

The Hon. Secretary read the following Resolution from the Irish Nurses' Association:—

"That this Meeting of the Irish Nurses' Association strongly condemns the action of the Royal British Nurses' Association in re-drafting a Bill for State Registration of Trained Nurses, which does not make sufficient provision for the direct representation of Trained Nurses,"

which had been forwarded by the President, Miss S. E. Hampson.

Mrs. Farquharson, of Haughton, wrote:—"My sympathy is all with the Resolution to be proposed. I feel sure now a Liberal common-sense Government is to be in power all such measures of reform and justice as the one you so earnestly propagate will be carried through."

Miss Wade and Miss Sandford (Edinburgh) hoped that the meeting would believe that it had their warmest sympathy. Letters were then read from Miss Edith Mawe, Lady Consul R.B.N.A., Miss Mathew (Exeter), Miss Emery (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), Miss Hay Forbes, Miss Clara Lee, and others warmly supporting the Resolution.

Miss Helen Todd, Matron of the Royal National Sanatorium, Bournemouth, then proposed the following Resolution:—

"That this Meeting most strongly condemns the retrograde action of the Executive Committee of the Royal British Nurses' Association in eliminating from its re-drafted Bill almost the whole of the direct representation on the Central Board originally accorded to Trained Nurses.

"This Meeting further considers that any Registration Bill which does not make full provision for the direct representation of Trained Nurses on their Governing Body contravenes a cardinal principle of justice, and should be actively opposed."

Miss Todd said:—To those of us who have followed nursing politics during the last few months this resolution needs no explanation, but it is possible that some present have been prevented by lack of time from closely following the latest developments.

Since Monday, January 8th, the Bill promoted by the Royal British Nurses' Association has been in the hands of the nursing profession, and the perusal of its contents came as a shock to those of us who, not being in the inner counsels of that Society, did not know their intentions.

You will remember that in the Bill drawn up by the Association in 1905 it was proposed to create a Central Board to manage nursing affairs and this Board was to consist of twenty-one members.

Of these nine were to be medical practitioners and lay persons, representing various bodies such as the General Medical Council, &c. Five were to be Matrons of hospitals or infirmaries, and seven nurses were to be elected by the registered nurses of Great Britain and Ireland as their direct representatives.

The Select Committee of the House of Commons recommended that the Central Body should not

consist of more than fifteen persons, and in order to fall in with their suggestions the R.B.N.A. in their re-drafted Bill deleted six out of the seven elected nurse representatives, and this although the number of non-nurse members remained the same. Perhaps it will make it clearer if we compare the percentage of nurse representatives in the two Boards.

In the original Bill the direct representatives of the Registered Nurses amount to 33·333 per cent. of the whole number, but in the re-drafted Bill 6·666 per cent. only of their governing body, surely a retrograde step.

At the last R.B.N.A. meeting, however, the nurse members insisted on the direct representation being increased, and as the Bill now stands this amounts to 26·31 per cent. of the Board.

In our Bill the percentage on the suggested Council is 35·45, much higher than even that in the first R.B.N.A. Bill.

We nurses are practical women, many of us trained business women and administrators. Such proposals are little short of an insult to our intelligence as skilled workers. It would have been a public scandal if such a measure had been put before Parliament as emanating from a society professing to represent educated nursing opinion in this country.

Personally, I do not think that even our own Bill goes far enough on the lines of direct representation, the election of the whole of the Board which is to control us ought to be in our own hands, but one recognises that the time is not yet ripe for such a suggestion. Such a Board as the R.B.N.A. proposed for our governance would have constituted a grave danger and a standing menace to our professional liberties.

Therefore, I beg that you will one and all support with enthusiasm this Resolution.

Miss Mary Burr, M.R.B.N.A., said that she seconded the resolution with great pleasure. It was only after a strenuous fight on the previous Wednesday that nurse members of the Royal British Nurses' Association had succeeded in having embodied in their Bill a Clause providing that the representative of the Association on the Central Board must be a nurse. The Medical Hon. Secretary had pleaded against the alteration from representative to nurse. It should be remembered that the representative of the Association on the Central Midwives' Board was a nurse not a midwife, and although Dr. Comyns Berkeley stated that in all probability a nurse would be appointed on the Central Nursing Board, nurses had learnt in their fight for legal status that where *power* was concerned it never did to take anything for granted, they should have it in black and white. Much stress had centred round the "direct representatives," but one point had been lost sight of. The Matrons, to be elected by their peers, must be in active practice, and reside in the kingdoms which they represented, but there was no such restriction as to the medical representatives, who might live anywhere; thus the medical practitioners appointed by the Scottish and Irish members of the General Medical Council might be in practice in London, but the Matrons elected must reside in the countries they

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)