

represented. How many Hospital Boards in Scotland and Ireland would be magnanimous enough to allow their Matrons the continual leave of absence necessary to attend to the enormous amount of business which would devolve upon the Governing Body of the Nursing Profession? Nurses, like the doctors, should be free to elect whom they chose.

Miss Burr said she noticed at the meeting of the R.B.N.A. the opinion of the Select Committee was quoted very frequently, and many votes on the direct representative question were lost in consequence, as it was stated that the Governing Body would be too large if they were added. Nevertheless, the recommendations of the Select Committee had not been followed in every instance.

We were not absolutely bound by the recommendations of that Committee, though, whenever possible, the Society for State Registration had endeavoured to follow these recommendations.

What was of primary importance was that there should be provision for the adequate representation of the rank and file of the registered nurses, and that there should be a majority of nurses on the Council.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick supported the resolution, and agreed with Miss Todd that the whole Board ought to be directly elected by registered nurses instead of a portion of them, being the nominees of organised bodies.

It was an outrage that so unrepresentative a society as the Royal British Nurses' Association should have proposed to deprive the registered nurses of the United Kingdom of all power in the government of their profession, making their Central Board an unconstitutional and autocratic body. She had attended the recent meeting of the R.B.N.A. when Miss Burr, Miss Forrest, Miss K. Scott, and others had come forward to voice the interests of the profession at large, and nurses were greatly indebted to them.

It did not, however, very much matter what the small clique governing the R.B.N.A. attempted to do. The nurses had their own State Registration Society, strong enough to demand justice for them. Moreover, the new Parliament would be composed of men who understood industrial problems, who would realise the importance of this working woman's question—for nurses were working women—and they would, no doubt, pass just laws. Work was a most honourable thing, and nurses were to be congratulated that they held high rank amongst the workers of the world. She did not really think there was the least fear that Parliament would sanction any such retrograde scheme as that advocated by the Executive Committee of the Royal British Nurses' Association.

Miss Stewart said that the principle at stake was that of the liberties of the nursing profession. She agreed with Miss Todd and Mrs. Fenwick that all members of the Governing Body should be directly represented by the nurses, but it must be remembered that in regard to the Parliamentary Franchise women had no vote, they ranked before the law with children and lunatics, and it would be very difficult to persuade Parliament that they possessed the power to govern themselves. There, however, should be a fair proportion of nurses on the Board, placed there by a free electorate and standing on their own work.

The Chairman then put the Resolution to the meeting, when it was carried unanimously with applause.

After a hearty vote of thanks to Miss Isla Stewart for the admirable manner in which she has conducted the business, the meeting terminated.

By Order!

As we go to press we have received the following characteristic notice from the Royal British Nurses' Association:—

Royal British Nurses' Association,
10, Orchard Street, Portman Square, W.
January 24th, 1906.

NOTICE.

Whereas it is known that at the Special General Meeting held at 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, on Wednesday, January 17th, 1906, a resolution was moved by a person who was not entitled so to do, not being a member of the Corporation, and whereas it is apprehended that other persons not being members may have taken part in the voting, a Special General Meeting of the Corporation will be held at 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W., on Wednesday, February 7th, 1906, at 3 p.m., at which the following resolution will be proposed:—

"That the resolutions passed at the Special General Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association, held on Wednesday, January 17th, 1906, be rescinded, and that the draft Bill be re-introduced in the form in which it left the Special Meeting of the General Council held on Monday, January 8th, 1906."

By Order of the Executive Committee.

As we were present at the meeting on January 17th we know that the names of each member who proposed and seconded the resolutions were given to the Chairman and announced by him to the meeting. They were as follows:—Miss M. Burr, Miss Wortabet, Miss F. Anstice, Miss Ambler Jones, Miss C. Forrest, Miss Eleanor Clarke, Miss Kuys, Miss Tawney, Miss Halkett, Miss K. Scott, and Miss Waters. If one of these ladies was out of order, it was the Chairman's duty to notify the same.

The flimsy excuse made by the Executive Committee to invalidate the whole proceedings is, of course, just the cowardly and tyrannous action that might have been expected from what we know of the men who govern the Nurses' Association.

The truth is, that for a majority of the nurse members to dare to oppose Dr. Bezly Thorne and his colleagues, to think for themselves, and to vote according to their consciences and not to order, is an outrageous act of independence, which must be nipped in the bud without delay.

Nothing more monstrously unjust has occurred since the historic meeting commanded to insult and condemn an innocent nurse member in 1896 who had been threatened by Dr. Thorne, then Hon. Secretary, and who had been exonerated in the High Courts of Justice of this country. In this connection it is interesting to recall the fact that the late Sir John Russell Reynolds, then President of the Royal College of Surgeons, was put up to propose the infamous Resolution, although *he was not, and never had been*, a member of the Corporation! The meeting on the 7th prox. should prove unusually exciting.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)