

received from Miss Margaret Thurnham, S.R.N., Warden of Slough and District Association for Moral Welfare, Fellow, and Miss Ursula Spon, Sister Tutor, Member.

Draft of Annual Report.

The draft Annual Report was considered and approved, and it was agreed that the Annual General Meeting of Fellows and Members be held on Friday, September 26th, 1947, at 2.30 p.m., to which it is hoped all Fellows and Members will make an effort to attend.

The Council will be grateful if Fellows and Members will notify the Secretary whether or not they are able to attend.

Votes of Thanks to International Hostesses.

It was unanimously agreed to send votes of thanks to the extraordinarily generous and kind hospitality extended to the members of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., by our American hostesses, when attending the International Congress of Nurses in U.S.A.

The meeting then terminated.

It was decided to send the following letter from the new President to all Fellows and Members of the British College of Nurses, Ltd.; also that it be widely distributed to Registered Nurses, to help them to realise the necessity of supporting this Association, created by the late Ethel Gordon Fenwick, for the maintenance of professional independence.

A MESSAGE TO EVERY MEMBER OF THE GREAT PROFESSION OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,

The passing of our revered President, Ethel Gordon Fenwick, on March 13th, 1947, although inevitable, at the great age of 90 years, came as a shock! Now that her inspiring personality has passed from this sphere, the words involuntarily come to the lips of all—"Who will replace her and carry on her work?"

No words could be more fully justified when it is realised what her ceaseless labour and remarkable talents achieved for the emancipation of nurses (nationally and internationally), a labour of over 60 years—so freely given.

A genius and personality such as that with which our late President was endowed we all know can never be replaced, as she was unique in her generation; such leadership is perchance given to a nation only once in a century, and perhaps not that. Yet it was always her cherished hope that her work should continue for the benefit of the Nursing Profession.

Nurses therefore, and nurses only, present and future, who in allegiance to her high professional ideals, can strive and go forward with her work and so in gratitude keep the flag flying, which, undaunted, she raised, and bore so courageously to the end.

An outstanding feature of Ethel Gordon Fenwick's ability was her uncompromising demand for professional status and professional independence for Registered Nurses, *with a free voice in the Press.*

"The British Journal of Nursing."

That nurses should have this vital asset, a free voice in the Press, she obtained THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, which is the Official Organ of The British College of Nurses, Ltd., and other nursing organisations; through its columns professional and educational information is sent to all members of the College, post free, and to which they are invited to contribute items and their views of professional interest. Ethel Gordon Fenwick was Editor of this Journal for upwards of 50 years.

The Founding of the British College of Nurses.

It was her inspiration that nurses should have a self-governing, educational and benevolent organisation; and

so in 1926, by the efforts and co-operation of her husband, the late Dr. Bedford Fenwick, the munificent gift of £100,000 was secured for the endowment of The British College of Nurses (now known as The British College of Nurses, Ltd.).

Opposition to De-Grading of Nursing Standards.

In her long struggle in the Nurses' cause, Ethel Gordon Fenwick was a straight and fearless fighter, ever wary of compromise, expediency was anathema to her, and she strongly deprecated any policy that infringed on professional status and independence.

Few therefore will ever know how deeply she deplored the cruel economic betrayal and de-grading of the Status of the Registered Nurse by the passing of the Nurses Act, 1943 (recommended to Parliament in spite of her efforts to prevent it), in which the semi-trained woman—*i.e.*, the Assistant Nurse—was recognised by the State; thus causing the Registered Nurse to suffer unfair economic competition from a less qualified grade of woman.

The British College of Nurses, Ltd., has consistently worked for the deletion of Rule 19 of the Act, which empowers the General Nursing Council for England and Wales to use part of the fees of Registered Nurses, and also their Headquarters, in organising and compiling the Roll of Assistant Nurses.

Danger of the "Closed Shop" Policy.

Always a forceful advocate of liberty of conscience and professional freedom, absorption of all associations and special branches of nursing, *under the cloak of affiliation*, the late President viewed with alarm, and considered that this movement should be strongly opposed, as being in effect the policy of "The Closed Shop." Under such a system monopoly would be created, and opposition stifled.

Continuation of College Activities.

During the War the College premises suffered severely from enemy action, and it was the late President's earnest hope that as soon as the War Damage repairs were completed, every effort should be made to organise with renewed vigour the activities for which the British College of Nurses was created, the higher education of nurses, benevolence, legal protection, and to promote the highest ethical standards for the Nursing Profession.

Ever eager to inspire courage, I quote the late President's last message to the Council: "The more determined stand our members take concerning their professional affairs, the greater the debt of those who do not belong to the British College of Nurses, Ltd."

She has blazed the trail! It is now for Registered Nurses to realise how great a heritage is theirs in the Self-Governing Organisation of The British College of Nurses, Ltd., which nurses owe to her genius, as under its Constitution Registered Nurses only are eligible for membership, and to serve on the Council.

It can only be by the prompt action of Registered Nurses becoming members of, and associating themselves with, this College that they can sincerely honour in perpetuity the memory of ETHEL GORDON FENWICK, the greatest leader and benefactress of the Nursing Profession during the century.

The Council would welcome applications for membership of this College, and those wishing to join should apply to the Secretary of The British College of Nurses, Ltd., 19, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7, for forms of application.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

HELENA McLOUGHLIN,
President.

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