

So that, as a matter of fact, instead of the Association possessing a balance to its credit, it actually closed its financial year about £130 in debt.

The number of members continues steadily to diminish, but it was claimed that even with withdrawals there were nearly 2,800 still on the roll. It is noticeable that this is a smaller number than the Association possessed at the time of its second annual meeting; and it is still more noteworthy that the accounts prove that less than 1,300 members paid their annual subscriptions last year. So that, even assuming the numbers given by the officials to be correct, considerably more than half the members of the Association do not subscribe one penny a year towards its support. A certain number of the others, of course, have paid their life subscriptions, and, therefore, incur no further liability; but the fact makes it apparent that the financial condition of the Association is most unsound and unsafe.

The election of the General Council for the ensuing year, further exemplified the disastrous results of the new Bye-Laws, and the fixed determination of the officials to destroy all authority and power on the part of the Matrons, within the Association. The thirty matrons who were elected on the Council, as we have already shown, hold positions of little or no importance in the nursing world, and two-thirds of them live at such distances from London that it would be most difficult, if not impossible, for them to attend the meetings of the Council. On the other hand, the nurses, as we have also shown, are, with only one exception, resident in London, and may therefore be expected to be present upon every occasion. The significance of this deliberate swamping of the Matrons' votes cannot be minimised; and we commend the manœuvre to the careful consideration of those few Matrons who hold Hospital appointments, who have permitted the officials to place them in such an undignified position of subservience to London private nurses, on the so-called governing body of the Corporation.

The remarks made by Mr. Edward A. Fardon upon this matter were most characteristic, and calculated, as usual, to embitter the relations between matrons and their nurses, which have hitherto, except in the rarest instances, been so harmonious. Mr. Fardon has taken upon himself a most serious responsibility in thus attempting to upset those relations, and in arousing a feeling of antagonism on the part

of nurses against their superior officers, and he must not be surprised if his proceedings are very strongly and generally condemned.

The Annual Report of the Association again illustrated its decadence, and showed that, during the past year, the whole efforts of the officials have been devoted to carrying the new Bye-Laws which have just received the sanction of the Privy Council, and which are already producing such disastrous results. It is remarkable and instructive to observe the estimate in which hospital Matrons are held by the officials of the Association. The latter have deliberately insulted these ladies as a body by depriving the leading matrons in the United Kingdom of the permanent seats on the General Council and Executive Committee which were accorded to them under the old Bye-Laws, and were promised to them when the Association was founded. Mr. Fardon and his friends now pretend to believe that, after such a deliberate breach of faith and insult, these ladies will, with due humility, accept the same seats merely on sufferance. We imagine that we know their sentiments better; that they consider that an Association which has once publicly and deliberately broken faith cannot be trusted again; and that no Matron who has been deprived of a seat which she held by right of her official position can, with any self respect, accept by favour of Mr. Fardon, Resident Medical Officer at the Middlesex Hospital, a temporary seat on the governing bodies of the Royal Corporation of Nurses!!

The predictions which we have made as to the results of the Thorne-Fardon policy are being abundantly verified. The Association is being generally condemned, ridiculed, or despised, according to the standpoints of its critics. There are very few indeed who support it in its present policy. Leading Matrons, at any rate, have shown that they will not do so; and good is coming out of evil by reason of the fact that these ladies are uniting together in support of their interests, and for the promotion of general professional reforms. They will protect themselves, and they will carry out the work which they alone can do, more easily and much more effectually than if they had performed it through the agency of the Association. Reformers are, therefore, taking heart of grace and realising that the very efforts which have been made to diminish the influence of hospital matrons, and to destroy their rightful and just authority, are resulting in increasing and extending that authority and influence.

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