.

Prayers having been read by the Secretary, the Minutes of the last Meeting were confirmed.

### BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES.

1. The President reported that the following letter had been sent from the British College of Nurses to the Chairman and Executive Committee of the National Council of Women of Great Britain, in reply to their letter reporting the Resolution *re* "The Training of Nurses" proposed by Mrs. Keynes, seconded by Miss Gwatkin, and passed at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women at Torquay on October 12th.

### BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES STANDS FIRMLY FOR THE ONE PORTAL EXAMINATION TO THE STATE REGISTER.

November 13th, 1933.

To the Chairman  
and Executive Committee,  
National Council of Women of Great Britain.

DEAR MADAM,—

The Council of the British College of Nurses, at its Meeting held on Saturday, October 21st, considered with very grave concern the communication received from the National Council of Women of Great Britain, intimating that the Resolution *re* the "Training of Nurses" had been passed at its Annual Council Meeting on October 12th, and it was unanimously agreed to enter a strong protest objecting to the suggestions embodied in the Resolution to divide the preliminary training and examination of nurses now applied by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales under the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919.

The principal reasons of objection upon the part of my Council to the Resolution are as follows:—

Under the present Statutory Rules of the General Nursing Council, the selection and education of students of nursing is conducted by professional persons qualified to judge of an applicant's personal suitability, and to teach the Theory and Practice of Nursing.

My Council is not satisfied that mistresses and teachers in secondary and other girls' schools possess either the practical or theoretical knowledge, qualifying them to exercise this responsibility.

Moreover, the heads of Nurse Training Schools realise that young girls are not suitable either physically or socially to undertake the responsible duties as student-nurses, even under the well-organised and considerate system of training which pertains in the majority of well-managed Hospitals.

Girls in the years following adolescence should not be subjected to the nervous strain, consequent upon necessary association with all forms of physical disability and disease, in hospital wards, and thus be subjected to scenes and shock by which older women are not affected.

Moreover, girls from 17 to 20 require social experience enabling them to attain a knowledge of life and culture, and to cultivate initiative and self-reliance so necessary in forming the character of women to be entrusted with the responsible care of the sick or the maintenance of standards of National Health.

At the same time my Council is of opinion that elementary Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene should form part of the curriculum in girls' schools, as it is necessary for the maintenance of health and as a basis of good citizenship, but that this elementary teaching could not in any way suffice for the knowledge imparted in hospital on these subjects, which is peculiarly selected for clinical needs; and to recognise a pass examination apart from the environment of the hospital ward would deprive a student-nurse of the most essential factor in her training.

The majority of Nursing Schools are well equipped and qualified to teach and train, and to provide enough nurses to satisfy the need of the public. When it is realised that there are 58,307 nurses on the General Part of the State Register of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and that the existing schools turn out nurses at the rate of 4,000 a year, the cry that there is a shortage of nurses cannot be maintained. My Council consider that the proposal incorporated in the aforesaid Resolution on "The Training of Nurses" adopted by the National Council of Women would introduce grave dangers to the administrative independence of the General Nursing Council in relation to its educational functions in the future. They stand firmly for the one portal examination to the State Register as the only means whereby high standards of nursing education and efficiency can be maintained.

My Council deplores the lack of consideration upon the part of the National Council of Women, in assuming expert professional knowledge of nursing education and training, and making recommendations, both to *The Lancet* Commission and the public, without consultation with its constituent Organisations of Registered Nurses, a course of action which they venture to assume would not be adopted in its relations with analogous organisations of professional women.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

ALICE STEWART BRYSON,

*Secretary.*

### TRAINING IN VENEREAL DISEASES.

2. In reply to enquiries, Miss Lloyd Still replied that the course of Training in the Venereal Diseases Department of St. Thomas' Hospital is for four or six months. There is no definite time for entry and candidates when accepted are informed when a vacancy may occur. Subject to the numbers of outside applicants, vacancies are filled from those in training.

3. Theses on "The Influence of the Nurse in Present Day Social Conditions," set by Miss Cochrane, had been received from (a) Miss A. W. Laxen, and (b) Miss G. M. Saddler, and submitted subject to their being awarded a grant of £35 each to enable them to take Midwifery Training and C.M.B. Examination.

Papers approved by Miss Cochrane.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

Letters of regret for unavoidable absence from Miss M. Breay and Miss Cowie.

The following Resolution, passed at the Fourth Annual Conference of Superintendents of Health Visitors, in London on July 8th, 1933, was submitted by Miss Cooper Hodgson:—

"That the Secretary write to the Secretary of the British College of Nurses asking for the support of that body in making effective the recommendation contained in the annual report of Sir George Newman, Principal Medical Officer to the Ministry of Health for the year 1931. Namely: 'Where the number of Health Visitors is sufficiently large it is most desirable that they should work under a Superintendent Health Visitor responsible to the Medical Officer of Health.'"

(b) A reply had been sent asking if the Superintendent Health Visitors would be Registered Nurses.

(c) The answer stated that there had not been time to consult the Chairman and Committee on the question, but that the point at issue is—that the Superintendent Health Visitor should be a health visitor and not a medical woman, the object of the resolution being to open up a path of progress to Health Visitors.

It was agreed to wait for a reply to the question sent and to defer a reply until the next Meeting of the Council.

Letter from Miss M. J. Paterson reporting that she had passed the C.M.B. Examination held in Edinburgh on November 9th, and thanking Council for grant of £35.

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