

be), why should we be asked to alter our mode of working, and do away with our *ex-officio* members? It is they who have done the work for us, which we of the provinces cannot, and could not find time to, do in London, as it would necessitate leaving duties undone which are more incumbent on us.

But why should we set aside such members as the following:—

Miss Louisa Hogg,
Miss Catherine Loch,
Miss Isla Stewart,
Miss G. Thorold,
Miss Gertrude Rogers,
Mrs. Bedford Fenwick.

For myself, I frankly admit that no Council for the Association from which the names of the founders were absent would possess my confidence. I therefore propose to such of the members of our Association as hold the same views as myself—and I feel sure their name is legion—that we should agree to fill in those names on our voting papers, and thus show that we not only acknowledge our indebtedness to them for their past labours on our behalf, but our sincere wish that it may be our good fortune still to be able to trust the future of our profession to their hands. If “union is force,” and “the divided house may not stand,” is it not the duty of each member of the Corporation to come forward and firmly express her opinion on this important matter, and to support the *ex-officio* members in maintaining the Constitution intact, so that the work of organisation of Nursing on professional lines may make that steady advance which can only be accomplished by continuity of interest in the work by those ladies who began it, and relying in whose judgment and devotion to our cause the majority of provincial Matrons and Nurses have joined the Royal British Nurses' Association.

I would also point out that as the Matrons of the opposing Metropolitan Nurse Training Schools have again refused to accept their *ex-officio* seats, and as, presumably, the Matrons of St. George's, St. Mary's and the Royal Free Hospital will be compelled to retire next year—should this most unwise suggestion be carried out—that the leading Nurse Training Schools will, in 1897-98, be entirely unrepresented by their matrons! What confidence, therefore, will the provincial Matrons have in an Association, professedly national, upon the governing bodies of which our professional leaders have no voice? I answer unhesitatingly, None!

Apologising for the space I have occupied,
I am, Madam,

Yours faithfully,

HENRIETTA C. POOLE, M.R.B.N.A.,
Matron East Lancashire Infirmary, Blackburn.

To the Editor of “The Nursing Record.”

DEAR MADAM,—As a member of the General Council, may I add my testimony to that of my unknown colleague in your issue of June 1st.

The time has come when all who are interested in the welfare and progress of the Association should see to it that the present deadlock in the work of the Association does not continue, to the amusement of our opponents without, and the grief and distress of our friends within.

From what I can gather, the Executive Committee are divided among themselves, in a large measure on account of the autocratic position usurped by certain

members, and an utter disregard of the proprieties of debate and the rightful conduct of business. We of the General Council know, alas! too well, how true this is of our quarterly meetings; it is absolutely futile to attempt to get any information of work done by the Executive Committee beyond any meagre disjointed scraps they may feel disposed to give. If a member, undaunted by previous snubs and attempts at annihilation, asks a question regarding any matter over which the Executive Committee have decided to cast a veil—and there are many such—the answer from the chair usually is, “That must be left entirely to the Executive Committee; it does not concern the General Council.”

Now the Charter has it, “That the General Council shall be the governing body of the Association,” and I hold that for the last year or more that clause has been set aside. The removal from the General Council of the *ex-officio* members cannot be too strongly condemned. Personally, I am very strongly in favour of the provision for the annual retirement in rotation of the members of any governing body, so as to prevent power remaining too exclusively in the hands of any one section, but I consider that the position of the Royal British Nurses' Association is unique. We have to face the fact that a good number of large Nursing Schools have never joined us, and if at one fell swoop we remove our founders, whom have we with as widespread influence to replace them? Will the large Metropolitan Nursing Schools, the Navy, the Indian Nursing Service, and the private Nurses be as truly represented on the administrative body when Miss Thorold, Miss Isla Stewart, Miss Hogg, Miss Loch, Miss C. J. Wood, and Mrs. Bedford Fenwick are removed? The fact that they remain on the Executive Committee is of small moment, as their hands would be practically tied if they are debarred from the General Council. And yet another point—do we owe them nothing? Have we so poor a memory that we are about to forget the *women* who all these years ago met and discussed the scheme out of which this great Association has evolved? At this moment, when its position is fairly assured, when our Nurse pioneers may with good reason feel proud of this result of their steady and untiring labours in the interest of our profession, it behoves *us* not to forget to whom we owe this success, and without whom it would have been impossible.

I would most earnestly beg all members to go very thoroughly into this matter for themselves, to endeavour to grasp the situation impartially, and to come to the General Meeting in July determined to see justice done and the honour of the Corporation upheld. Remember, after all, that the responsibility now rests with the *members*; it has gone beyond the Executive Committee and the General Council, to the fountain head—the Corporation itself. It is the duty of every member to realise his or her individual responsibility, to put aside all private feeling, and to endeavour honestly to act in the best interests of the Nursing profession.

I should like to draw attention to an omission in Bye-law 4, Section F, which will doubtless be rectified when the Bye-laws are revised, viz., that there is no provision for the annual retirement of any proportion of the medical men, so that they remain a closely packed body, yet not so closely packed but that they can this year find room for one extra member.

MAUD ANDREWS,
Member of the General Council, R.B.N.A.

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