

nominated Council was not our choice. Had it been so we should have had people there who took a more serious view of their responsibilities to the nurses. No doubt the interests of certain people who, through no fault of their own, had no certificates, were taken into consideration, but it is not right to take the personal view in a matter of this kind. It is interesting to note that those who wished to deprive us of the record of our certificates were medical and matron members. The members who did oppose the proposal were those connected with nurses' organisations.

In regard to the omission of the record of certificates, Miss PEARSE said she was glad to know that the protest made, and the strong action taken had averted that calamity.

Miss DODDS thought that there was no good to be done in going back on the certificate question when it had now been settled.

A gentleman at the back of the hall dissented. He argued "once bitten, twice shy."

NURSE GIFFIN enquired whether the ladies who objected to the record of certificates had three years' certificates themselves.

The answer to this was that some had and some had not.

The Resolution was then carried enthusiastically with three or four dissentients.

RESOLUTION II.

Paralysing Important National Work.—Wasting the Nurses' Money.

The next Resolution was moved by Mrs. Paul :

"That this Meeting enters a strong protest against the conduct of the majority of the General Nursing Council, in deliberately neglecting the duties which they had undertaken to perform, by concerting together to abstain from attendance at the meetings of the Council for ten weeks, and thus paralysing the very important national work entrusted to the Council by Parliament, for which conduct, upon resuming their duties, these members have given neither explanation nor apology."

Mrs. PAUL said : To go on strike is not original, but it was certainly neither dignified, nor courteous to the nurses, for members of the General Nursing Council to first neglect their duties and then to resume them without explanation or apology. But certain things about this strike are original. When a body of people resort to direct action certain demands are usually formulated. This strike differed from others inasmuch as no one knew what it was about.

Then, when public opinion has ended a strike the terms on which it is settled are announced. This course was not pursued by the members of the General Nursing Council. The nurses were treated in such a flippant manner, that neither explanation nor apology was vouchsafed to them. Imagine anyone treating a body of nurses with such contempt. Surely people so reactionary, so frivolous, so irresponsible, ought to be in a home for the aged ! But the remedy is in our own hands, and when the election takes place nurses will know whom to elect and whom to leave out.

In seconding the Resolution, Miss G. LORD said : It strikes me these people did not realize what they were doing or how bad their behaviour was. Like the ordinary striker they were shirking duty, and had given no reason for so doing. Meanwhile, money was being wasted because though the work of the Council was suspended the salaries of the staff and the office expenses were going on as usual. Moreover, valuable time, given freely, which money could not buy could not be utilized to the best advantage. Indeed, the work of the Council was hampered so much that when these people returned they saw the necessity for speeding up the work. May it soon dawn on them how inexcusable their behaviour has been.

The Resolution having been proposed and seconded was thrown open to discussion.

Miss ANDERSON PARSONS emphasised the point that the money for the maintenance of the offices, and the salaries of the officials to the amount of £50 a week came out of the pockets of the nurses, but the work could not be carried on because the greater part of the Council had gone on strike. She got a postal order in November to send up as her registration fee, but she was not spending her guinea. She would rather earn her living by scrubbing floors than register under such a Council.

Miss BREAY asked if a nurse went on strike for ten weeks, and then reported for duty without explanation or apology what the audience thought her Matron would say to her. [A Voice : She would turn her out.] This time it was the Matrons who were accountable to the Nursing Profession, and who had set this bad example.

Mr. JOHNS (National Asylum Workers' Union) said that if nurses organised to-day they would soon be able to dictate their own terms. The Asylum Workers would register when they saw they would get value for their money, not before. He was sorry to see that men had joined with the ladies in going out on strike. He knew what the medical profession would say to the asylum attendants if they came out. They would say they could go to prison.

He congratulated the ladies who had stood for the interests of the nurses. They would come out a good colour in the end.

A member of the audience asked what the duties of the General Nursing Council were ?

Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK answered this question, and said that the duties were threefold. To conserve the best interests of the Nursing Profession and to protect the public by compiling a correct Register of trained nurses ; to define the educational curriculum for future nurses, and to maintain discipline in the ranks of Registered Nurses ; therefore the educational standards, economic conditions, and the reputation of individual nurses were in its hands. It must not be forgotten, that the Council could not only put a nurse on, but take her off the Register.

The profession must have confidence in the integrity of the persons forming a Council, which could exercise such powers for good and evil.

Mrs. PAUL remarked, in regard to the effect on

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