

of Great Britain, representing the Matrons of the leading London and Provincial hospitals, are entirely in favour of the Rules, and I can only say that if the Rules were rejected, there would be no other course left open for me than to move the repeal of the Act, do away with the Register altogether, and the whole thing would become a farce.

MR. R. RICHARDSON: I speak for neither of the two associations referred to by the right hon. Gentleman, but for the nurses who are members of a trade union, and who are entirely opposed to the action taken by the Nursing Council. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of the constitution of that Council. What we said when the Bill was in Committee upstairs has come to pass. We said that it would be an unworkable Council. Twenty-one of the people on the Council belong to the employing side, leaving five or six for the rest of the Nursing Profession. Those people for whom the Act was passed, the nurses who were to be protected by the Act, are left with only four representatives to see that their rights are protected.

SIR A. MOND: Will the hon. Gentleman explain what he means by the employing side?

MR. RICHARDSON: The medical profession and the matrons.

SIR A. MOND: Matrons are nurses as much as anybody else.

MR. RICHARDSON: I claim to have had as much experience of municipal hospital work as most people, and I know the iron hand of the matron. I know that often if a nurse claims to have a soul of her own she has to leave practically the next day. She is thrown on the street without a penny. I put my experience against the advice offered to the Minister of Health. The continuation of this Council is entirely wrong. Because these people did not get all they were insisting on being done they went on strike. I have had something to do with strikes and lock-outs, but this is the very first strike I have ever known in which the strikers drew their pay while they were on strike, and they helped themselves to £500 during the ten weeks. These are the people who are in power on the Nurses' Council. There were no salaries deducted. These things are happening, and the nurses are claiming that they have some right to say that the money which they are subscribing should be distributed for the work which they are doing in an efficient manner.

SIR A. MOND: No members of the Council get any payment whatsoever.

MR. RICHARDSON: If the right hon. Gentleman will make inquiries he will find that what I am saying is correct, that they were paid in salaries to the staff without the Council being working.

SIR A. MOND: The hon. Member said that the Council went on strike. That is not correct.

MR. RICHARDSON: I submit that that does not alter the position one bit if there is no work to be done, and the Act has been annulled by their action and cannot be worked for the staff inside

that office. Let me tell the right hon. Gentleman that immediately they came back they set about driving the others off every committee, and leaving them with no power whatever. They drove off one committee a woman who has had more experience than any other woman on that Council, and put on another woman who would act according to their dictates, thus taking away the only friend on that committee which the working nurses had. Again, they drove off a committee a matron who was the only matron who knew anything of the training of nurses in one important special branch, and another lady was put in her place, and so they have gone on. Some protection ought to be given to these people. Their livelihood depends on it. This Act was passed for the sake of safeguarding the nurses and the general public. . . Young women who have given three years of their lives to training ought to have some protection. Therefore we are claiming that this thing is not on right lines, and that if justice is to be done both sides ought to have sufficient members on the Council. They might prevent a strike if working nurses had a sufficient number on the Council to form a quorum, for there would then be no use in these people refusing to come and act and to get these nurses on the Register which the right hon. Gentleman is so anxious should be compiled, with which I am in entire agreement. . . We want these people to have a real say in the working out of their own salvation. Surely the time has passed when women should have to work 12 hours a day for £30 a year. It is a shame. The very best women we have in the country should be able to take up the nursing profession. It is in some ways of vastly more importance than the medical profession, for the nurse is continually with the patient, and must know what is best to be done at any moment to save human life.

MR. LYLE: . . The statement has been made that the object of the General Nursing Council is to do some damage to nurses. My hon. Friend has waxed eloquent about the nurses managing their own affairs, but he has missed the whole point. This Council is only a temporary Council, nominated to carry on until sufficient nurses have registered.

MR. RICHARDSON: Does the hon. Member say that the whole of the registration is to be done before the nurses get a Register at all?

MR. LYLE: The nurses are not registering as had been expected. The object of these Rules, passed by a large majority of the temporary Council and approved by the Minister of Health, is to enable nurses to register, and when sufficient nurses have registered they can manage their own affairs. It is precisely with that object that the Rules are placed on the Table. Just now nurses are not registering because there is so much difficulty in sending up their certificates. Under the present scheme the certificate of a nurse has to be verified and to be sent to the Registrar. There is no question of a nurse getting through without proper qualifications. The scheme is designed

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