

THE ASSOCIATION OF POOR LAW UNIONS AND THE COLLEGE OF NURSING.

A deputation from the Association of Poor Law Unions of England and Wales, as reported in the *Poor Law Officers' Journal*, waited on the College of Nursing, Ltd., on November 2nd, with respect to the Bill to provide for the Registration of Nurses.

The deputation was introduced by Sir John Spear, M.P., President of the Association, and was received by the Hon. Arthur Stanley, chairman of the College of Nursing, Ltd., accompanied by Sir Cooper Perry (hon. secretary), and Miss Rundle, secretary.

The first point which must strike trained nurses is that this deputation of employers of poor law nurses was received by the two hon. officers of the College, and that there was not present one representative of the nurses on the Council. Where were the matrons who, in accepting office, have accepted the responsibility of representing the nursing profession?

Sir John Spear called on Mr. H. List to explain their views. These views were in opposition to the statement made by Mr. Stanley at the meeting held on June 15th last at St. Thomas's Hospital that the nurses would practically manage their own affairs. What, he asked, would happen if the nurses in managing their own affairs sought to interfere in any serious degree with the constituted authorities, such as Boards of Guardians. He thought there was a great omission on the part of the promoters of the College in omitting from the Bill provision or recognition for representation of the training schools.

In his view, at least one-third of the Council should consist of such representatives.

In connection with the qualification for a Poor Law Nurse Training School Sir Cooper Perry said the College was between two stools as a voluntary Association; if they made registration so easy that nurses might come in from insignificant training schools those from the best training schools would not come on their Register; if they could not attract them they might as well shut up.

Mr. Beaumont enquired whether they were ignoring the fact that they must be supported by the Local Government Board or they would never get the Bill through. Mr. Stanley replied that they were very much alive to that. He thought the Local Government Board would probably introduce the Bill.

Commenting on the foundation of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, Mr. Beaumont said the Nursing College was being formed on the same basis. These colleges were formed at the beginning of the last century. There was a different position to-day, and if anybody was establishing such colleges now there was no doubt that the owners who provided the capital and annual upkeep for the big general infirmaries

and the poor law infirmaries would be given some representation.

Alderman Beavan said there was to be a proportion of two-thirds nurses on the Council. They might swamp everything; if they had the voting power they were the top dog.

Mr. Beavan said it was not at present appreciated by the poor law and general hospital authorities that, as proposed, the nurses were going to take charge of these hospitals and infirmaries. As soon as the owners running these two shows, the hospitals and infirmaries, realize the position to be given to the nurses there will be a great furore.

Mr. Beaumont suggested a policy of compromise. He said that to have a preponderating majority of two-thirds of one class against one-third of all other possible combinations was altogether out of proportion.

Mr. Stanley invited the Association to give their opinion as to the objects and conditions on which the College should register as a College of Nursing, and also their opinions on the Bill, including the representation on the Council, the size of the poor law training schools and the constitution of the Council.

Mr. Stanley further said that they were having some negotiations with another society (presumably the Royal British Nurses Association), and he thought they were coming to some friendly agreement with them. It was out of the question to get the Bill in this Session, but they would like to try to get it agreed before the end of the year and have it ready to bring in next Session. It had got to be an agreed Bill, introduced by the Government.

Sir Cooper Perry added that, if these negotiations came off, technically it would be the other body promoting the Bill, not the College.

We ask again, Why were not the Matrons on the Council of the College present at this Conference? This is the second discussion on our affairs which has taken place with the hon. officers of the College at which only men and no nurses were present.

Secondly, we may point out that the fact seemed to escape Mr. Beaumont that the question under consideration was *Nurses' Registration*, and that the nurses will provide the money for financing their governing body and its work. It would be just as reasonable for the owners running the hospitals and infirmaries to say that the medical profession take charge of these institutions because Committees of Management and Boards of Guardians are not represented on the General Medical Council as that the nurses will do so if they are in a majority on their General Nursing Council. The plain fact is that the employers of the nurses realise that whoever has the vote on the General Nursing Council will, as Mr. Stanley has forcibly put it, be "top dog," and they propose to seize the machine, while the nurses may be permitted to pay for keeping the machinery going.

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