

This year, the officials proposed that men and women who have had no training in a general hospital should be registered by the Association as trained nurses, the expressed object being to increase the funds of the Association by the fees to be paid for such registration by Asylum Attendants. We protest strongly against such an attempt, as it would ruin our Register, and must mislead instead of protecting the public. (Loud applause.)

We consider it most extravagant that the office expenses of our small Association should amount to more than £450 a year, and that the office salaries should be another £250 per annum. We feel confident that the public will regard an expenditure of £700 a year on office management, when the members' whole subscriptions only amount to £300 a year, as simply preposterous, and most discreditable to the officials. Formerly, the Association paid its way and saved money. We are now placed in a position which we, as self-respecting women, consider to be most humiliating, as we are made dependent on theatrical entertainments, sales of work, and other forms of begging, in order to meet the needless and useless extravagance of the officials. (Loud applause.)

We object to the officials packing the governing body with nurses belonging to the Middlesex Hospital and the Chelsea Workhouse Infirmary, and who are, therefore, of necessity, subordinate and subservient to themselves. If the officials were really desirous of affording the members fair play and ordinary justice, there would obviously have been no need for them to take this extraordinary and unprecedented step, in order to secure for themselves an obedient majority at the Council meetings. (Applause.)

The matrons of the Irish Hospitals who protest against the present mismanagement of the Royal British Nurses' Association are firmly determined to do all in their power to obtain a public inquiry into the charges made against the officials. They are compelled to regard this as the only course now left to nurses to regain their rightful influence in their own Association. They have no confidence in the officials, and they feel certain that when they have proved their case the public will share their feelings.

I have been candid in urging our cause with what may seem undue heat and zeal, but have only spoken with warmth from the strength of my convictions. Those who do not complain are those who will be sent to the wall. (Loud and continued applause.)

DR. WOODS said that, as President of the Incorporated Medical Practitioners' Association, he felt it incumbent upon him to reply to the statement which had been laid before the meeting by Mr. Fardon, and which referred to the Protest of the Central Council of his Association. The discussion which had taken place was quite sufficient to justify the action of that Association, which had been taken solely and entirely in the interests of the Royal British Nurses' Association. It was notorious that, for some years past, the work of the Association had not been carried on in an amiable and fair spirit. Members rose at all their meetings and denounced the strong methods adopted to check debate, and it was not unlikely that the Association would become a sort of public bear-garden. Dr. Woods dealt with the first allegation contained in the Protest of the I.M.P.A., viz., that in 1895 the officials, by a quibble, removed certain matrons from the General Council. He was not prepared to enter into the legal aspect of the matter, but

surely the Bye-law which the Royal British Nurses' Association's legal advisers said did apply to the General Council of the Royal British Nurses' Association, could have been revised. Therefore, he thought there must have been something like a quibble or ambiguity in the action of the officials. It was said that it was legally impossible for certain matrons to retain permanent seats upon the Council. That was obviously incorrect, for the Bye-law could have been altered if the officials had wanted to keep the matrons on the Council. The reconsideration of the Bye-laws was evidently undertaken with an object. The Bye-laws did not make it impossible for the matrons to sit on the Executive Committee, and so it perhaps was intended that the Bye-laws should be revised in order to make it impossible. (Hear, hear.) He observed that, in the Hon. Secretary's statement there appeared to be a promise that provision was made, in the new Bye-laws, for conferring a very large number of *ex-officio* seats on the Council upon the matrons of important institutions. He strongly objected to Mr. Fardon's discussing the proposed Bye-laws, when, at the last meeting of the Executive Committee, they were specially requested not to allude to them because they had not yet been discussed and accepted by that Committee.

[At this point, the Chairman intervened, and said that he could not allow the proceedings of the Executive Committee to be discussed.]

DR. WOODS, resuming, said that the Hon. Secretary's statement certainly contained a distinct reference of a kind calculated to influence that meeting. He (Dr. Woods) and others were at the last meeting of the Executive Committee, and they were asked not to make any use of the document containing the proposed Bye-laws. Therefore he said that none of the officials of the Association had a right to use it (Applause.) He considered it a breach of confidence that effect had not been given by the Executive Committee to promises which had been made by certain members in their private capacity. Not having been one of the members in their private capacity he could only say what he had heard. There certainly had been something of the kind, and there had not been any contradiction of that statement, or, at any rate, no substantial contradiction. Miss Barlow wrote to a nurses' paper a letter infinitely less offensive to the officials than his (the speaker's) recent letter to the daily press. She was at once met with a threat to show cause why she should not be struck off the Register. He was rather curious to know if the officials would make any similar drastic threat to him. (Much laughter.) It was perfectly obvious from the balance-sheet that had not the Association received donations which were not likely to be of a permanent nature, it would have been in most serious financial difficulties. (Hear, hear.) Now, those donations might or might not have been given in view of certain events which were likely to occur. It was perfectly obvious that the legal expenses were far too high for an Association with very scanty funds. It was evident from that day's meeting that the officials were at variance with the members. It was also obvious that an undue preponderance in the control of the Association was held by a few medical men, that the General Council was packed with nurses from the Middlesex Hospital and the Chelsea Workhouse Infirmary, who were practically compelled to adopt any proposals they might choose to make, and that the paid servants of a public institution

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