

7. That new Bye-laws had been drawn up by the officials without consulting the members, and which they had even prevented the Executive Committee from discussing.

8. That the journal of the Association is used by the officials to publish personal attacks against their opponents, and that letters written to the journal in defence are suppressed.

MR. FARDON : I stated at the Council meeting that I hoped an opportunity would be afforded at the annual meeting to discuss these matters, and to obtain a vote upon them, in order that we may determine whether the present governing body enjoys the confidence of the great majority of members or not. I have no wish to delay that expression of opinion for one moment longer than is absolutely necessary, but it seems to me that there is something of much more importance to the nurses than the simple fact as to whether one person or another person should occupy an official position upon the Association; and that is the effect not only upon the Association itself, but upon the public mind, of these unnecessary contentions, of the effect that it must produce upon the nurses and upon nursing generally. If, unhappily, the Association should prove to be the means of fostering strife and angry feelings amongst the members, if it should be the means of inducing members to write bitter articles in the public press against one another, or resort to litigation against each other, I do not hesitate to say that the effect upon the spirit in which you nurses should carry out the great work of your life will be so disastrous, will be so harmful, that it would have been better for you nurses, it would have been better for nursing, it would have been better for suffering humanity itself, that the Royal British Nurses' Association should never have been founded. But I am

number an average of less than 12 nurses and less than four medical men represented the Middlesex Hospital. The Chelsea Infirmary has contributed an average attendance of less than two nurses, and on no occasion has the result of a division depended upon the votes of the Middlesex and Chelsea nurses, nor has their presence been necessary in order to secure a majority. The reason why the representation of some of the larger institutions is not larger than it is, is not because of any reluctance to represent those institutions, but is due to the difficulty of procuring candidates. It is emphatically denied that any use whatever is made of any members of the Council to promote the private ends of the officials.

7. This statement is absolutely without foundation. The course that has been adopted is perfectly regular. The sub-committee appointed in February, 1896, presented their report to the Executive Committee, and it was read at their ordinary meeting. It was then proposed to print the draft of the proposed Bye-laws, distribute them to all the members of the committee, and to call a special meeting to consider them as soon as practicable. No attempt whatever has or could be made to prevent the Executive Committee from discussing the report, and it is well-known that the Bye-laws will have to be submitted to a general meeting of the members, and after that, obtain the sanction of the Privy Council before they can come into operation.

8. No instances are given of this charge. A reference to the columns of the journal will prove how groundless it is. Two letters only are known to have been refused admission into the journal; one had reference to matters which were the subject of threatened litigation, which is now pending, and the other was not inserted for reasons publicly stated in the *Nurses' Journal* for August, 1896.

persuaded that the very great majority of the nurses who form this Association are pained and astonished spectators of these unwise attempts to sow discord and confusion in our midst. I beg of you nurses not to allow yourselves to be drawn into these quarrels, but rather that you should help us to restore order and peace, so that we may be free to carry out and to develop those real, true purposes for which this Association was founded. Owing to these agitations the progress of the Association is impeded, its resources are sapped, and it suffers in public estimation (hear, hear), but I appeal with every confidence to the commonsense, to the high-mindedness of the nurses who compose the large majority of the members of this Association, to support and help those who are doing their very best to bring about a happier state. I have now to read to you the Report which has been submitted by the Executive Committee.

The Annual Report was then read as follows :—

“It is the pleasant duty of the Executive Committee to report that the address of congratulation to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, signed on behalf of the Association by Her Royal Highness Princess Christian, was presented to Her Majesty by our Royal President. Since the last annual meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association, 142 members have been elected, 31 have withdrawn, nine have died, and 74 have been removed from the Roll in consequence of having been more than two years in arrear with their

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)