

Royal British Nurses' Association.



A SPECIAL Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association, convened to consider the adoption of the proposed new Bye-Laws, was held at the Rooms of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, Hanover Square, W., at 4 p.m., on Friday, 17th December, H.R.H. Princess Christian, President of the Association, being present. Those on the platform were Sir Dyce Duckworth, Sir James Crichton Browne, Mr. Pickering Pick, Miss Thorold (of the Middlesex Hospital), Mr. Fardon (of the Middlesex Hospital), Mr. Langton, and Mr. Brudenell Carter.

H.R.H. PRINCESS CHRISTIAN, who was attended by Miss Loch, opened the proceedings by saying: I am very glad to meet you again here, and to lay the proposed new Bye-Laws before you. I should like to say that they have been discussed and passed by the Executive Committee, and have been laid before the Council. The Council has also approved of them. I would like to say one word. I want you all to understand that whatever I do, or whatever those do that work with me, we are only actuated by the one wish—your good, and the unity of the Association. (Applause.)

Sir DYCE DUCKWORTH then took the Chair, and Mr. E. FARDON (Hon. Medical Secretary) read the notice convening the Meeting.

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: I rise to a point of order, Sir. It has hitherto been the invariable custom at the meetings of this Association for the Members to sign their names in the attendance book before admission to any meeting. That procedure has not been adopted upon this occasion; and, upon one very important previous General Meeting, it was found afterwards that there had been persons present who took an active part in the proceedings, but who were not Members, and had, therefore, no legal right to be present. I must call your attention, therefore, to the evident necessity of the names of all who vote for and against these Bye-Laws being taken down, so that no unauthorized person shall have a voice in changing the present constitution of the Association. (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN: It is not customary to take the names of the members who vote, unless the division is very narrow. In case there is a very close division upon any point, then it may be important and necessary to take the names, but otherwise it is not generally considered necessary to do so.

Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK: I should like to call attention to the fact, as we have had that answer from the Chair, that there is no means of knowing, by votes taken by the hand, whether those persons who are voting on the matter are members of this Corporation or not. I must draw attention to the fact that at the last Special General Meeting, gathered together in this hall to condemn one of our colleagues who had been exonerated in a court of law (loud cheers), that the gentleman who proposed the Resolution was not a member of this Corporation (hear, hear), but he was requested to propose the Resolution, although it was absolutely illegal. (Shame.) I refer to the late President of the Royal College of Physicians, Sir John Russell Reynolds. Our Charter says: "At a General Special Meeting of the Corporation every Member of

the Corporation shall have a vote, but no Member shall be entitled to be present or to vote at such Meeting who is in arrear of any subscription or any sum payable by him or her under the Bye-Laws for the time being in force." A distinct illegality therefore took place last time (hear, hear), and it is therefore necessary to use every means at this Meeting to prevent such a proceeding being repeated (hear, hear, and loud applause).

The Hon. Medical Secretary then read and formally proposed the first Resolution as follows, and this was formally seconded by Mr. Alfred Cooper:—

"That the proposed new Bye-Laws, appended hereto, be approved, and that the same be submitted to the Privy Council for their approval, and, if approved by the Privy Council, become and be the Bye-Laws for the time being of the Association."

At this stage, the Chairman detected a photographer using a camera at the end of the hall, and he was ordered to withdraw, the Chairman adding that he "totally disapproved of that sort of thing."

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: I rise to a point of order, Sir. This is a Resolution affecting the entire constitution of this Corporation, and it has been proposed and seconded without one word of comment. I must, therefore, ask you to rule what method of procedure you propose to adopt at this Meeting. Are we to go through these Bye-Laws *seriatim*, or are we really to be expected to receive and vote upon a Resolution of such vital importance proposed and seconded without one syllable of explanation? (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN: The order of business will be as follows:—A certain number of Members have sent in amendments. These amendments will take precedence of any others that may be presented at this Meeting. These having come in first will be considered in their order. These amendments will be taken first. Dr. Fenwick and other members will have ample opportunity of expressing their opinions on all the amendments that come up.

Dr. WETHERED: I have to propose an amendment to Bye-Law 10. This resolution is an extremely simple one. It simply alters one of the Bye-Laws in order to make the work of the Association more easy. Take the first, Bye-Law No. 10. The amendment is that the Law read as follows:—"The first Annual General Meeting of the Corporation to be held at such time and at such place as the President shall appoint, and every subsequent Annual General Meeting of the Corporation to be held in May or June of each year, and at such place in the United Kingdom as the Executive Committee shall appoint." It merely alters the Bye-Law in this way, Sir, that, supposing the Bye-Law to pass at this meeting, submitted to the Privy Council and approved, say, in January or February, according to that Law it would be necessary to wait till the following May or June before a meeting could be held, whereas, after the Bye-Law I propose is amended, it can be held at any time Her Royal Highness shall approve. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN called for a seconder, and Dr. COUPLAND said he would second the amendment.

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: I think it is a very great pity that the officials did not carefully consider the meaning of these Bye-Laws before they brought them before the Association. (Hear, hear, and laughter.) Dr. Wethered takes an active part in the Executive Committee and General Council which approved these

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)