

your letter of February 5th, 1949, and its enclosure regarding the State Register of Nurses.

In reply, I am to inform you that the editorial article in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING conveys quite a misleading impression. The proposal which the General Nursing Council has submitted and which was discussed with leading representatives of the nursing profession, does not entail the abolition of the Nurses Register, but only the discontinuance of its sale and publication as a printed document. The published Register has been found to serve a very limited purpose—it is only a secondary means of verifying that a person is state registered—and the cost of printing and publication is out of all proportion to its value.

The General Nursing Council will, of course, as required by statute, continue to maintain the Register, and will publish from time to time printed lists of additions to and deletions from the Register.

I am, Madam,
Your obedient servant,
FREDA BLISS.

The following letter pointing out why the Editorial of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING was not misleading was communicated to the Minister of Health:—

March 5th, 1949.

To—
The Right Hon. Aneurin Bevan,
M.P.,
Minister of Health,
Ministry of Health,
Whitehall, S.W.1.

Sir,
**Withdrawal of the Printing and
Publishing of The State
Register of Nurses.**

The President and Council of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., thank you for your courteous reply to their letter of protest dated February 5th, 1949, concerning the recommendation of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales to discontinue the printing and publishing and placing on sale of the State Register of Nurses (and that its circulation shall cease) on the plea that the cost is out of all proportion to its value.

My Council in reply respectfully contends that the Editorial in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING is not misleading in this matter as it cannot be denied, that the fact that the General Nursing Council for England and Wales proposes neither to print, publish, nor to place on sale the State Register of Nurses is an abrogation of the Nurses Registration Act, 1919, which lays down *inter alia* :—

“As soon as possible after the 1st July, 1922, and as soon as possible after the 1st January of the year 1923, and of each subsequent year, the Register containing the names of all persons, and particulars in the First Schedule included in the Register on those dates respectively, shall be printed and published, and the published Register shall be placed on sale.”

My Council, therefore, points out that in ceasing to print, publish and place on sale, the State Register of Nurses as heretofore, and instead to maintain a single manuscript copy only available at the Headquarters of the General Nursing

Council for England and Wales in London, defeats the purpose for which the State Register of Nurses is compiled.

The printed evidence of professional achievement, and other particulars recorded in the State Register of Nurses are of great importance, and their publication should not be denied to State Registered Nurses, or to the would-be employers of nurses.

When it is realised that Registered Nurses have subscribed upwards of one million pounds for the upkeep of their Governing Body, and for the publication of their Register, my Council is of opinion that the proposed withdrawal of the printing, publishing and placing on sale of the State Register of Nurses, would be a cruel blow to the prestige of nurses, and a betrayal of their fundamental right by Act of Parliament.

The proposed procedure thus eliminating the provisions laid down in the Act, is, in the opinion of my Council, inadequate and undignified, and is unworthy of the Government of this country which has gone to enormous expense to raise the status of the Nursing Profession at a time

of great difficulty in attracting suitable trainees.

The Council of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., therefore implores that you, as Minister of Health, will not permit of any amendment to the Nurses Act so derogatory to this highly valuable and established right.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
ALICE STEWART BRYSON,
Hon. Secretary.

The Council of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., were most grateful to receive the many replies from Members of Parliament of all parties on this important question concerning the status of the Nursing Profession.

How grievous has been the steady decline in the high ideals founded on fundamental principles of justice which Ethel Gordon Fenwick spent her life to promote for the benefit of the Nursing Profession, a decline in which the first step on the downward course was the abolition of the One Portal System to the State Register, which had been twice previously turned down by the nurses' vote in the General Nursing Council.



The last home of Ethel Gordon Fenwick.

The Nurses Act, 1943.

A few years later came the recognition by the State of a second-grade nurse—the Assistant Nurse, recommended by the Royal College of Nursing.

The repercussion of this legislation we believe to be the cause of the debt leading to the sacrifice of the State Register of Nurses.

It was, therefore, a strange irony that the subject for the 1949 Christmas Card of the British College of Nurses, Ltd., should have been a picture illustrating “the last home of Ethel Gordon Fenwick, Founder and Pioneer of State Registration of Nurses.”

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