

any person who is or has been a Matron or Superintendent of Nurses at any Hospital or Infirmary, provided the evidence of her training is considered satisfactory by the Executive Committee; any Sister or Nurse whose name is entered on the Register maintained by the Corporation pursuant to Bye-Law 26."

The last half of the qualification is something indefinite—the opinion of the Executive Committee as to what constitutes a satisfactory training. (Applause.) Next, one would expect logically that the qualification required of Nurse candidates would appear in the same Bye-Law as those regulating other Members, or at least, logically, that it would follow in the next Bye-Law. But no, the one is separated from the other by pages of other matter. Now, I wish to dissociate myself from the ultra-critical members of the Association, but I should much like to know what this means? When I first came to Bye-Law 26, the mental effect that was produced by it reminded me of the Irishman and his rather lively horse who managed to get one foot in the stirrup, whereupon the rider remarked to the animal, "If you are going to get up, I must get off?" (Laughter.) I went on from Bye-Law 7 to see the meaning of the definitions to Bye-Law 26. But this simply speaks of nurses as "fit and proper persons." "The Executive Committee shall keep a Register of such persons as the Executive Committee shall think fit and proper persons to act as Nurses." Now Bye-Law 7 refers us for a definition to Bye-Law 26, yet in that Bye-Law there is not one letter formulating the qualifications required of nurse candidates; there is not a word about "membership" nor a nurse's qualifications. At first sight, I confess it simply appears to be an ingenious arrangement for evading those questions altogether. (Hear, hear.) My amendment, Ladies and Gentlemen, incorporates Bye-Law 26 with Bye-Law 7. It leaves to the members of the Association the definition of what the qualification shall be which is required of nurse candidates, and in that way leaves to them the right of choosing those with whom they wish to be associated. It also, I may point out, arranges matters so that, at any time, the members can call a meeting of the Association and alter the qualification required in order to bring it up to date. Now, I should like to point out, and I must once more lay stress on this point, that it does not in any way interfere with the powers of the Executive Committee. As, under the draft Bye-Laws, so under this amended Bye-Law, the Executive Committee will still elect the Members of the Association under Bye-Law 8, and will still have the power of bringing about a change in the qualification of nurse candidates by calling a Special General Meeting of the Association under Bye-Law 11; provided, of course, that the members of the Association approve of such an alteration. There may be certain objections to my arrangement. The first is, that it may be said that the question of the qualifications required by nurse candidates would be better left to the Rules and Regulations in force. I want to warn you against that subtle reasoning. It is merely another way of saying that the matter shall remain as it is, and that the Executive Committee shall say who is a nurse and who is not. The next objection is that it would require a Special General Meeting of the Association in order to bring this Bye-Law into operation. My answer to this is that it would not occur more than once in two or three years, and then it would be a matter of the utmost importance to every member of the Association. (Loud applause.) Another objection is that, as you observe, my amend-

ment entirely deletes two particular draft Bye Laws, and places them in one. My answer is that it is not mutilation, but settles definitely this particular question of nurse candidates to membership of the Association and is quite apart from the other questions of managing it, which, I have no doubt, will find critics. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) I do not think there is any other serious objection to be brought against the amendment. It has been said, indeed, that the Bye-Laws of the Association have worked so well during the last few years that no change is necessary. All I can say is that I do not think the Bye-Laws of the Association have worked well. (Applause.) Now, before moving my amendment, I should like to address a few words of warning to the Nurse members of the Association, which is the Royal British Nurses' Association. (Applause.) I would ask the Nurse members to look back over the great struggle which trained nurses have had to establish their position, and I would ask them to remember the difficulties against them and amongst them, for defending themselves. (Applause.) I would do more than this. I would ask the Nursing members of the Association to look forward to the time when, perhaps by the agency of this Association, the position of the nurse will be defined by Act of Parliament (hear, hear, and loud applause), and I would warn you when that time comes there will have to be no choosing between the rights and interests of the hospital-trained nurse and the rights and interests of other workers amongst you. (Applause.) The effect of my amendment is to give the former the power of excluding such workers. For that reason, I ask the Nurse members to pass an amendment which shall permit them to select those of their own kind and class with whom they may wish to associate themselves. (Applause.) I ask them, therefore, to lay aside all prejudice, for or against the "fighting members" of the Association, and all prejudice for or against the non-fighting members of the Association, and vote for an amendment which means voting for themselves and other fellow nurses. I will ask some nurse member of the Association, who is a supporter of the Executive Committee, if possible, to second it.

Miss STACEY formally seconded the amendment.

Mr. GANT said that the whole point of the last speaker's address overlooked the fact that there would be a third of nurses on the Executive Committee, and that what he had been saying in a rather dreamy and dull manner was an utter loss of time. (Applause.)

Mr. FARDON: I should like to say, in regard to this amendment, that I thoroughly appreciate the very moderate way in which Dr. Biernacki has put his proposition before the Meeting, and I should be happy to hope that all the amendments we have to discuss will be discussed in the same spirit. I have also to speak to this because it appears to me that Dr. Biernacki and those who are responsible for the drafting of these Bye-Laws are standing absolutely upon the same platform. I hope that it is no disrespect to what Dr. Biernacki has put forward so clearly to us to say that I cannot conceive that there is any essential difference between his proposition and that already before the Meeting.

Dr. WOODS: Then why not accept it at once. (Laughter.)

Mr. FARDON: There is one impression which I think may possibly have crept into the minds of some of the Members, and that is as to the constitution of the Register. We must all remember this, if you

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