

Mrs. Hughes concluded by saying: "I trust you will all join me in refusing to follow this course; and by voting for the resolution, express your determination that none but properly-trained Nurses shall belong to the Royal British Nurses' Association." (Applause.)

MISS MARGARET BREAY SUPPORTS THE
RESOLUTION.

Miss Margaret Breay (who was greeted with loud and prolonged applause) said that she considered that the fact that the meeting had been convened was a *disgrace* to the Royal British Nurses' Association. That in a matter so important as that which was at present under consideration, the Members of the Association ought to be able at its present stage to bring their views before their Executive Committee and be sure of a fair hearing. That they ought not to have to consider the subject in a special meeting, or to appeal to the public for support against the action of their own officials. But they, she herself at all events, and she thought she was expressing the views of many of her audience, were *not* sure of a fair hearing, in fact, they would be very much surprised if they got it. They were accustomed, or ought to be by this time, to be snubbed, forbidden to speak, ruled out of order on some technicality, to have personal attacks made upon them by the officials, to be snuffed out on a quibble, and to be called "turbulent" when they expressed opinions in the quietest manner at variance with those of the Hon. Officers, or even when they did not do so, but only got the length of giving notice of a resolution which they were not permitted to move. The *raison d'être* of that meeting was that a certain number of the Members of the Royal British Nurses' Association desired, and *would have, fair play and free speech*, and because they believed that this question which so nearly concerned the Nursing Profession vitally concerned the public also, it had been invited to be present to hear what there was to be said on the subject.

Miss Breay then proceeded to give a few instances in proof of her statements; the cases in point will be familiar to readers of the NURSING RECORD.

She mentioned Miss Poole's statement made at the Special General Meeting in January, 1896, that she had been forbidden from the Chair to speak, and that discussion was stifled in every way; that Dr. Bedford Fenwick, whose services had from its foundation been ever ungrudgingly and without measure at the disposal of the Royal British Nurses' Association, and whose unique work for Nurses, would she believed, be only fully realised and appreciated

by future generations, was prevented from speaking to the Report at a meeting, on the ground that he had given notice of a motion bearing on the same subject, and that the question could not be discussed twice. When discussion had thus been suppressed and the Report adopted, the Chairman, Sir James Crichton Browne, had requested him to withdraw his resolution, but stated that if he did not yield to that request, he, the Chairman, would rule it out of order, and this step Sir James Crichton Browne actually took, the meeting breaking up in the utmost disorder, and the Chairman being loudly hissed.

Miss Breay then briefly gave the reasons which had led to her bringing an action against Sir James Crichton Browne last year, and stated that had the suppression of the resolution, of which she had given notice, been an isolated instance of the suppression of discussion in the Association she should not have brought it, she did so because it was the last of a series of cases in which attempts to express views not in accordance with those of the Honorary Officers had been suppressed. She concluded by saying that what the Members of the Association needed was neither *patronage* nor *charity*, that what they asked for was *freedom* for the leaders of the Nursing Profession to carry out on professional lines the management of the Nurses' Association.

Miss Breay then said that these were a few of the reasons why it was necessary that, when members of the Royal British Nurses' Association desired to discuss the affairs of their own Association, they had to meet outside the Association to do so. With regard to the question under consideration that afternoon, others abler than herself had explained the reasons for not admitting Asylum Attendants to the Register of Trained Nurses. She heartily endorsed their views, as she considered the proposed scheme derogatory to the Register and unjust to trained Nurses. From her knowledge of the medical profession and of their appreciation of the services of fully-trained Nurses, she did not believe that this scheme would receive the support of the bulk of the profession. It had been stated that the point at issue in the Association was due to friction between doctors and nurses, and that the medical men must be supreme. That was *not* the question. The cry was a clever one, but it was not a true one. The point at issue was between nurses and about half a dozen medical men who had, by no right conferred upon them, assumed an absolute autocracy in the Royal British Nurses' Association, and persistently ignored, as on this important question, the opinion of the Nurses concerning their own affairs. (Applause.)

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