

affecting the Corporation shall rest with the General Council." This case was of vital importance to every Nurse and to the Corporation, and by the Chairman's action the governing body had been prevented from discussing or hearing anything about the recent trial and judgment against the Corporation. He considered that the Chairman had taken a most serious responsibility upon himself.

The CHAIRMAN declared the meeting closed, upon which loud cries of "Disgraceful," "Shame," "We protest," and hisses, were raised.

THE MANAGEMENT OF MEETINGS OF THE ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—Would you kindly allow me, through the medium of the NURSING RECORD, to express my views on the method of conducting the business of the Corporation—at the quarterly meeting of the General Council of the Royal British Nurses' Association, held at 17, Old Cavendish Street, on Friday, January 10th—as it appeared to me.

It seemed to have been a pre-arranged plan to "rush" the proceedings at the General Council meeting in order to avoid any discussion on a certain, now well-known, subject. This has led some to believe that the Committee would not have been able to justify themselves if this subject had been discussed.

Though taking no actual part in the proceedings, I followed them very closely, and being in one of the front rows was able the better to do so. I was painfully struck with the apparent amusement and levity with which those, or most of those, on the dais received any remark made by the members in the other part of the room. The judicial decision against the Association was not, in my judgment, a subject for merriment, especially merriment from those who were conducting very unusual proceedings, which should have been carried on with dignity.

The discussion on the Report of the Executive Committee was stopped by the Chairman at the two last paragraphs, which related to the action against the Corporation standing in the name of Barlow *v.* Thorne and others. The chairman said that this subject must be postponed, as Dr. Bedford Fenwick had a motion before the meeting on the same subject.

This ruling by the Chairman seemed to me to be both illegal and unbusiness-like, as no Report should be adopted until it has been allowed to be fully discussed. Dr. Bedford Fenwick justly claimed the right to discuss every part of the Report, but when it was put to the vote whether he should do so or not he was outvoted, largely by members of the Executive Committee. The resolutions put from the chair were so ambiguous and so hastily given that it was almost impossible to know on what one had to vote, and I saw—voting by mistake on both sides—more than one member. Also, so many members did not vote at all, that it was impossible to judge what were the real opinions of the Council. In one case, forty-three or so voted on one side and seventeen on the other, and there seemed to be more like one hundred members attending than sixty. Also, I cannot help thinking that the larger number of the members did not understand the correct method of procedure at meetings, and were therefore undecided how to vote.

To proceed. When Dr. Bedford Fenwick's motion came up in the course of the business to be transacted, the Chairman said "that the wording of the motion was not in order," and that he had legal authority to vouch for what he said. Therefore, the Chairman must have believed all along that this motion of Dr. Bedford Fenwick's was out of order, and could therefore not be discussed, and still he said before that any discussion on the part of the Report which related to the same subject must be postponed till this motion of Dr. Bedford Fenwick's was brought up, because the subject could not be discussed twice over! Such tactics cannot have been acceptable to many who were present, and, if the business of the Corporation is to be conducted on the same lines as those on which it was conducted on the 10th inst., it will not be surprising if members lose all confidence in the management. There was a very general expression of opinion amongst the members, after the meeting, that resignation was the only course to pursue.

What we must demand is, that the business of the Corporation shall be carried out in a legal, just, business-like, dignified, and unbiassed manner; that there shall be free and open discussion on all points; and that the opinions and criticisms of the members in general shall be received by the officials with some small amount of respect.

It is impossible that the Association can continue to exist under the present conditions of government.

The Association was started by Nurses for Nurses, and a condition of affairs, in which the Nurses are absolutely forbidden to exercise the rights granted to them in the Charter, must not be permitted to continue.

It is earnestly to be hoped that the strong outburst of indignation against the proceedings on the 10th inst., by many members present, will convince those who are attempting to stifle free speech that such a course is impossible.

Yours faithfully,

S. G. WINGFIELD,

Member of the General Council, Royal British Nurses' Association.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I travelled from Lancashire to London to attend the meeting of the General Council of the Royal British Nurses' Association, expecting to hear details of a case mentioned on the agenda, and which appeared to be of the greatest importance to the whole Nursing profession. I desire to enter my protest against the manner in which the Council was prevented, by the votes of the Executive Committee and their friends, from hearing and discussing both sides of a case which has recently been decided against the Corporation in the Court of Chancery.

The conclusion to which everyone must come is, that it must have been some very strong reason which prompted the Executive Committee to prevent its conduct in this case being discussed by the Council; a further conclusion will be arrived at, I believe, by most unbiassed persons, namely, that if the Executive Committee can thus silence the governing body of the Corporation, Miss Barlow may have been very well advised to seek the protection of the law for herself.

It appears to me that Miss Barlow has been fighting single handed a battle for all Nurses, to obtain for

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