

not boycotted the question all these years (when the *B.J.N.* was the only organ dealing faithfully with it) we might have had our Nursing Council twenty years ago, and been already highly organised for our responsible public duties.

Under the heading of "The Lay Press and the Nursing Profession," the commercial, lay-edited *Nursing Mirror*, posing as a professional organ, has the impertinence to criticise the *Globe* exposures! Making huge profits as it has done by inserting advertisements from, and supporting the policy of, the anti-registration hospitals and nursing institutions responsible for present conditions, the irony of this is apparent to the meanest intelligence. We are not surprised that the editor of *The Globe* delivers the "retort courteous" with telling effect!

During a discussion at a recent meeting of the Cardiff School Management Committee as to whether an increment of £5 should be granted a nurse, Alderman F. G. L. Davies remarked: "It is shameful to consider such a thing. Nurses are badly treated; they receive wages we would not give to a docks office boy." The Committee left the matter in the hands of the managers.

We are strongly opposed to coercion, either from Committees or officials, where nurses are concerned. Whether they join an organisation or not should be entirely at their own will and pleasure.

Recently the Bermondsey Borough Council and Board of Guardians announced that only trade union members would be employed, and the infirmary nurses and health visitors were given no option but to join the National Union of Corporation Workers, which is specially concerned with the welfare of dustmen and road-menders. Eventually, after protests, the National Association of Local Government Officers was recognised as a trade union, and, as many of the Council's professional employees belong to this body, they had no longer to rub shoulders with the dustmen—not that we wish to depreciate these very useful municipal workers for a moment.

Even then, as the Nurses belong to various organisations—outside Poor Law influence—they are circularising Boards of Guardians desiring to have their professional unions

recognised for arbitration purposes. Here they are again met with intolerance from Boards of Guardians and their officials. Many Poor Law Matrons have used influence not far short of coercion to compel their nurses to join the College of Nursing, Ltd., and have warned them against joining the National Union of Trained Nurses, and especially against the Professional Union, which is registered as a trades union.

Thus we note that the Kensington Board of Guardians, at a recent meeting, treated with contempt, and agreed to take no action, on the courteous communication received from the Professional Union of Trained Nurses, which asked for recognition, and also to be allowed to interview the nurses and place their policy before them. Why this unfair discrimination? The Guardians have made no objections to the College Company placing its policy before the nursing staff, nor to the Matron urging personally and in print that the nurses should pay up their guineas and join the College. Why, therefore, should they boycott a *bona fide* nurses union?

Mr. H. Harcourt-Smith, who moved that no action be taken on the letter received, gave as his object in doing so that the employees be left free to join which union they liked, and expressed the pious opinion that it was not for the Guardians to say to their officers that they should join a particular union. Quite so. Neither is it for the Guardians to permit their officials to adopt this unjustifiable policy. In our opinion the Kensington Guardians should allow the nursing staff perfect freedom in this connection, and not prevent them, as they did in this instance, from hearing the views of their colleagues, other than members of the College of Nursing, Ltd.

We hope Mr. Lyne, who appears to be a fair minded member of the Board, will enquire further into this matter, and insist upon absolute freedom for the nursing staff to hear all sides of questions concerning the organisation of their profession.

Whether or not the governors of a voluntary hospital have a right of access to reports concerning its management was fought out at the Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle, at a quarterly meeting of the governors last week, with the result that it was decided that a report dealing with the grievances of the nurses and the management of the Infirmary should be at the disposal of the governors in confidence, together with the report and recommendations of a sub-Committee in the matter.

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