

Association was founded by Nurses for Nurses. (Applause.) It was founded for their mutual aid, to help them in their education, and to better their financial position, to gain for them legal status and all the advantages which come from legal status. And I may say that for five years the internal work of the Association was most harmonious, and that this Association was feared by its enemies and respected by its friends. During the last two years, an entirely new form of government has been introduced into the Royal British Nurses' Association, and that, in short, has been a government of official autocracy. (Hear, hear, and applause.) The rights of the members on the Executive Committee—the Nurse members—have been over and over again disregarded and over-ridden, and I think it is not too much to say that the majority of the Matrons who worked with me during 1894 and 1895 have to a very great degree lost confidence in the justice that would be likely to be awarded to a Nurse by the Executive Committee. We presented a protest against the proceedings of that body in March, 1894. That protest was disregarded, and I have only to say that so dissatisfied were the majority of the Matrons with the treatment that they received from that Committee, that they absented themselves for several months from its meetings. Now, Sir, Dr. Drage stated that there has been friction in this Association before. It is my firm conviction that there will continue to be friction in this Association until justice is accorded to the Nurses, and until the business of our Association is conducted according to the Bye-laws and the provisions of our Charter. (Hear, hear, and applause.) No one can have more greatly, or truly, the interests of the Royal British Nurses' Association at heart than I have (loud applause), but those interests must be upon a true basis. We must have no false ideals in this matter. We are formed to carry out definite principles; we must work for those definite principles, and if the very foundation of these principles is to be denied to the Nurses, I can only say that this Association will inevitably fail. ("Question!") This dissatisfaction has been fermenting for two years. (Hear, hear, and applause.) For two years we have been protesting at every meeting. We have protested in the Executive Committee against what we considered to be injustice to the Nurses. Therefore, this meeting must not for one moment imagine that Nurse Barlow is the only person who has felt herself aggrieved. (No, and disturbance.) For the last two years, certainly not; and I place it before you that the first principle of this Association must be justice for Nurses, and that they must be permitted to express their views and their wishes in their own Association. (Hear, hear, and loud applause.)

Miss THOROLD: Ladies and gentlemen, I should like to say that I cordially support the resolution which was proposed by Sir Russell Reynolds and seconded by Sir William Broadbent, and I appeal to all my fellow Nurses to vote for it. I consider that it is at present of the utmost importance that we should all be unanimous on this point, that we should act together, and I trust that the voting will be a unanimous vote, and at any rate that it will be supported by an overwhelming majority. (Hear, hear, and applause.)

Miss ANNESLEY KENEALY: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—When the history of this meeting

comes to be written—and it will be written—(hear, hear), and when the circumstances of it become the property of the Press—and it will become the property of the Press—it appears to me that it will be a very great shock to the public to find that the Royal British Nurses' Association, which was founded for the protection of the Nurses, for the benefit of the Nurses, and in the interest of the Nurses, has used its powers to oppress and condemn a Nurse unheard and untried. (Hear, hear.) I should like to ask what confidence can we, as Nurses, have in the Executive Committee of the Royal British Nurses' Association, when one of our own number has to appeal for protection against that Executive to the High Court of Chancery? (Hear, hear.) What confidence are we to feel that tomorrow will not bring the same treatment to us? Another point that occurs to me is this, that it would appear from the present crisis as if the Register, which we always thought would be such a safeguard to Nurses, constitutes in reality a great danger. That Register is now being used as a weapon in the hands of the Executive Committee to prevent the exercise of the right of every one of us to freely criticise the management of our own Association. (Hear, hear.) Now I should like to ask, if the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association are not to criticise the management of it, in whose hands is this criticism to be left? We are responsible for the management of our own Association, and we claim the free right to criticise anything which takes place either at the Executive Committees, in the office, or at the General Council Meetings. (Hear, hear, and applause.) I should like to ask if we are going to allow by our conduct today the Executive Committee to take up that position, that it shall sit aloft on a pedestal free from the criticism which every human being is subject to? (Hear, hear.) There is another very interesting point that I should like to bring before you, and that is, why this particular Nurse was singled out for persecution. (Cries of "Hear, hear.") Many others—and I am ready to say that I myself am included—have freely criticised in the pages of the same paper the management of this Association, which, for the past two years at least, has been revolting to any woman of independence and character. (Applause.) I want to ask why I, and why some of the other women whose letters have appeared in the same paper, have not been threatened with removal from the Register. I rather wish we had. (Laughter and applause.) There is another point, Mr. Chairman, that I should like to bring out, although perhaps it will not be very agreeable to you, Sir, and that point is this: If the Executive Committee is doing its duty, why is it so afraid of criticism and investigation? (Hear, hear.) If they are doing everything that is right, if they are caring for the interests of the Nurses, and to further their progress, what is there to fear? They have only to court inquiry, and you would think if their conduct were perfectly correct and honourable they would be only too glad to court it and prove that they were in the right. This afternoon there has not been any attempt to prove that they were in the right. There has not been a plain straightforward statement on the other side. That is what we are waiting for (Hear, hear). I do not know that we shall get it; we are not likely to stay here long enough. ("Vote.") Now there is another point which has touched me very keenly, and that is this. In the resolution before us an expression is used, "That this meeting wishes to

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