

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

COUNCIL MEETING.

A Meeting of the Council of the British College of Nurses was held at 19, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7, on Saturday, July 15th, 1939, at 2.30 p.m.

The President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, was in the Chair, and there were present Miss A. M. Bushby, Miss E. F. Brownsdon, Miss M. M. Ingman, Miss E. Martin and Miss D. G. Tilby, Fellows.

Regrets for absence were received from Miss M. Breay, Miss M. S. Cochrane, R.R.C., Miss E. Brodie, Fellows; and Miss D. M. Dickinson and Miss K. Fogarty, Members, the majority being absent on holiday.

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

BUSINESS ARISING.

Re Interim Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services.

Letters of protest that the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, had decided *in camera*, and without any consultation with its electorate, the Registered Nurses, to compile a Roll of untrained and semi-trained women to attend the sick, had been, as agreed, sent to persons of influence and to the Press.

DUTY TO CONSULT THE ELECTORATE.

The following letter had been sent to the General Nursing Council:—

The British College of Nurses,
19, Queen's Gate, S.W.7.
June-22nd, 1939.

To the Chairman and Members of the
General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

At a Meeting of the Council of the British College of Nurses, held at 19, Queen's Gate, S.W.7, on Saturday, June 17th, it was agreed to enter a strong protest against the conduct of business by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales in that they considered *in camera* and not in open Council, the Recommendations contained in the Interim Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services, as they refer to the State recognition, and compilation of, a Roll of Assistant Nurses, composed of untrained and semi-trained persons, unable to conform to the minimum educational standards, prescribed under the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919. Upwards of 80,000 Registered Nurses have conformed to such standards and that under what they regarded as an honourable contract (made with them by the State, and by the body appointed to carry out the provisions of the Act) to maintain these standards.

We hold that before the General Nursing Council proceeds to compile a Roll of semi-trained nurses, calculated in our opinion to degrade the educational and economic status of Registered Nurses, the Council should consult its electorate. By evading this course through conducting its business *in camera* the Council lays itself open to well-merited censure now and in the future.

The offices at 23, Portland Place, London, W.1 (maintained as they are by the Registered Nurses) should not be available for the organisation of semi-trained competitors, without the nurses' consent. The General Nursing Council is not empowered by Parliament to assume an absolute authority in its dealings towards its electorate.

My Council claims that matters so momentous to the Registered Nurses and their profession should not be discussed and brought to a decision in secret and requests that the General Nursing Council shall call a Conference of Registered Nurses without delay, in order that the latter may express their views on a professional matter of such gravity and far-reaching importance.

In anticipation of your reply.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

ALICE STEWART BRYSON,
Secretary.

In connection with the acknowledgment of which, the following communication was sent from the College:—

The British College of Nurses,
19, Queen's Gate, S.W.7.,
July 5th, 1939.

To MISS G. DAVIES,
REGISTRAR,

The General Nursing Council for England and Wales,
23, Portland Place, London, W.1.

DEAR MADAM,

I beg to acknowledge your letter dated June 29th, acknowledging the receipt of the letter dated June 22nd, addressed to the General Nursing Council for England and Wales by the British College of Nurses.

I note that the matter therein has been noted by the Council and anticipate that we shall receive a reply to our communication as soon as convenient.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

ALICE STEWART BRYSON,
Secretary.

It was reported that so far the claim that the General Nursing Council should consult its electorate had not been complied with, and as all the business had been decided *in camera*, absolute autocracy had been adopted by the General Nursing Council, and a most dangerous precedent, so far as Registered Nurses were concerned, had been established.

The Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services.

Acknowledgment of the following Resolution sent from the Annual Meeting held on July 4th, has been received from Mr. W. A. B. Hamilton, Secretary, Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services:—

RESOLUTION.

"That the Members of the British College of Nurses in Annual Meeting assembled on Tuesday, July 4th, 1939, desire to place on record their strong disapproval of the proposed amendment to the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, for the purpose of compiling a Statutory Roll of untrained and semi-trained nurses by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, the Governing Body of efficiently trained nurses, registered after examination.

"Moreover the members of the British College of Nurses protest against the Headquarters in Portland Place which they have erected, and finance, being used for the organisation of a Roll (a Register) of untrained nurses, with whom they would thus become officially associated in the public mind to their professional and economic damage."

Letter from Miss J. C. Cowie, F.B.C.N., expressing great appreciation of the Editorial article in the June issue of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Many letters of interest were considered. Mrs. Hedley Smith wrote from Canada:—"We are just beginning to get over the Royal visit; you have no idea what this visit meant to us, the people of Canada, as well as to the British Empire. As their Majesties passed by, our emotions are impossible to put into words."

Letters of thanks were read from many members for expressing the policy of objection to being classed with the "Assistant Nurse" who was not qualified for safe attendance on the sick without supervision.

Letters from a Fellow and a Member expressing thanks to Miss Cochrane for valuable instruction at Charing Cross Hospital, which was of the greatest value to nurses who for some time had been out of hospital.

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