

Many Matrons who live at a distance from London, already find it difficult to take any active part in the working of the Association, but still they gladly do what they can, because they feel complete confidence in the representative body. This would be very largely destroyed if the *ex-officio* Matrons were removed from the Council, and the result cannot fail to be disastrous to the best interests of the work, which has been so valuable in the past, even if it does not, as is very possible, lead to a very serious withdrawal of members. I cannot imagine a more prejudicial policy. It seems impossible that it could have emanated from a friend of our Association, or from anyone really in sympathy with the professional progress of Nurses.

I trust that wiser counsels will prevail, and a very possible disruption be averted, by the Bye-laws being so framed as to carry out what I am sure are the wishes of a very large majority of Nurse members.

Thanking you, dear Madam, for giving the matter publicity,

I remain,

Yours very faithfully,

GERTRUDE KNIGHT,

Member of the Council R.B.N.A.,

Matron, General Hospital, Nottingham.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—As one who took a keen interest in the formation of what has now the honour to call itself the "Royal British Nurses' Association," may I ask space for a few remarks about its affairs? The happy security that all was going well with it was rudely shattered by the volcanic eruption of April 19th. It revealed a lamentable state of things subsequently confirmed by the next meeting and the official account in the May number of the *Nurses' Journal*. The question of most moment and around which the keenest interest centres is the "To be, or not to be" of the *ex-officio* Nurse members on the Council. Now it strikes the ordinary mind as quite wonderful and almost comic that instead of heated debates and learned, and probably costly, legal opinions on the subject, the simple course was not pursued of adding such words to the present "ambiguous" Bye-law as should bring it into accord with the old one and carry out the carefully considered policy to which the original members had pledged themselves. "Almost comic," I said, but no, it savours more of tragedy that a deadlock should have been allowed to arise seriously threatening the stability of the Corporation and exposing it to the ridicule of outsiders. The question which naturally occurs to the on-looker and to which there appears to be no answer is "What advantage is the Corporation to gain by the loss of the most important of the members of its Council?" The advantage would have to be very great to justify a procedure best defined as breaking the spirit in order to keep the letter of the (Bye-)law. It is a very important Bye-law, as it involves a distinct promise that certain clearly specified members should always have a voice in the counsels of the Association they largely helped to form; also it involves as distinct a promise to the Metropolitan Hospitals mentioned, that they should have a similar power through their Matrons. It is this apparent disregard of the promises made and the obligations accepted when the Association was being founded, more even than the loss of the

individual members—deplorable as that would be—which is to be deprecated. It is difficult to understand how so important a Bye-law attained its present ambiguity. Of the meaning it was intended to bear when drawn up there can be no doubt in the minds of the members who passed it, and all these members are bound to support it in its original form. It is a curious way of rectifying a blunder which has somehow arisen, by making it a permanent one! Members should be very jealous of any alteration in the constitution of their Association; if one part is to be changed without adequate reason given, why not all—until the whole character of the Association is transformed? Progress and improvement we should all welcome but not a procedure calculated to pull down rather than to build up.

Another point arrests attention; continuity of Government has its advantages, but why should these be reserved for one section of the Council and be denied to the other? Why should the regulations for the retirement of Matrons and Nurses exist, and be enforced with a fervid conscientiousness that hesitates at no sacrifice, and makes one recall rather feelingly the warning "Surtout point de zèle," and no such regulations exist for the medical members. The large amount of time, trouble and consideration bestowed on the interests of the Nurses by the medical members all must be ready to admit, and to acknowledge with a deep sense of obligation. Still, Nurses alone can thoroughly understand the requirements of Nurses, hence the feeling of insecurity aroused by the proposal to remove the leaders of the profession from the Council. If there be cause to think their removal expedient, let it be made public, that the Corporation which after all constitutes the ultimate Court of Appeal may give its decision. To ask it to vote in the dark is unreasonable.

I cannot conclude my remarks without expressing my own and, I am sure I may say, my fellow-members' gratitude to our President for her unselfish and untiring devotion to the cause of the Royal British Nurses' Association.

Yours faithfully,

AMY K. ROBERTSON.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—We members of the Royal British Nurses' Association owe you a very sincere debt of gratitude for your public-spirited action in drawing our attention to the true state of the case concerning the formation of the new Council. The fact that there has been a strong feeling of dissatisfaction in the minds of those members who take a personal interest in our Association during the past year is indisputable, and yet we Nurse Members are ourselves largely to blame for the present despicable position to which we have permitted the Association to drift. It is our lack of public and professional spirit, *as a body*, in its honour and welfare, which has made it possible for the present official policy to actually propose that our Founders should be thrown aside by us—like an old shoe! Our duty was to have supported Miss Annesley Kenealy in her protest a year ago, when these self-same leaders were maliciously attacked in our own Journal, instead of permitting this policy to run its course to the probable end—dissolution. But there is still time for us

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