

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES, LTD.

COUNCIL MEETING.

A meeting of the Council of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., was held on Wednesday, November 17th, 1943, at 19, Queen's Gate, S.W.7, at 2.30 p.m.

The President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, was in the chair. Prayers having been read by Miss A. Stewart Bryson, Secretary, the Minutes were confirmed and signed.

Correspondence.

1. THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

Letters from Mr. Ernest Brown, late Minister of Health, were reported. The President reported that Mr. Ernest Brown had been superseded as Minister of Health by Mr. H. U. Willink, M.C., K.C., M.P., and expressed the hope that a new era in the treatment of Registered Nurses might arise under the new administration, as the contempt with which their honourable status and service had been de-graded by recent legislation promoted by Mr. Ernest Brown, in association with the Royal College of Nursing, had aroused a keen sense of injury and indignation which it was in the power of just administration to rectify.

It was the duty of Registered Nurses in support of safe standards of nursing to unite to effect reforms. It was agreed to place before the new Minister of Health a considered statement on the Nurses Acts, 1943, and a sub-committee was appointed to draft the same.

2. THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

Correspondence with the General Nursing Council for England and Wales concerning the financing of the Assistant Nurses' Roll was read, in which the hope was expressed by the General Nursing Council that the administration of the Roll would be self-supporting. On a one guinea fee, as limited by the Act, such a hope was illusory. It was pointed out that already £1,272 7s. 10d. had been advanced from funds paid by Registered Nurses for the equipment of the Assistant Nurses' office, and, while thanking the General Nursing Council for information concerning the organisation and financing of the Assistant Nurses' Roll, it was unanimously agreed to invite further information as to the details of how the cost of the organisation of Assistant Nurses is to be defrayed, and the College Council had submitted for the consideration of the General Nursing Council a schedule of annual expenses which would necessarily be incurred and which would cost thousands of pounds annually.

3. THE WOMEN'S LIBERAL FEDERATION.

The copy of the Interim Report of the Sub-Committee of the Women's Liberal Federation was notified, and the Secretary read paragraph 7, "Nurses' Associations," as follows:

"In order that the interest of nurses may be properly protected, the various existing organisations, such as the Royal College of Nursing, the British College of Nurses, etc., should be amalgamated and form a corporate body. All sections of the nursing profession should be included (student and probationer nurses, assistant nurses, as well as the State Registered Nurses), and there should be opportunities for obtaining the views of the young. There should be a widespread network of organisations all over the country."

The President said that Mrs. Corbett Ashby, LL.D., was the chairman of the sub-committee of ten laywomen, whose names and nursing experience, if they possessed any, were unknown to them. This sub-committee had never communicated with this College before drafting its report, or they would have been instructed that it was an endowed organisation of highly qualified Registered Nurses, whose

principles were based on self-determination and self-government and that association with such bodies as the Royal College of Nursing, governed conjointly with nurses, by the laity and the medical profession, was not compatible; and that, moreover, the de-grading of the Royal College of Nursing standards was strongly opposed by the British College of Nurses, Ltd. The Secretary gave an interesting report of a meeting of a branch of the Women's Liberal Federation she had addressed on the subject, at which, upon hearing her arguments against amalgamation those present unanimously passed a resolution strongly opposing the recommendation, a copy of which resolution was sent to the local Press, and to the Chair of the Women's Liberal Federation.

A vote of thanks to Miss Bryson was unanimously agreed by the Council for taking public action in this matter.

It was agreed to communicate with Mrs. Corbett Ashby and send the members of the sub-committee a copy of the pamphlet issued by the British College of Nurses, Ltd.: "A Demand for Justice for the State Registered Nurse."

4. WOMEN FOR WESTMINSTER.

A communication from "Women for Westminster" re lectures on "Instruction in Citizenship" was considered. It was agreed a course of such lectures might arouse a sense of public duty in the nursing world.

Finance.

The Secretary reported replies from members whose health and circumstances had been damaged by war conditions, accepting financial help; £90 was then allocated with sympathetic good wishes to nine members, and the hope was expressed that those members in need would not hesitate to communicate with the Council as it was the earnest wish of the donor of the Endowment Fund that financial help should be generously allocated to those in need.

Termination of Legal Proceedings.

Official communications were presented from the solicitor, in which it was reported that the legal proceedings in connection with the incorporation of the College had now terminated in the most satisfactory manner.

The Charity Commissioners had notified the repayment of tax and a sum of £2,566 4s. 7d. has been paid to the Official Trustee. Of this sum, £354 8s. 7d., representing the gross amount of the interest paid in August, 1942, on the Great Western Railway Consolidated Ordinary Stock, less the amount of the taxed costs of the Order by the Court, has been remitted to the College account. The balance, approximately £2,500, has been invested in 3 per cent. Savings Bonds, which will realise an additional income of £75. . . . Thus, all matters connected with the Ethel Mary Fletcher Trust have now been disposed of. Well over £100,000 has been invested, the dividends for which have been placed to the College account.

The Council received this very satisfactory statement with sincere gratitude and pleasure, terminating, as it does the legal business in connection with the endowment of and incorporation of the British College of Nurses, Ltd.

A very warm vote of thanks was unanimously accorded to the President for her successful work for the last four years and her guidance of College finance.

In returning thanks, the President congratulated the College on the success of its honourable and determined policy and on having been fortunate in securing first class legal advice, eloquent Counsel in the High Court of Chancery and the decision of a just and sympathetic Judge. They must prove themselves worthy of their trust—safe and efficient nursing standards for the sick of all classes—and justice for the State Registered Nurses were the fundamental principles on which they must stand firm. The Ministry of Health, the General Nursing Council, and Members of

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