

## NURSES! MAINTAIN AND CHERISH THE INDEPENDENCE OF YOUR LEAGUES AND ASSOCIATIONS.

To those who follow the history of the many campaigns so vigorously fought—and won—by Ethel Gordon Fenwick, in the course of her long life's work—for the emancipation of Nurses, it becomes more and more apparent that we owe it to her genius that it was on the fundamental principle of liberty of conscience and professional independence that she founded the greatest of nurses' organisations.

It was, therefore, on these sound democratic lines that, over 40 years ago, the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain was founded and affiliated to the International Council of Nurses through the untiring effort of Ethel Gordon Fenwick, destined later to become the pioneer of State Registration for Nurses.

In founding the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain it was the intention of the late founder, Ethel Gordon Fenwick, to sound a clarion call to all members of the Nursing Profession in Great Britain to promote mutual understanding and establish associations of not less than 50, now increased to 100 members, who would have independent and free representation on the governing body—The National Council of Nurses of Great Britain—which would in turn represent associations so founded on the International Council of Nurses.

Here we would remind Nurses that the social, travel and educative intercourse—of inestimable value to those privileged through their leagues and associations to take part in great International Congresses—is now inspiring history and a testimony to free enterprise.

### PROPOSED REORGANISATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND.

In the past the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain was largely maintained by the benevolence of its Founder and first President—the late Ethel Gordon Fenwick. It has now become necessary to reorganise it on a sound and independent financial basis.

With this object in view, a questionnaire has recently been sent, by the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to all affiliated associations in order to ascertain their wishes and recommendations in regard to the form this reorganisation should take.

#### A SOLEMN WARNING.

Before affiliated associations send their replies to the questions asked in this document, it is necessary to warn members that there appears to be a movement on foot for one of the large affiliated associations to endeavour to usurp the function of the National Council of Nurses, and, in so doing, to destroy the freedom and financial independence of other member affiliated associations.

It is, therefore, imperative that all members should realise the vital danger which threatens their present organisation, namely, the sacrifice of what they now have, a federation of free associations of nurses, and the submission of their independence to what is merely one of their affiliated member bodies.

The grave danger of such autocratic control, inimical to professional freedom, can only be averted—and we

pray that it will—by the determined stand of the members to maintain the independence of their affiliated association (whatever the cost!) so that the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland shall continue a free federation of nurses—as it was designed by their Great Leader—whose vision in her organisation for the welfare of the Nursing Profession will, we believe, prove to be unerring.

The following Questions and Answers, arising out of the questionnaire compiled by the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, were drawn up and agreed at a recent meeting of the Council of the British College of Nurses, Ltd.

*Question 1.*—How do you consider the National Council of Nurses should be constituted, so that it will be truly representative of the Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland?

*Answer.*—The National Council of Nurses, as it stands, is truly representative of the Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It would seem, however, that an increase in membership is essential. This could be achieved if propaganda were used to educate the Senior Nurses in Hospital to the purpose and function of the National Council of Nurses.

If the minimum membership of a Member Body for affiliation were dropped from 100 to 50, for the time being at any rate, smaller Hospitals would be encouraged to found Leagues for the purpose of becoming affiliated.

With regard to the Governing Body of the National Council of Nurses—

i. That the voting should be done by postal-ballot by the appointed delegates and representatives, since the cost of travel alone would prevent some members from the remote parts of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland from attending the Grand Council to register their votes.

ii. That the Directors should represent a region, that is, from names either put forward by the League of that region or to be in office or resident in that region, as follows:—

One Director from Scotland, one from Northern Ireland, one from Wales, one representing the Supplementary Registers, and three from England, one from Northern England, one from the Midlands, and one from Southern England.

iii. The Vice-Presidents should be chosen from nominations, so that at least two of them represent bodies outside London.

It is suggested that the Executive Meetings should be held quarterly, and alternate between London and the Provinces in location.

*Question 2.*—Bearing in mind the objects for which the International Council of Nurses was established and the functions which it expects a national association to perform, how do you consider that these can best be achieved in this country?

*Answer.*—The constituent Member Bodies and an adequate Central Office, with all the necessary secretarial help, should be able to fulfil the functions listed.

*Question 3.*—How do you consider the National Council of Nurses could be adequately financed?

*Answer.*—By an increase in membership of each Member Body as suggested in the answer to Question 1, and by an increase in the *per capita* fee.

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