

elect our own representatives on the General Nursing Council of the future?

We must insist that original certificates, or legally verified copies thereof shall, when possessed, be produced for the scrutiny of a body of experts. No declaration, signed by a Secretary or other responsible officer, testifying that in the prehistoric past some sort of a document which purports to qualify a nurse to be placed on the Statutory Register was produced to, and verified by, that body will meet the situation. Certificates must be dealt with in the manner laid down in Rule 9 framed under the Nurses' Registration Act, which method has been in practice up to the present time.

Time has not shown an improvement on the method implied in the old proverb, "In the multitude of Counsellors there is wisdom." Only by the adoption of a really just method can we hope to protect our professional and economic interests, and to secure that the public shall be safeguarded.

MISS FLORENCE WISE, who seconded the Resolution, said: I would like to remind the meeting that the not very scrupulous autocrat who in 1914 made a bid for the world's supremacy, did not, after all, have everything his own way. I have no wish to flatter those who have made all this pother by attributing to them the same degree of autocratic power, but I am convinced that our contemptible little army can give a good account of itself in this matter. I should also like to point out that as Tommy in the trenches could not achieve victory without the leadership of generals and officers, neither could they have defeated the enemy without the support of the men in the ranks. The lesson is that it is incumbent upon every nurse to do her share to see that this Rule is annulled, not to leave everything to her leaders. In this fight for justice we must rely upon the British sense of fair play.

MR. T. W. CRAIG said that if a privileged caucus were going to flood the new Register with a whole block of nurses, then it was the most reprehensible thing that any public body in England had ever dared to do. If that were the extraordinary fact, the meeting should emphasise the point that to put 20,000 nurses by guile, shove, or otherwise on the Register was most unfair.

MISS ANDERSON PARSONS said the disgraceful propositions left her gasping, and a gentleman at the back of the hall reminded the lady who said that nurses were not forced to join the College that it was possible to use a magnet as well as force. People could be pulled as well as shoved.

The Resolution was then put to the meeting, the same small clique voting against it, one of them holding up two hands, upon which the Chairman remarked, "Only one hand each person, please."

A VOICE: "College tactics."

RESOLUTION V.

Same Old Gang—Same Old Tricks—Cooking the Committees.

The Fifth Resolution was moved by Mr. T. W. Craig:—

"That this Meeting protests against the decision of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales

to rescind the Rule, agreed to by Parliament only three months ago, which provided that Standing Committees of the Council should continue in office till the present Council is dissolved in December next, and providing instead that these Committees be at once changed, with the evident intention of excluding therefrom those members who have criticised and opposed proposals in the General Nursing Council which would be most injurious to the rank and file of the Nursing Profession."

MR. T. W. CRAIG, whose remark that he had travelled up from Chester that afternoon to move the Resolution, was heartily cheered, said:—

The rescinding of the Rule to which this Resolution refers is part of a threefold attempt to in effect, wreck the decision of Parliament. It would enable the majority on the General Nursing Council to deprive the minority who are opposed to its policy, of office—by summarily removing them from the Standing Committees. The minority in this case are the nurses' best friends.

That is its immediate intention, but it is also allied to the persistent efforts of a certain body of people who, in common parlance, represent "vested interests" to prevent any such measure for the proper control of the nursing profession by coming law.

We all know the history of that body of obstructionists, backed by influence, money and professional authority—it is the history common, alas, to every measure of reform, whether for the emancipation of slaves or the emancipation of that right hand of the medical profession—to wit, the nursing profession, and here again is the fly in the ointment, and it is the same old fly.

In politics it is common to fight and wrangle over controversial measures across the floor of the House, and all sorts of questionable methods are employed to obstruct, delay and defeat legislation. The ordinary man of the world stigmatises these as Parliamentary tricks—sometimes adding the adjective Dirty! by way of showing his contempt.

But when a measure has received the sanction of Parliament then it is considered incumbent upon members to deliver the goods, or in other words "work the Act." This is the recognised constitutional method of Government.

Now, in these new Rules to which these Resolutions refer, there lurks the contrary spirit of constitutional methods. It would appear to be an attempt to flout the decision of Parliament and wreck the Act. It is of the character already described.

The arguments put forward are specious but not convincing, and the hidden hand is as much behind these retrograde decisions as it was behind the well-organised obstructionists and contemptible methods adopted before and during the time when Major Barnett's Bill for the State Registration of Nurses was before Parliament. It is the same old gang at the same old tricks.

It is not very necessary for me to enlarge upon this aspect of the case before this audience for most of you are warriors in the battle for the rights of nurses and the establishment of their profession upon a sanctioned Parliamentary Charter. I could

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)