

## THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

### REPORT OF THE COUNCIL MEETING.

A Meeting of the Council of the British College of Nurses was held on Saturday, May 22nd, 1937, at 39, Portland Place, London, W.1, at 2.30 p.m.

The President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, was in the Chair, and there were present, Miss M. Breay and Miss M. S. Cochrane, R.R.C., Vice-Presidents, Miss A. M. Bushby, Miss F. M. Campbell, Miss I. Macdonald, Miss G. Le Geyt, Miss S. H. Vian, Fellows, and Miss E. F. Eburah and Miss D. de M. Warren, Members.

### AGENDA.

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

The Council standing, the President expressed deep regret in reporting the death of Miss Beatrice Kent, who had been a faithful Fellow of the College since its inception. In a short *résumé* of her distinguished career, the President stressed the fact that Miss Kent was an unswerving supporter of the Movement for the State Registration of Nurses, the enfranchisement of women, the more humane treatment of prisoners, and religious teaching in the schools. That it was she who first approached Sir Richard (then Captain) Barnett on the value of statutory education for Nurses, with the result that he gave the Nurses' Registration Bill his place in the ballot in 1919 and faithfully sponsored the Bill promoted by the Central Committee for State Registration through the House of Commons. The President felt that in the passing of Miss Beatrice Kent, a very courageous and loyal lady, the Nursing Profession suffered a grievous loss.

### REGRETS FOR ABSENCE.

Regrets for absence were received from Miss C. E. Nelson, D.N., M.B.C.N., and Miss E. L. Macaulay, O.B.E., R.R.C., F.B.C.N. Of the latter the President expressed very deep regret that the cause of her absence was due to a painful accident (an impacted fracture of right wrist) and proposed from the Chair that a letter of sympathy be sent to Miss Macaulay.

### BUSINESS ARISING.

#### UNFAIR DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN.

The President reported that:—

As directed by the Council at its last meeting on April 17th, the following Resolution was sent to Capt. Cunningham Reid:—

#### RESOLUTION.

"At a meeting of the Council of the British College of Nurses held on Saturday, April 17th, 1937, it was unanimously agreed to call attention to the unfair discrimination between men and women in the provision of the Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Contributory Pensions (Voluntary Contributions) Bill, defining that the income limit for men shall be £400 per annum, of which not more than £200 may be unearned, and for women £250 per annum, of which not more than £125 may be unearned.

"This Council is of the opinion that this unfair discrimination perpetuates the erroneous preconception that women (especially spinsters of whom many are Registered Nurses) have no economic responsibilities, when on the contrary many women have to contribute to the maintenance of, or entirely support some member, or members, of their family. The Council most earnestly hopes that an amendment to the Bill will be secured."

To which Captain Cunningham Reid replied:—

House of Commons,  
April 30th, 1937.

Miss A. Stewart Bryson, F.B.C.N.,  
The British College of Nurses,  
39, Portland Place, W.1.

DEAR MISS BRYSON,

Thank you for your letter of the April 26th, forwarding

me the Resolution passed on April 17th by the Council of the British College of Nurses.

As no doubt you saw from the newspapers, when the Contributory Pensions Bill was discussed in the House of Commons, a considerable volume of opposition to the apparent discrimination between the sexes contained in the scheme was voiced from various quarters of the House.

Although the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health explained for the Government that as the Bill was a technical one containing many actuarial considerations which had probably escaped notice, the discrimination was in fact more apparent than real, yet I should imagine from the trend of the debate that at the Committee Stage, when amendments to individual clauses can be considered, the position of women under the Bill is likely to be amended, and as opportunity arises I will certainly press for this.

Yours sincerely,

A. CUNNINGHAM REID.

Letter from Mr. H. J. Ryan, Private Secretary, that Sir Kingsley Wood, Minister of Health, desired to thank the Council for its letter expressing appreciation for the provision made for Registered Nurses to view the Coronation Procession.

A letter from a member expressing thanks to the President and Council for their kindness in sending her a Benevolent Grant, and stating that she hopes to repay it when she is able once again to work.

A letter from Miss Gwen Burbridge expressing thanks for the Nightingale Brick which she had collected from the College on the previous day, as a gift for the Royal Adelaide Hospital, Melbourne.

Letter from Miss E. H. Scholes, M.B.C.N., thanking the Council for kind sympathy sent to her in her recent accident.

Letter from Mayor of St. Marylebone concerning further classes on Anti-Gas and Air Raid Precaution to be held in May.

Thanks for Diplomas received from:—

(a) Miss J. L. Edgar, who writes:—

"It was a great surprise to receive such a lovely one. I am charmed with it as I think everyone must be who receives it. Very many thanks."

(b) Miss E. L. Johns, stating:—

"Thank you very much for my Member's Diploma of the British College of Nurses which I received safely on Saturday. I am proud of it."

Letter from Miss B. J. Wall saying that Miss Macaulay would be unable to attend the Council Meeting as she has sustained a serious accident caused when she tripped and fell on going into the Nurses' Home. She has sustained an impacted fracture of her right wrist, and must remain in bed for several days. It was agreed unanimously that an expression of sincere sympathy be sent from the Council to Miss Macaulay.

Mr. H. P. FitzGerald thanks for copies of Journal, he hopes his Lecture on the "Care of the Feet" will be of some use to readers.

Letter from Miss Isabel Macdonald enclosing communication from the National Council of Women of Great Britain *re* Executive Committee Nominations. Miss Macdonald consented to be again nominated for the Executive Committee of the National Council of Women.

A large number of letters were received from members of thanks for advice in difficult circumstances, which had had very satisfactory results.

The President pointed out that such advice had usually, when acted upon, been of real service to members, especially in the drafting of letters to public authorities on professional matters—of which many Nurses had had little experience.

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