

CITY OF LEEDS

Section "F".

Letter of Resignation.

TRAINING COLLEGE.

Beckett Park,

LEEDS.

May 17th, 1916.

Dear Mr. INVESTIGATION INTO THE SYSTEM UNDER WHICH THE TRAINING  
COLLEGE IS CONTROLLED AND MANAGED, WITH SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO THE RECENT RESIGNATIONS OF MEMBERS  
OF THE STAFF.

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My reason for feeling obliged to give up my post,

is that I have come to the conclusion that the constitution  
of the College is on a sound basis. After my three years  
of experience here.

THE RESIGNATION OF THE VICE-PRINCIPAL.  
most favourable conditions a Mixed Residential Training  
College could be an advantage to the normal two year student,  
but I have no doubt now that, in the conditions under which  
we work here, we get to the full the disadvantages of the  
Mixed S.I.

1. COPY OF LETTER OF RESIGNATION.

2. NOTES OF CONVERSATION OF PRINCIPAL WITH  
VICE-PRINCIPAL.

3. SECRET MEETINGS OF COLLEGE STAFF FOLLOWING  
RESIGNATION OF VICE-PRINCIPAL.  
was working under conditions that obtained  
up to last February.

During the STATEMENT OF DR. BOLTON,  
that I cannot do work of any value for the College in the  
immediate circumstances or in those which will obtain  
next Session.

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|   | Medical Officer.                                  |
| " | " MISS J. M. CORDER,<br>Lecturer on Method Staff. |
| " | " MISS A. CRAWSHAW,<br>Science Tutor.             |
| " | " MISS E. GRAY,<br>Art Mistress.                  |

15TH AUGUST, 1916.



Section "F".

Letter of Resignation.

Beckett Park,

L E E D S.

May 17th, 1916.

Dear Mr. Graham,

I write to ask you to be so good as to place my resignation of the post of Vice-Principal of the City of Leeds Training College in the hands of the Chairman of the Governors.

My reason for feeling obliged to give up my post, is that I have come to feel strongly that the constitution of the College is on unsound lines. After my three years of experience here, I am doubtful whether even under the most favourable conditions a Mixed Residential Training College could be an advantage to the normal Two Year student, but I have no doubt now that, in the conditions under which we work here, we get to the full the disadvantages of the Mixed System with practically none of its advantages.

I should have resigned some time ago, for as you will see my present opinions were necessarily formed, in the main, under more normal conditions than have prevailed during this Session, but I did not wish to leave while the College was working under the difficult circumstances that obtained up to last February.

During the last few weeks, I have also come to see that I cannot do work of any value for the College in the immediate circumstances or in those which would seem to obtain next Session.

*Mr Parsons*

*Section F2*

REPORT OF TALK WITH MISS MERCIER, on the

19th May, 1913.

1. On the 17th May, 1913, the day on which Miss Mercier's resignation was forwarded to the Office, she visited me in my room and asked me to read her letter of resignation.

2. It is, therefore, with the greatest regret that I must ask you to place my resignation before the Committee to take effect at the end of August.

Yours faithfully,

WINIFRED MERCIER.

3. I also pointed out to her that while she had complete freedom with regard to her own actions, I could not support the suggestion contained in her letter of resignation that a mixed college was dangerous. In support of my statement I made use of the following arguments :-

(a) Under ordinary conditions a boy was better for having a sister and a girl was better for having a brother, but I could understand none or bad conditions being so unsatisfactory as to bring about disastrous results. It was the same in a mixed institution, and it was up to her and to me to make the tone of the College so sound that the students received the full benefit of the mixed system without its disadvantages.

(b) Leeds and the country needed men teachers as well as women teachers and I was certain that it would be disastrous to attempt to run separate men's and women's colleges in Leeds. In places where this scheme has been tried regulations had to be



Mr Parsons

Section F2

NOTES ON TALK WITH MISS MERCIER, on the

17th May, 1916.

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1. On the 17th May, 1916, the day on which Miss Mercier's Resignation was forwarded to the Office, she visited me in my room and asked me to read her letter of resignation.
  2. After having read the letter I remarked to her that I was extremely sorry to learn that she had decided to take this step and that I wished she had previously taken the opportunity of discussing with me some of the difficulties she had in mind with regard to the reason given for resignation, namely that she was not in agreement with the constitution of the College as a mixed College.
  3. I also pointed out to her that while she had complete freedom with regard to her own actions, I could not support the suggestion contained in her letter of resignation that a mixed College was dangerous. In support of my statement I made use of the following arguments :-
    - (a) Under ordinary conditions a boy was better for having a sister and a girl was better for having a brother, but I could understand home or housing conditions being so unsatisfactory as to bring about disastrous results. It was the same in a mixed institution, and it was up to her and to me to make the tone of the College so sound that the students received the full benefit of the mixed system without its disadvantages.
    - (b) Leeds and the Country needed men teachers as well as women teachers and I was certain that it would be disastrous to attempt to run separate men's and women's colleges in Leeds. In places where this scheme has been tried regulations had to be



55 Rollin Helen F.

adopted by means of which men students were  
allowed out only on certain half days and women  
students on other half days, but this did not  
prevent secret meetings.

(c) In a men's college pure and simple the students  
would look upon any discussion of the relation of  
the sexes as an illegal interference with their  
freedom, whereas in a mixed college the problem  
was a problem of the institution and thus gave  
full scope for the Principal and the Vice-Principal  
to discuss these problems without causing any  
resentment on the part of the students. As  
evidence of this I pointed out that not long ago  
the men students sent a deputation to me asking  
if I would give them a plain straight talk on  
the sexual dangers of a young man's life.

(d) Practically the whole of the Universities of this  
Country and of America and many of the higher  
institutions are mixed institutions. Send a

(e) That the dangers suggested were not dangers of a  
mixed college was evident from the number of  
disasters that had taken place in women's  
colleges and I gave proof of this statement.

(f) I also pointed out that during an experience of  
over 20 years of a mixed institution, I had  
never had a single case of unsatisfactory  
relationships between the men and the women  
students, but that during the last month I  
had had two serious cases of unsatisfactory  
conduct on the part of the women students of  
the College, but in each case the man in question  
was in no way associated with the College.

(i) If Miss Morcier's resignation was due to personal  
reasons it was not our business to interfere.

(ii) If it was due to reasons affecting the welfare and  
interests of the College, she had acted discourteously  
was in no way associated with the College.



B. B. Rollin

Section F<sub>3</sub>

Resignation of Miss Mercier and the Action of the Staff.

When Miss Mercier's resignation was announced I went to her to express my shock and surprise at the action she had taken. I said to Miss Mercier -- "Why did you send in your resignation? If you had any alteration in the policy to suggest why did you not bring it before your colleagues on the staff for discussion, when we might have been able to join you in a petition for such a change?" Her reply was "It is too long a story". I have not yet been able to understand this "too long story".

During this time it came to our knowledge that meetings were being held by the Women Tutors at which they were bound to secrecy. At length it appeared to some of the wiser among them that their actions were unconstitutional and that it would be advisable to confer with the other members of the staff.

The women called a General Meeting of the staff and read to them the text of a manifesto in praise of Miss Mercier which they invited all to sign, their avowed purpose being to send a copy of the same to the Education Committee, to the press for publication, and to the Board of Education.

We felt that this manifesto was not only most unusual and uncalled for, but was extravagant in its terms and savoured of the nature of a veiled protest against the acceptance of Miss Mercier's resignation. We tried by every manner of questioning to arrive at the causes for this resignation, but could not get a satisfactory reply. Therefore, we declined to take any part in it, because:

- (i) If Miss Mercier's resignation was due to personal reasons it was not our business to interfere.
- (ii) If it was due to reasons affecting the welfare and interests of the College, she had acted discourteously



towards us in not taking us into her confidence in the matter, and therefore we could not protest against causes of which we were ignorant, and of which they were determined to keep us in ignorance.

Miss Mercier's Conditions of Appointment like the others I presume, ended with the Clause - "these conditions are subject to modification in the light of experience". Here we have the indication that our Board of Governors are ready to make such modifications as in the light of experience appear necessary.

If Miss Mercier from her educational experience felt that certain changes of policy would be to the advantage of the College, it was her duty to bring it before her Colleagues for discussion, and if agreed upon, it would have been sent as a petition to the Board of Governors.

We have yet to learn that such a petition would not have received their serious and sympathetic consideration.

At the next meeting, the letter to Miss Mercier was read and approved of unanimously, and was afterwards signed by all the Women Externs. On this occasion it was also suggested that an appreciation should be sent to the Board of Education and to each member of the Education Committee, in addition to that to the Press. To this suggestion an objection was raised that it was a very unusual procedure, and reserved for a protest. This was repudiated, and the statement made that it was "the usual thing to do" on such an occasion. The later "in the chair" read out "a few notes" on the lines of which she suggested the "appreciation" could be drawn up. Objections were raised against certain statements with regard to "improvement in tone", and "increase in the number of students taking advanced courses, increased earnestness in work," etc.



Miss J.M. GARDNER, M.A.

Lecturer on Method Staff.

The controversy which has culminated in the resignation of nine Tutors of the City of Leeds Training College had its beginnings in meetings of the Women Members of the Staff, which were privately convened by certain individuals.

The first meeting was the outcome of the public announcement in the Press of Miss Mercier's resignation, which, in the opinion of many, did not receive sufficient prominence. At this meeting, owing to school demonstration work, I was not present, but it was decided that a letter of appreciation and regret from the Women Staff to Miss Mercier should be drafted and submitted at the next meeting. It was also proposed by certain members that an appreciation should be sent to the Press, but this was left for further consideration.

At the next meeting, the letter to Miss Mercier was read and approved of unanimously, and was afterwards signed by all the Women Tutors. On this occasion it was also suggested that an appreciation should be sent to the Board of Education and to each member of the Education Committee, in addition to that to the Press. To this suggestion an objection was raised that it was a very unusual procedure, and savoured of a protest. This was repudiated, and the statement made that it was "the usual thing to do" on such an occasion. The tutor "in the chair" read out "a few notes" on the lines of which she suggested the "appreciation" could be drawn up. Objections were raised against certain statements with regard to "improvement in tone", and "increase in the number of students taking advanced courses, increased earnestness in work," etc.



since the arrival of the Vice-Principal, in that they carried with them untrue implications on the work and life in the College before her coming. When I suggested that the Principal and Men Tutors should be taken into our confidence - assuming on their words that it was solely an appreciation I was treated somewhat with scorn as an uncomprehending person, and was told it was "not a man's question", - that "the men's point of view was quite different".

On this occasion, too, it was stated that "we should not get another Vice-Principal, let alone a Woman Principal", and there were frequent allusions to the case".

Certain individuals were appointed to draw up a statement to be considered at the next meeting.

Before the next meeting, however, each tutor was visited by one of the "leaders", who had drawn up the statement which was to be considered. In this an attempt had been made to avoid the remarks previously objected to. I was informed that the men tutors were to be asked to attend, and that there must have been some misunderstanding about this.

At the meeting which followed, the men tutors enquired most carefully into the motives underlying the intended procedure, and also into the purpose which they hoped to accomplish by it. It was not so much the statement, but the procedure with regard to it, that called for investigation, and the men tutors did not consider it advisable or necessary to take such a course, which they pronounced unusual. They pointed out that it was in the nature of a protest, which, in view of the reason for resignation given by the Vice Principal (viz. that she disapproved of the constitution of the College) was uncalled for. The reason as stated in the Press was questioned by



one of the women tutors who said it was misleading, and that "she must have had heaps of experience of co-educational institutions of varied kinds before she came"

Principally The meeting closed without satisfaction.

At a subsequent short meeting of the women members alone, certain tutors still did not see the advisability of signing the statement for the purpose for which it was to be used, so one member on the other side suggested that, if it was not to be unanimous, they might "make it stronger". Resignations were mentioned at this meeting, but one tutor thought a spectacular display would not accomplish their purpose. The document was to be ready for signatures the next day. This was the last meeting dealing with this question, and anything further that was done was done in private meetings of the members who have resigned. As far as I know, the whole question was in abeyance at the time when the residential staff were asked to meet the Secretary for Education.

The actual resignations were sent in ostensibly as a result of Mr. Graham's "talk", (which was quite a different question) and without talking the matter over with the rest of the Staff. This was the "exciting cause", but, to me, the whole question seems a much wider one, and has deeper roots, e.g. When the Vice Principal took up her position in the College, one member of the Staff, who has now resigned, took the trouble to secure a copy of the terms of her appointment and the scope of her powers, and made a point of impressing it on the older-established members of the Staff. Her action seemed to imply that the Principal's powers were now altered and limited, and that a whole section



of the work was delegated wholly and exclusively to another authority. There was a definite attempt to impress the fact that the Vice Principal was practically Principal of the Women's Department, and that if her powers were interfered with she could appeal direct to a higher authority. At the same time, the new members of the Staff talked in depreciatory terms of the Principal, the original staff, and of the College. There has been this undercurrent of feeling for the past two years which has revealed itself on the surface in isolated actions, and remarks from time to time, and has culminated in the present crisis.

Throughout, there seems to have been no thought of loyalty or recognition of responsibility to the Principal of the College, and for these reasons, I, amongst others, could not sympathise with the aims and efforts of those who have resigned.

In addition, it was proposed that two members of the Staff should prepare a statement of some kind bearing on the Vice-Principal's resignation, which, if approved of, should be sent to the Board of Education, to the Leeds Education Committee and to the Press. It was pointed out that something of this nature should be done or it would seem that the appointment of a woman as Vice-Principal had been a failure and this conclusion would affect not only the Leeds College, but the position of women in other colleges and schools - in fact, "The Cause" was involved. There was some opposition to sending anything of the nature of a protest, and so, in order to have something which might possibly meet with the approval of the whole meeting, it was proposed that the statement should take the form of an appreciation of Miss Harrier and this should be sent to the Board of Education, the Education Committee and the Press.



Miss A. Crawshaw, B.Sc.,  
Science Tutor.

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It has been stated that the majority of the women tutors who have resigned their positions at the College have done so in consequence of the talk given by the Secretary of Education to the resident Staff.

As I belong to the non-resident Staff I was not present on that occasion, but for some time before it I could see plainly that there was a considerable amount of unrest and several members of the Staff were in the frame of mind that would cause them to take offence readily.

Soon after the announcement of the Vice-Principal's resignation, a meeting of the women tutors was called, at the suggestion of one of them, and it was proposed that a letter be sent to Miss Mercier expressing our regret at the step she had taken and assuring her of our good wishes for the future. This was passed unanimously.

In addition, it was proposed that two members of the Staff should prepare a statement of some kind bearing on the Vice-Principal's resignation, which, if approved of, should be sent to the Board of Education, to the Leeds Education Committee and to the Press. It was pointed out that something of this nature should be done or it would seem that the appointment of a woman as Vice-Principal had been a failure and this conclusion would affect not only the Leeds College, but the position of women in other Colleges and Schools - in fact, "The Cause" was involved. There was some opposition to sending anything of the nature of a protest, and so, in order to have something which might possibly meet with the approval of the whole meeting, it was proposed that the statement should take the form of an appreciation of Miss Mercier and this should be sent to the Board of Education, the Education Committee and the Press.



However, some of us felt that although this appeared to be harmless, there was the idea of a serious protest underlying it. Some members of the Staff seemed to think it important that action should be taken speedily (before half-term) so that if, as a result of it, the members of the Committee there wished to dismiss any tutors they would be able to do so during that term.

It became evident that all the women tutors would not agree to the proposed step and so it was decided that those who wished to sign the appreciation should do so.

Then it was thought that the men tutors might be willing to take some part and they were invited to a meeting to consider the matter. I was not present at this meeting but heard that, as a result of it, the whole idea of sending out statements had been abandoned.

Soon after this, I was invited to another meeting of women at which it was proposed that we should arrange to have an "At Home", that this should be held in a room in the town and to it should be invited Miss Mercier's friends and many prominent people in the Educational World. Also Miss Mercier was to be asked to give an address on some educational topic. Later, at a full Staff meeting, it was decided to have a small garden party, or something of that nature, to give the College Staff an opportunity of meeting Miss Mercier before her departure from Leeds.

Then followed Mr. Graham's talk and the resignations.

The next step came as a great surprise. Invitations were issued by the Northern Branch of the Training College Association to an "At Home" to meet Miss Mercier. The character of this function was in accordance with the suggestion made at the previously mentioned meeting of women members of the Staff. It was held in Powolny's Rooms, Bond Street, was attended by a



Miss T. Gray,  
Art Director,

large number of people, and the chief feature was an address by Miss Mercier. One of the women staff to raise a protest I have not resigned simply because I have not felt there was any reason for doing so. This I refused to attend. I have been quite happy in my work and have had the greatest possible freedom to carry it on in the way I thought best. Also, I do not know what are the grievances of the nine women who have resigned, for the only one who discussed the subject with me spoke only of Mr. Graham's talk.

Later the women staff invited the men staff to attend. This day I refused to attend for the same reasons. I know that many women's meetings were taking place. I accidentally entered the women's staff-room during one of these, and found that the Protest action had been dropped. They got silent to arrange for a recognition of the Vice-Principal's services, the women staff doing all the arrangements and inviting the men staff to take part afterwards. I gave my opinions on the matter, stating that we could not act in this way without the co-operation of the men tutors - that we stood or fell together as a College. This was ridiculed.



Miss E. Gray,  
Art Mistress.

Following the Vice-Principal's resignation there was a meeting of the Women Staff to raise a protest against the Education Authorities for accepting the Vice-Principal's resignation. This I refused to attend, partly as I looked upon it as going contrary to the Vice-Principal's wish to resign, and secondly because I considered the matter was out of our sphere, as tutors under the Education Committee.

Later the women staff invited the men staff to attend. This also I refused to attend for the same reasons. I heard that many women's meetings were taking place. I accidentally entered the women's staff-room during one of them, and found that the Protest action had been dropped. They now wished to arrange for a recognition of the Vice-Principal's services, the women staff doing all the arrangements and inviting the men staff to take part afterwards. I gave my opinions on the matter, stating that we could not act in this way without the co-operation of the men tutors - that we stood or fell together as a College. This was ridiculed.

RESIGNATION OF VICE-PRINCIPAL.

STATEMENT OF MR. POLLOCK.

Medical Officer.

" Miss J. M. HANCOCK,

Lecturer on Method Staff.

" Miss A. ORANGLAW,

Science Tutor.

" Miss E. GRAY,

Art Mistress.

18TH AUGUST, 1916.