

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL MEETING.

The One hundred and third Meeting of the Council of the British College of Nurses was held on Saturday, October 19th, 1935, at 39, Portland Place, London, W.1, at 2.30 p.m.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President, was in the Chair and there were present, Miss M. Breay, Miss I. Macdonald, Vice-Presidents; Miss M. G. Allbutt, Miss F. M. Campbell, Miss G. Le Geyt, Fellows, and Miss H. G. Ballard, Member.

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

Regrets for absence were received from Miss J. C. Cowie, Miss E. L. Macaulay, O.B.E., R.R.C., Miss S. H. Vian, Fellows, and Miss E. F. Eburah, Member.

BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES.

It was reported that an amendment had been made in the wording of the College Pension Regulations (*re* Recommendation 1) that provision be made so that Fellows receiving £1 a week should continue to have 10s. a week when they are eligible for the Old Age Pension, so that the Pension shall continue at £1 a week. This was agreed.

THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

It was agreed not to communicate further with the Ministry of Health until after the General Election. As a comprehensive programme for National Health and Social Service was projected by both Nationalists and Socialists, it would be well to await their proposals.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Letter from Miss E. W. Littlejohn, Matron, Infants' Hospital, Vincent Square, S.W.1, saying that she will be very glad to see the Administration Class for a visit on Thursday, November 14th, at 2.30 p.m.

Letters of thanks have been received from Miss G. Kitton and Miss A. F. Russell for Tickets given them by the College to attend a Course of First Aid in Chemical Warfare at the British Red Cross Society's Headquarters, 14, Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1.

Letters received from:—(a) Miss E. A. Hall of thanks for the Refresher Course in Midwifery which she received at the Ormond Maternity Home, for which the College awarded her a Grant of £6 6s. to defray the cost. (b) Miss Aldridge, Matron of the Ormond Maternity Home, sending particulars of the Refresher Course in Midwifery attended by Miss Hall.

Letter from Miss F. M. Gemmell, expressing thanks for the notification of the vacancy for a Sister-Tutor at Greenock Royal Infirmary, and stating that she was appointed Sister-Tutor there on October 1st.

A letter from Miss S. H. Vian, who states that "there is a feeling amongst the Matrons in this part of the country that steps should be taken to ensure that the senior masseuse and radiographer employed in hospitals should also be a State Registered Nurse. I am mentioning this as I feel that it might be a good thing when an occasion arises to ascertain if the opinion is general. I do not suppose that there are at present enough candidates with the dual qualifications but it might be possible to encourage scholarship for nurses desiring massage or radiography training."

It was agreed to inform Miss Vian that the Council unanimously supported the principle expressed in her letter that the senior masseuse and radiographer employed in Hospitals should also be a State Registered Nurse.

That in the London County Council Hospitals this principle is in practice with regard to the employment of Departmental Sisters who have the double qualification of Masseuse and State Registered Nurse, unless the Matron wishes it otherwise; but this does not apply to the other ranks of masseuses employed.

NURSES' HOURS IN L.C.C. HOSPITALS.

The President reported that she had consented to receive a deputation of Sisters and Fellows of the College to place before her the serious disadvantages of the new Schedule of Duty Hours for Sisters and Nurses, which came into force on October 1st, in Hospitals under the authority of the London County Council, who attended with the consent of their Matron.

After giving very serious consideration to the difficulties and hardships placed before her resulting from the re-arrangement of hours without the considered advice of the Matrons of L.C.C. hospitals, she decided to address the following letter to the *Daily Telegraph*, to which the Editor courteously gave prominence on October 16th.

NURSES' HOURS IN HOSPITALS.

Burden of L.C.C. Regulations.

(From the PRESIDENT, BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.)

To the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*.

SIR,—I have read with considerable interest letters which have appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on the subject of nurses' hours, especially in reference to those now in force in hospitals under the authority of the London County Council.

I have been consulted by some of the Sisters in these hospitals concerning the practical difficulties and hardships resulting from the re-arrangement of hours which came into force on October 1st, and I venture to address you on the matter.

These Sisters do not complain of the enforcement of a 54-hours' week, although, as the Socialist Party are now advocating a 40-hours' week, it appears inconsistent to increase the long hours of nurses.

Half-hour Daily Added.

What the Sisters do complain of is the arrangement of those hours during the week.

(1) That on six days of the week half an hour has been added at the end of the day to their span of duty, which begins at 7.45 a.m., so that instead of going off duty at 8.30 p.m. they remain in until 9 p.m., for 15 minutes of which time they are on duty alone in a ward containing serious cases.

Those conversant with the heavy responsibilities of a Ward Sister will sympathise with their view that the addition of this half-hour at the end of an exhausting day's work entails a heavy physical and mental strain.

(2) The second point upon which these Sisters feel strongly is that they are precluded by the re-arrangement of hours of duty on Sunday from attending Divine service in congenial places of worship.

The two hours' leave on Sunday morning is not sufficient for this purpose; and on Sunday evening the time off duty begins at 6.30 p.m., a time at which many services commence.

For many nurses the time spent in religious devotion is not only a duty but a source of pleasure and refreshment, and they return to their wards to diffuse an atmosphere of peace and serenity which is of real psychological value in attendance on sick people.

Rousing Public Conscience.

To-day, when the importance of the vocational aspect of nursing is increasingly realised, it is very regrettable that a public authority employing thousands of nurses should deprive them of so potent an aid to the fulfilment of their vocation.

I hope that this matter may be brought to the notice of the London County Council by some of its own members,

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