

Matron the nursing in an institution would rise or sink. Further, the prestige of the institution would be affected. If a regiment had prestige, it had no difficulty in obtaining recruits; if it had not, they were not forthcoming. It was the same in a hospital. If it had a good reputation, it had no difficulty in securing a desirable supply of nurses; if not, the supply fell short. It must not be thought that the Nursing Profession was greedy of personal position and power, but it had a pride of calling, and when that was imperilled in the persons of its leaders, it was imperilled in the case of all. It was, therefore, time to speak up when an attempt was made to lower the outward, and visible signs of the Matron's authority and position. Miss Mollett concluded by expressing the hope that the protest of the Matrons' Council and the good sense of the Local Government Board would prevent the latter sanctioning the extraordinary and inexplicable resolution of the Metropolitan Asylums Board.

The resolution having been proposed and seconded, Miss I. M. BAKER, Member of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, said that the new bye-law would not affect the present Matrons, but directly a new Matron was appointed to any of the Board's hospitals or asylums then she would rank as a second class officer.

Mrs. CARMICHAEL STOKES, in supporting the resolution, said that women should be specially careful in allowing anything to start them down hill. It was much easier to roll down than to roll up again. Once the terms human being and man meant the same thing, and amongst the Freemen of the City of London women were enrolled. Through the greater definiteness of language at the present time this had been lost to women, and now the term man always included woman in the case of a penalty, and never in that of a privilege. So long as women had no vote or no voice, they must be legislated for like cats and dogs. Our legislators, no doubt, tried to be kind, but they did not understand the needs of women.

The HON MAUDE STANLEY, a Member of the Asylums Board, said, in her opinion, it was no use approaching the Metropolitan Asylums Board. Those who were fighting on the Board to maintain the status of the Matrons, knew it was not open to conviction or argument. She thought that the Board, which had recently been reconstructed, knew little of the real meaning of its decision. The first Matron to take a strong position in any of the Board's hospitals was the Chairman of the present meeting. She was appointed to what was probably the worst hospital, and did strenuous work there, and the tone had been raised ever since. At present the Matrons under the Board were first-rate, and the nurses excellent. If the present proposal as to the status of the Matron took effect, applications would fall off, and there would once again be a poor class of nurses in Metropolitan Asylums Board hospitals.

Miss TODD, Matron of Wandsworth Infirmary; Miss E. R. WORTABET, and Miss E. C. KINGSFORD also spoke.

Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK, who supported the resolution, said that the question before the meeting was a vital one for the public. For the safety of the community the poor had to part with their nearest and dearest when suffering from infectious diseases. These poor patients were isolated in fever hospitals. Their relations could not go in and out, as in a general hospital, and assure themselves of their well-being, or remove the patient if they were not satisfied. The poorer classes were absolutely at the mercy of the standard of nursing in the isolation hospitals, and if that standard were lowered the anxiety and suffering of the people would be greatly enhanced. The Matrons working under the Metropolitan Asylums Board had won for themselves a reputation for devotion to duty, and for a keen sense of professional responsibility. It seemed extremely hard that they, of all Matrons, should be called upon to suffer this indignity, as a result of the obtuse and senseless action of the Metropolitan Asylums Board.

Dr. KINGSFORD, who said he was voicing the views of many medical men, expressed the conviction that it was absolutely essential the Matrons should be in full charge of the nursing and domestic staffs. Although the Metropolitan Asylums Board had passed this bye-law, it was not done with the sanction of its medical officers. It was certain a great mistake had, perhaps inadvertently, been made. He hoped that the Local Government Board would put a stop to this very idiotic procedure.

Miss J. C. CHILD, late Matron of the New Somerset Hospital, Cape Town, said that anything which lowered the position of Matrons in the Old Country prejudicially affected that of their colleagues in the Colonies, who often had a difficult time. If the proposition of the Asylums Board was sanctioned the set back would be felt in South Africa.

The Resolution, on being put to the meeting, was carried unanimously.

#### RESOLUTION II.

The following Resolution was proposed by Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK:

"That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the President of the Local Government Board with the request that as it is impossible to show clearly in a letter the widespread and prejudicial effects that this change would cause, the President of the Local Government Board will permit a small Deputation from the Matrons' Council to lay the facts before him."

Mrs. Fenwick said it was wise to go straight to the fountain head, and that was why they wished to place their case before the President of the Local Government Board. No Minister in the Cabinet should be more willing to receive them sympathetically than Mr. John Burns—whose whole life had been a protest against injustice. She hoped that if they were permitted to plead persuasively with the President that their arguments might prevail to prevent his sanction being given to the proposed Bye-law.

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