

THE ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING.

A Special General Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association was held at 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London, W. 1, on Wednesday, December 12th. Dr. Kenneth Stewart was in the chair. The meeting was summoned by command of the President, to consider the following Resolution passed by the General Council:—

"After careful consideration of the objections raised by the Privy Council to the Draft Supplemental Charter, as agreed upon by the Corporation and the College of Nursing, Limited, the General Council have reluctantly come to the conclusion that it would not be to the interest of the Corporation to accept the alterations suggested."

The Secretary, Miss I. Macdonald, having read the notice convening the meeting, the Chairman read the following letter from H.R.H. Princess Christian, President of the Association.

"TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

"My object in summoning this meeting to-day is that there may be laid before you an account of what has taken place since your last Special General Meeting.

"You will hear from your Hon. Medical Secretary a report of the negotiations between the College of Nursing, Ltd., and your Association since January last, and the reasons why your Council decided not to accept the Supplemental Charter as amended.

"While I have every confidence in my Council, I feel that it is only right that a report of what has taken place should be laid before you, and an opportunity for discussion upon it given to you.

"I know that the Nurses on your Council gave to the matter very careful consideration, and I felt that the proper and constitutional course for me to take was to leave a decision so vitally affecting their interests in their own hands.

"It is important that all Members should be made fully acquainted with all that has happened, so that the Council may be assured that they possess the full trust and confidence of the members.

"My one aim and object has always been, and always will be, to safeguard and advance the interests of the Nursing Profession by every means in my power. I hope that the decision which has been come to, will be conducive in every respect to that end.

"HELENA, President."

THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

The Chairman, addressing the meeting, then said:—At a previous meeting a Supplemental Charter designed to amalgamate the College of

Nursing, Ltd., with the Royal British Nurses' Association was laid before you. In the form in which it then stood it was approved of, and all built high hopes upon it that the purposes for which we exist—the good of the Nursing Profession and through that the good of the public—would be promoted by it.

Subsequently that Charter was submitted to His Majesty's Privy Council, who made various amendments to it. Our Honorary Secretary will read these amendments to you. Your Council held that the amendments, with which they were unable to agree, entirely changed the Charter as it affected the Association.

Most of the discussion took place regarding the deletion of the word "Official" before the word "Register" in Clause D.

It has been argued with superficial plausibility, and that argument has been before you, that the removal of the word "Official" was quite unimportant because no nurse could possibly have assumed that the Charter could anticipate the action of Parliament by setting up an Official Register before a Registration Act exists. The argument, however, cannot rest at that point. Many nurses did undoubtedly rely upon the Clause, supported as it was by a circular issued by one of the parties to the agreement, as setting up an Official Register; and they had this justification, that they relied and were entitled to rely, both upon the wisdom and the sincerity of those who drafted the Charter, and who inserted the word "Official." Your Council considered it was of vital importance to the Charter from the point of view of this Association, and they concluded that they could not properly consent to its removal, as it constituted the chief extension of the powers of the Association.

When you have heard the other amendments, together with this, you will be in a position to appreciate why your Council decided that your acceptance of the original Supplemental Charter could not be taken as an acceptance of this, a totally different, Charter.

I think every nurse in this Corporation will agree as to the wisdom of this Council in declining to accept the alteration in Clause B. This Association is concerned only with those with whom nursing is a serious profession, to exercise which a full training is necessary. The words "classes of nurses" implies quite a different field of interest, with which we, as a body, have nothing to do. Our objects are concerned with the fully trained nurse, to serve the public through her. To extend the scope of our work would only be to detract from the great purpose for which we exist.

More important still. Your Council feel that, when the facts have been fully laid before you, not only will you emphatically endorse the action they have felt it right to take, but that every Member here present will be so fully informed upon the points at issue that we shall remain a united and therefore a powerful body, and that no attempt to dissociate us in opinion will have any success whatever.

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