

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES, LTD.

A Meeting of the Council of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., was held on February 18th, at 19, Queen's Gate, London, S.W., at 2.30 p.m. The President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, S.R.N., was in the chair.

There were present Miss M. S. Cochrane, R.R.C., S.R.N., Vice-President, Miss A. Stewart Bryson, S.R.N., Miss A. M. Bushby, S.R.N., Miss E. Martin, R.R.C., S.R.N., Miss Susan A. Villiers, S.R.N., Fellows; and Miss H. G. Ballard, S.R.N., D.N., and Miss Edith Hussey, S.R.N., Members.

Prayers having been read, the Minutes were read and confirmed.

Letters of regret for absence were read from Miss E. J. Haswell, S.R.N., and Miss E. Brodie, R.G.N.

The Incorporation of the British College of Nurses.

An important communication from the solicitor was received, notifying the incorporation of the College under the Companies Act—a step considered advisable in order to administer the Trust Fund, owing to the death, and the resignation of the two Trustees. Legal consideration in the High Court of Chancery, which advised incorporation, the drafting of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and consultation with the Board of Trade had been prolonged, principally owing to the opposition of the Royal College of Nursing to the retention of its title by the British College of Nurses, under which it had done useful work of national value during the past 16 years; factious opposition which was ultimately disallowed, a deputation from the British College of Nurses having been permitted to place its own case before the Board of Trade. The Council of the College, in the first instance, having invited incorporation without the word "Limited" ultimately decided that, as many of the privileges now enjoyed by Fellows and Members would be disallowed, decided to accept this addition and the Memorandum and Articles of Association, as agreed by the Attorney-General, provide for the retention of all the privileges hitherto enjoyed by Fellows and Members.

The Council received the solicitor's Report with great satisfaction and gratitude, and unanimously accorded him a very hearty vote of thanks for all the trouble he had taken in the High Court of Chancery and at the Board of Trade for the successful incorporation of the British College of Nurses to enable it to administer the Trust Fund.

Election of Members.

Applications for membership were considered and all applicants were elected.

The Nurses' Salaries Committee.

A communication from the Nurses' Salaries Committee of the Ministry of Health was considered and a reply agreed, including a suggested schedule of emoluments for the various grades of Registered Nurses employed in hospitals.

Short Report of the Proceedings of the Special Committee for the Protection of the Legal Status of Registered Nurses.

A short report of the valuable work of the Special Committee for the Protection of the Legal Status and Economic Security of Registered Nurses was presented.

The Committee has met five times, and has been actively engaged in communicating with various authorities dealing with the question of the registration of the semi-trained Assistant Nurse, especially placing the opinion of the College before Lord Horder, who is Chairman of the Special Reconstruction Committee of the Royal College of Nursing. The letter addressed to Lord Horder included the following expressions of opinion:—

1. That safe standards of nursing must be maintained for all classes of sick people.

2. No recognition by Parliament of semi-trained women to care for the helpless poor segregated in Public Institutions, or elsewhere.

3. No association of the semi-trained "Assistant Nurse" with the well-qualified Registered Nurse, by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, which the latter entirely finance, as the Treasury has no financial responsibility whatever for the upkeep of the General Nursing Council, its Headquarters, or the issue of the Register of Nurses.

4. No control of the economic conditions of Registered Nurses by the Royal College of Nursing, or by a conjoint committee of lay and medical employers, as provided in Bills drafted by it in 1919, and disallowed by the Ministry of Health at that date.

5. No class legislation providing for the exclusion of poor women from rising in the Nursing Profession by instituting grades of nurses—thus placing them in compounds—for the benefit of public employers, such as County and Borough Councils.

6. That the examinations of the General Nursing Council shall be based on sound practical nursing knowledge and not on standards more fitted for medical students.

7. Educational courses to qualify Registered Nurses for positions of authority, and for special branches of work and usefulness in the uplift of national health, to be organised by Universities, Colleges and kindred institutions, for which instruction scholarships should be available. Thus the policy of the Special Committee demands justice, and self-government for the Nursing community.

The Second Meeting.

At the second meeting which was held on October 2nd, 1941, further action was agreed dealing especially with the Economic Status under the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, when the financial support of the Registered Nurse in maintaining the General Nursing Council was emphasised, and when it was pointed out that no less than **three-quarters of a million pounds** had been contributed by them for this purpose.

A scheme drafted by Miss D. de M. Warren was under consideration, and Miss G. M. Hardy, Matron of Battersea General Hospital, reported activities she had had in connection with the general Press, and hoped for results.

The Third Meeting.

The third meeting of the Special Committee took place on October 30th, and a very satisfactory report of the activities was presented. Further action was agreed upon which it was hoped would enlighten the public on the very dangerous result of depreciating standards of nursing, and enlist the sympathy of those who realised the value of professional status for women.

The Fourth Meeting.

At the fourth meeting of the committee, held on December 4th, the Chairman reported that a deputation from the committee had been received at the House of Commons by Miss Irene Ward, M.P., Chairman of the Woman Power Committee, and Viscountess Davidson, M.P., on Tuesday, December 2nd, 1941, eight members of the committee attended, representing organisations of general, fever and mental nursing.

Miss Cochrane read the Memorandum prepared for the information of the Women Members of Parliament, in which was stated, "The safety of the sick public of all classes, including the chronic sick depends, under medical direction, upon the maintenance of an efficient standard of nursing, so that there shall be no imposition on rich or poor by the legal recognition of semi-trained unskilled women."

When the Assistant Nurse question was placed before Miss Irene Ward and Lady Davidson, a copy of two volumes

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)