

Royal British Nurses' Association.

(Incorporated by Royal Charter.)



THE current issue of the *Nurses' Journal* opens with the following paragraph:—

“The Association is to be congratulated on the satisfactory nature of the issue of the annual meeting. Without wishing to enter into controversial topics, it would be impossible on an occasion like the present, to pass by altogether without comment, the significance of an action

whereby a large majority of members assented to the propriety of abiding by certain rules of procedure. *Vox populi Vox Dei*, and in spite of the many mis-statements that through some means or other have found their way into different journals, the verdict on the point alluded to was emphatic. It would be ungenerous on our part to make any further comment. We shall therefore conclude these brief remarks with an earnest recommendation, that the decision will be accepted in a dignified spirit, and that the absence of any personal motives on the part of those officially concerned in the matter, will be at once recognised and accepted.”

The above paragraph, composed of hints and allusions instead of plainly stating facts, continues a policy in the conduct of our *Journal*, of which every self-respecting member of the Royal British Nurses' Association must disapprove.

In plain English, it is wished that the members of the Association should believe that “action” was taken at the Annual Meeting, concerning the retention of *ex-officio* members on the Council, and that the voice of the members was against retaining them, when it must be well known by the editor of the *Nurses' Journal* that this question was never even raised, much less assented to, at the meeting.

The voting paper for the General Council was issued with no intimation to the members that a drastic change of organisation was therein involved; and in returning these lists to the office, unchanged, many members were made responsible for the removal of the *ex-officio* Matrons, contrary to their wishes and judgment, as some of them have since publicly stated in this *Journal*.

In February, when it became known that it was the proposed official policy to act upon the letter of the Bye-law constituting the General Council against the spirit of the constitution which had existed from the foundation of the Association, and to remove the Matrons of the leading training schools, sixty-nine members at once requisitioned for a special general meeting of the Corporation to alter the Bye-law.

That meeting was permanently “postponed” by the Executive Committee, thereby denying to the members their *right* to express an opinion upon the proposed change in the constitution of the General Council, and thus violating a privilege granted to the members by the Charter and Bye-laws.

To infer, as the editor of the *Nurses' Journal* has done, that any “action” for the retention of the *ex-officio* members would have been possible or valid at the Annual Meeting (without altering the Bye-law), is an indefensible mis-representation of fact which we consider it our duty to expose.

The vital principle embodied in the retention of the leaders of the Nursing profession as *ex-officio* members of the governing body of the Royal British Nurses' Association, is one which has yet to be settled in general meeting by the members themselves; and we have very little doubt that the “majority of members,” who are known to be actuated by a strong sense of professional feeling, will agree with us that a Nurses' Association, upon the governing body of which the Matrons of the leading Nurse-training schools have no seats, is, from a professional point of view, a body in which Trained Nurses can have no confidence.

By the proceedings of the officials of the Association, the heads of the great Nursing schools of St. Bartholomew's, Middlesex, and Leicester, the Navy and Indian Army Nursing Services have, this year, been swept off our Council, and upon the same fatal policy, next year the Superintendents of St. George's, St. Mary's, the Royal Free and Bristol would also be deprived of seats. The only questions that remain to be answered are: How many trained and certificated Nurses will be content to be registered by an Association, upon the governing body of which the names of the Superintendents of the leading Training Schools are conspicuous by their absence? and how many conscientious Superintendents will encourage their certificated Nurses to submit their professional credentials to the inspection of a Board so constituted? We are of opinion that the experience of the past six months as to the applications made for admittance to the roll of the Royal British Nurses' Association, is a sufficiently significant reply.

Nursing Echoes.

* * * All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.



WE are glad that the announcement has been made in the present issue of the *Nurses' Journal* that the Lending and Reference Library which we proposed should be organised by the Royal British Nurses' Association, and which was sanctioned by the General Council in July, 1894, will soon be in working order. We learn that:—

“The announcement is made with much pleasure that a Lending and Reference Library for Members of the Association is now being actively organised, and the Sub-Committee, in arranging all the necessary details, confidently anticipate that it will be available for the use of members on October 1st.

Two substantial book-cases, with glass doors, movable shelves and good locks, each to hold about 1,000

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)