

and Nurses), in whom we had complete confidence, that it is time that the great body of the members were made acquainted with the reasons for these deplorable secessions from active participation in the work of the Royal British Nurses' Association, and I earnestly hope that those who may be driven to follow Miss Mollett's example in the matter of resignation, will plainly state their reasons for doing so.

We country members are well aware that it has been made almost impossible for gentlewomen to work on the Executive by some of the medical members of which it is at present composed (the letter of Sir Dyce Duckworth in *The Hospital* of February 8th is a fair proof of what we who differ from him may expect), and liberty even to ask a question on the subject-matter before the chair was refused at the last Council Meeting by the Chairman. The result of this mode of government has been already most disastrous, having almost compelled ladies who hold a high position in the Nursing world to retire from active service to our Association—I may mention Miss Hogg of Haslar, Miss Mollett, Mrs. Spencer and others.

I know I am expressing the almost unanimous feeling of the country Matrons, who hold prominent positions as heads of our large Training Schools, and who are members of the Royal British Nurses' Association, when I state that until a reform of government and management takes place in the Executive Committee, we will decline to accept the responsibility of advising the members of our Nursing staffs to join the Association. The treatment Miss Barlow received, both at the hands of a paid official and at the hands of a certain member of the Executive, who under most questionable circumstances brought the weight of the medical profession to terrorise an innocent woman, has made membership of the Royal British Nurses' Association an honour to be dreaded, and I, for one, see no good to be gained by Nurses placing themselves in such a connection. It will become the duty of those who still remain members of the Association to use every means in their power to rescue the Association from its present lamentable condition, and for this purpose we must be prepared, if need be, to appeal to higher powers.

I am, dear Madam,
Yours faithfully,
H. C. POOLE,
Matron, Member of General Council,
Royal British Nurses' Association.
The Infirmary, Blackburn.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—Miss Mollett's resignation of membership of the Royal British Nurses' Association has made it incumbent on the part of every Matron who is still a member to take some concerted action if our Association is to continue to exist. Those amongst us who have been members from the first, and who, as Miss Mollett says, "at its inauguration hoped so much" from it, owe it to ourselves and our Nurses to make our views concerning the present condition of affairs quite plain. There is no doubt in the minds of those members, who like myself have attended several of the Council Meetings lately, that a most determined autocracy has been attempted on the part of the Hon. Officers, and certain members of the Executive Committee. In plain English, no Nurse member of the

Council whose opinions differed from those of these said Officers was allowed a fair hearing.

I believe there are many country members like myself who feel it their duty to take firm and active measures if we do not in the immediate future find that this policy is abandoned by the officials and their supporters on the Executive Committee. If any improvement is to take place in the management of our Association we must place our grievances plainly before the public:

(1) As a member of the Royal British Nurses' Association I object strongly to being made responsible for what I consider a gross breach of faith, *i.e.*, the expulsion of our *ex-officio* Matrons from their seats on the Council which they were offered by the Corporation and accepted. To rectify this very questionable and discourteous action, I claim that the anomalous Bye-Law constituting the Council be reconstructed so that we may retain the services of those who know our needs and in whom we have confidence. Also I desire to show my appreciation of the great work accomplished for Nurses in the past by our hard-working pioneers, by appointing some of our Senior Matrons as Vice-Presidents.

(2) I strongly object to any member without the sanction of the Corporation pledging the Royal British Nurses' Association to an untenable policy, such as voting against the principle of State Registration, as lately done by Miss Wedgewood, who, moreover, is a comparatively new member. If the Officials are to be permitted to work against this vital principle of State Registration, then I contend that not one shilling more of the Nurses' money should be taken for Registration by our Association.

(3) I am of opinion that our expenditure ought to be kept strictly within our assured income (as was formerly the case); any other course is detrimental to the best interests of the Association and to us as Nurses of self-respect and independence. The cost of our offices and four paid officials alone is upwards of £600 a year, an altogether outrageous expenditure for a society of working women. If less were spent on these items much more could be accomplished for the benefit of the members.

(4) I condemn unhesitatingly the intimidation of Miss Barlow by the Officials and her further persecution at the late General Meeting, and I feel sure that the effect of this attempted intimidation will defeat the end it was intended to attain, and will rouse rather than cower the innocent amongst us who are unjustly accused. If it be true that Sir J. Russell Reynolds was not a member of the Association when he attended the meeting and proposed the resolution, I hope Miss Barlow will demand an ample apology for this proceeding.

Those amongst us who have the welfare of our Nurses at heart cannot conscientiously encourage them to run the risks to which Miss Barlow has been exposed. Unless the Executive Committee adopt an entirely new policy, and recognise the fact that we Nurse members can only take an active interest in the Association, if law and liberty are permitted to prevail, I feel convinced that they will receive no support from the Provinces.

Yours very faithfully,
GERTRUDE KNIGHT,
Matron,
Member of Council, Royal British Nurses' Association.
General Hospital, Nottingham.

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