

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

REPORT OF THE COUNCIL MEETING.

A meeting of the Council of the British College of Nurses was held at 39, Portland Place, London, W.1, on Saturday, December 18th, 1937, at 2.30 p.m.

The President (Mrs. Bedford Fenwick) was in the chair.

Prayers having been read, the minutes of the last meeting were confirmed.

Before further business was enacted Miss A. M. Bushby rose and asked, on behalf of herself and the Council, to express great thankfulness that the President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, had escaped more serious injury in the 'bus accident which had happened to her on the previous day.

The President expressed thanks and stated that, together with Miss Blacklock, they had marvellously escaped serious injury.

REGRETS FOR ABSENCE.

Regrets for absence were received from Miss D. G. Tilby, Miss S. H. Vian, Miss E. Brodie, and Miss C. E. Nelson, owing to press of duty.

BUSINESS ARISING.

Jurisdiction over Maternity Nurses.

The following letter, as directed at the previous meeting, had been sent to the Minister of Health, Sir Kingsley Wood:—

The British College of Nurses,
39, Portland Place, W.1.
December 9th, 1937.

SIR,—At the recent meeting of the Opening Winter Session of the British College of Nurses, held at 39, Portland Place, London, W.1, the Midwives Act, 1936, was under consideration:

It was unanimously agreed to ask you, as Minister of Health, to be good enough to furnish my Council with information on the following point:—

In the event of an offence alleged to be committed by a State Registered Nurse, while acting as a maternity nurse, which body would have jurisdiction in judging such a case, the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, which has been given authority by Parliament over State Registered Nurses, or the Central Midwives Board, which has defined the course of training which she has undergone as a maternity nurse and has certified her as competent in this capacity, but the authority of which under the Midwives Acts is restricted to jurisdiction over State Certified Midwives.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ALICE STEWART BRYSON,
Secretary.

The letter had been acknowledged, but no explanatory reply had been received so far.

The Representation of the Nursing Profession.

Re the Council's further request that it might be granted representation on the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services, the following letter was sent to the Minister of Health:—

The British College of Nurses,
39, Portland Place, W.1.
December 9th, 1937.

SIR,—Adverting to my former letter of October 1st, from this Association of Nurses asking you to be good enough to consider its representation on the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services, we noted with pleasure that our Member of Parliament, Capt. Cunningham Reid (St. Marylebone), and other Members of the House, advocated in discussion on the Bill to provide for "the limitation of hours of work for persons employed in connection

with hospitals, etc.," on December 3rd, that the Nurses' organisations should have representation on the Inter-Departmental Committee.

We therefore ask you to be good enough to reconsider your decision on this matter, as inasmuch as the four Registered Nurses on the Committee are all members of the College of Nursing and that at least sixty thousand Registered Nurses in this country are not members of that College, and inasmuch as in the Report of the Debate on December 3rd, it was stated that the Council of the College of Nursing had sent a resolution to Members of Parliament definitely opposing legislative reform, the four members of the College of Nursing cannot, therefore, be considered entirely unprejudiced in considering the "Reference" to the Departmental Committee.

To accede to our request would remove a sense of grievance of which members of certain important Nurses' organisations are conscious.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,
ALICE STEWART BRYSON,
Secretary.

The following further reply has since been received from the Minister of Health:—

Ministry of Health,
Whitehall, S.W.1.

December 17th, 1937.

DEAR MADAM,—Sir Kingsley Wood has asked me to thank you for your letter of December 9th with further reference to the question of representation on the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services, and to say that, after consideration, he does not see his way clear at this stage to increase the number of members of the Committee by making the additional appointment proposed by your College.

Yours faithfully,

H. J. RYAN,
Private Secretary.

The President, in giving a short résumé of the debate in the House of Commons on December 3rd, on the Second Reading of the "Local Authorities (Hours of Employment in connection with Hospitals and Institutions) Bill," pointed out to the Council that, in granting representation to members of the College of Nursing only on the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services, and refusing this privilege to other nurses' organisations, the Minister of Health ignored a very large section of professional nursing opinion, and it was unanimously decided to send a further letter to the Minister of Health, pointing out the injustice of his decision and the consequent antagonism and lack of confidence in a Report of a Committee from which adequate and independent professional opinion had been excluded.

It was agreed unanimously to send a vote of thanks to the following Members of Parliament, who advocated that "more members of the great Nursing Profession itself" should be represented on the Committee: Capt. Cunningham Reid, D.F.C. (Member for St. Marylebone), Commander Sir Archibald Southby, Bt. (Member for Epsom), and Mr. McEntee (Member for Walthamstow, W.).

CORRESPONDENCE.

Re Local Authorities (Hours of Employment in connection with Hospitals and Institutions) Bill.

Letters sent:—

(a) To the Secretary, College of Nursing, asking for a copy of the Resolution sent by the Council of the College of Nursing to Members of Parliament on this subject.

(b) Explanatory reply received from Miss Goodall, Secretary, College of Nursing, enclosing copy of communications alluded to in the House of Commons on December 3rd.

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