

People who advocated that girls of twenty should be sent round as Health Visitors showed such absolute ignorance of the nature of public health work that their opinion was valueless. If nurses in Public Health had been properly organised they could have opposed these regulations. They were pushed through because there was no opposition from the workers.

Mr. Sydney Paxton, a member of the Actors' Association, said we must defend our rights not in defiance, but in defence. We had to protect ourselves from injustices which seem all around us. He gave a graphic account of how members of his Union had been protected from breach of contract upon the part of the well-known and powerful film company (Messrs. Pathe Freres). He said nurses must be protected against massage establishments, and against women who wore their honourable cloak in the street for purposes of immorality; as actors had to fight against bogus actors, nurses must fight against bogus nurses.

#### NO STRIKE CLAUSE.

There was no discussion, but in reply to a question the Chairman stated that they had no strike clause in their Articles of Association, but they might advise members to apply the boycott.

#### THINGS DONE IN THE FIRST THREE MONTHS.

1. First member enrolled January 1st, 1920.
2. Registered under Trades Union Act March 1920.
3. Invited by Minister of Health to send names for consideration for appointment on First General Nursing Council.
4. Approached Minister of Labour *re* the inclusion of Nurses in the 48 Hours' Bill. Deputation received by Sir David Shackleton. Conference called of employers and employees forwarded a scheme and Memorandum to Minister of Labour before Easter.
5. Wrote to Lord Burnham, proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph*, asking him not to start charitable appeal for Nurses, and formed part of a deputation to the principal newspaper offices protesting against the "begging" scandal in the *Daily Telegraph*.
6. Had a question asked in the House of Commons *re* the Appeal, especially in reference to "Nurse Juliet."
7. A Branch of P.U.T.N. already formed in Scotland.
8. Have formed a Public Health Section, and have communicated with several authorities on the question of low salary.

#### TRUE TALE WITH A MORAL.

*College Member to Trades Union Nurse*: "We consider you have dragged the Nursing profession in the gutter."

*Trades Union Nurse*:—"And we consider that has been done by your "Nurse Juliet."

## LEGAL MATTERS.

### THE MENTAL NURSES' ASSOCIATION, LTD. v. MISS MARY DOWNIE.

A case of considerable interest to nurses was heard on Tuesday, April 20th, before His Honour Judge Bray in the Bloomsbury Court, Great Portland Street, W., involving some important points to nurses in private practice.

Miss Downie was sued by the Mental Nurses' Association, Ltd., for breach of agreement under a clause in her agreement which provided that if she left the Association she should not, until twelve months had expired, enter the service of anyone who had employed her in any capacity while working for it without paying its percentage for the continuance of the case. Mr. Duncan represented the plaintiffs, and Mr. Campbell-Lee the defendant nurse.

Miss Catherine McKinnon, Matron of the Association, supported this claim and said that the defendant was sent to a patient at the Royal Palace Hotel, Kensington, on December 15th, 1918. She tendered her resignation to the Association on September 11th, 1919, being still at the case. The Association had received £132 for the defendant's services and paid her £101. The Association was a Limited Liability Company, Mr. Robert Donaldson and Mr. Walshe, J.P., were two of the Directors.

Replying to Mr. Campbell-Lee she said that she sent Miss Downie an application form. She did not send the rules (contract) she was required to sign. They were not in the habit of sending the rules to applicants. She did not send a form of agreement or a letter explaining the Association. Nurses who applied from the Mental Hospital in Glasgow, where Miss Downie was trained, could learn what the rules were from other nurses there. The Association got the nurse to sign the rules (contract) when she came into the office.

Under Rule 13 she had the right as Matron to discharge a nurse at once without giving any reason.

When Miss Downie came from Scotland she had already been accepted; she signed the agreement after she came to London. Miss McKinnon could not remember whether she had ever personally discussed with her the terms under which she was going to serve. If the legal side of the present case were sustained Miss Downie would have to pay the Mental Nurses' Co-operation £32 a year as long as she remained with the patient if it was for 100 years. If she left for one year there was nothing to prevent her taking the case then.

Miss Emma Miriam, Secretary, supported Miss McKinnon's statements, and said the percentage charged to nurses by the Association was 23 to 25 per cent., or a quarter of the nurses' wage.

Mr. Donaldson, Manager of the Male Nurses' Temperance Co-operation, and a Director of the Mental Nurses' Association, said the directors' instructions were that every nurse should have the

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