

4. That the rights and privileges of the members of the London and Counties Protection Society were completely safeguarded by the fact that they were identical with those of the members of the Medical Defence Union.

This view was arrived at after a thorough and critical examination of the constitutions and memoranda of association of the two societies made by the lawyers advising the joint committee.

5. That the London and Counties Protection Society could not legally guarantee the transference of any of its members.

6. That the accounts and liabilities of the two societies should be investigated and reported on by chartered accountants.

7. That the duties of district councils of committees should be advisory, organising, and ethical.

From the foregoing it will be seen that substantial progress was made towards an understanding on this subject, the delegates of the Medical Defence Union having at all stages referred important points at issue to their council for advice and instruction. However, concerning the constitution of the council of the Union after the amalgamation should have been completed, several proposals were put forward. The first of these was suggested by the delegates of the London and Counties Protection Society, who proposed that for the first eight\* months after fusion the council of the Union should consist of twelve persons nominated by the Medical Defence Union and twelve persons nominated by the London and Counties Protection Society. These twenty-four persons were to elect from among their number a president, treasurer, secretaries, &c., for the eight months in question. At the end of the year—e.g., 1894—the government of the Union was to revert to the council of the Medical Defence Union as at present constituted.

This proposal, which, of course, necessitated the temporary destruction of the administrative machinery of the Medical Defence Union, was communicated by their delegates to the council of that society.

The council of the Medical Defence Union felt that this proposal was unworkable for several reasons.

Firstly, that in addition to the difficulty of constituting an executive to work for such a short period out of a body of men unaccustomed to act together the proposal would involve complete alteration of the constitution of the Union at a general meeting.

Secondly, the council of the Medical Defence Union considered that with regard to the number of representatives of the two societies on the council, since the rights and privileges of the members of the two societies were identical, it would be fair and equitable if the representation of each company upon the conjoint council should be calculated according to the number of members composing each society, since the numerical strength of the Medical Defence Union is about 2800, and that its council numbers forty-two; and whereas the numerical strength of the London and Counties Protection Society is but between 600 and 700, proportionate representation would under ordinary circumstances be met by the addition to the council of the Defence Union of ten members nominated by the London and Counties Protection Society.

In view, however, of the fact that the London and Counties Society contemplated winding up, the council of the Defence Union agreed to receive twenty nominees of the London and Counties Society.

Since the London and Counties Medical Protection Society was organised partly on the understanding that the district councils should have wide powers, and since one or two members of the council of the London and Counties Protection Society had made this point a *sine qua non* in their scheme of medical defence, it was clear that the fundamental difference of opinion which would of necessity arise on such an important point might be fatal to the real success of the amalgamation by impairing the efficiency and hampering the working of the conjoint council.

The council of the Medical Defence Union resolved therefore to ask that the list of nominees of the London and Counties Protection Society should be furnished to them before further progress was made with the negotiations.

This request, however, was refused by the London and Counties Protection Society, in consequence of which the negotiations were suspended.

\* The number eight is taken because, whereas the financial year of the Defence Union ceases on Dec. 31st, that of the London and Counties Society is closed on April 31st.

#### LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE LONDON AND COUNTIES MEDICAL PROTECTION SOCIETY.

SIR,—I have just received a document purporting to be a *résumé* of the negotiations between the committees on amalgamation of the above societies, and a note from the president of the Medical Defence Union informing me that negotiations are at an end. In case this document should be sent for publication before it has been laid before the committee of our society, I send you an *interim* reply until there is time for our council or committee to reply formally:—

The Medical Defence Union has from the first disclaimed taking the initiative in promoting amalgamation, and we are proud to plead guilty to an attempt to bring about a future which all alike professed, and ought to desire.

The statement that our committee brought about the termination of the conference by a refusal to accept a proposal which could hardly have been made seriously namely, that the names of our representatives in the suggested amalgamated society should first be submitted for approval to the council of the Medical Defence Union is not correct. The real fact is that this proposal was met by the natural counter-proposal that the names of those proposed for the amalgamated council by the Medical Defence Union should in like manner be submitted to the London and Counties Medical Protection Society. Is it this counter-proposal of ours that has put an end to the conference? Again, the statement that our society "contemplated winding-up" is

an expression which, used *à la* Medical Defence Union, means that our committee considered that our council might be asked to submit to even this self-effacement for the general good. But, under the actual circumstances, to say, "In view, however, of the fact that the London and Counties Society contemplated winding-up, the council of the Defence Union agreed &c." is to make a representation which is not a true one. Our society does not contemplate winding-up, and the question never and probably never will, be broached before our council. On the question of the relative numbers of the two societies I dispute the accuracy of the published figures of the Medical Defence Union, and I affirm that the present number of *bonâ-fide* members of our society is not less than 890.

I may add that it has become more and more evident, at any rate to some of the members of our council, as negotiations have progressed, that amalgamation is at present undesirable, and that for several reasons, *inter alia* the Medical Defence Union seems disposed to act simply as a defender of individual members, whereas the Medical Protection Society desires to protect and forward the interests of the profession at large by the suppression of quacks and the like. Moreover, the Defence Union appears to be still of the mind that an oligarchy is better than a free government, and to desire to exercise all power from one centre, leaving its branches helpless, except in so far as they may be paying supporters of the central authority; and still further differs from the London and Counties Society in the opinion that all the medical officials should be unpaid, as insisted on by our society.

These and other differences which emerged during the negotiations appeared to render undesirable the amalgamation of the two societies. If the Medical Defence Union is resolved to retain unmodified its absolute central authority, its limited range of operation, and its paid medical officials, so is the London and Counties Medical Protection Society determined to stand by its more representative principles, its wider activities, and its honorary administration.

Yours, &c.,

HUGH WOODS, Hon. Sec.,  
London and Counties Medical Protection Society.

#### THE ASSOCIATION OF FELLOWS OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.

A MEETING of the committee of the Association of Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons of England was held on Nov. 22nd at 5 P.M., Mr. George Pollock, the President, occupying the chair. There was a full attendance of members of the committee. The minutes of the preceding meeting having been read and confirmed the hon. secretary read letters of regret at inability to be present from Mr. Mayo Robson, Dr. C. Steele (Clifton), Dr. George Helm (Marazion), and Mr. George Jackson (Plymouth). He then explained that the report which the committee had passed at the last meeting and which had been published in the journals had not yet been printed, issued to the Fellows, or sent to the Council of the College owing to the fact that some members of the committee were desirous of making some emendations and additions. In view of this he had consulted the President with the result that the present meeting of the committee had been summoned. The report of the committee was then brought up for further discussion, it being agreed that it would be undesirable to alter it to any material extent. Several suggestions were made as to the wording of certain of the clauses, but these were not pressed after full discussion had taken place respecting them. It was, however, unanimously agreed to insert the words "body corporate" in the place of "Fellows" in Clause 11,<sup>1</sup> and to add a new clause to the following effect: "That Members of the Court of Examiners of the Royal College of Surgeons of England shall be elected annually, and that no member of the Court shall hold office for more than five consecutive years, and at the expiration of this term he shall not be again eligible till after a period of two years has elapsed." The foregoing clause was one of the recommendations sent by the Association of Fellows to

<sup>1</sup> Vide THE LANCET, Nov. 11th.