

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, where the proceedings of the Council were reported in detail, could call to mind many such instances.

In the Nurses' Registration Act and the Rules framed upon it great privileges were given to nurses. An excellent Syllabus of General Training had been framed but it was now suggested that this should be "temporarily withdrawn," and a skeleton Examination Syllabus adopted as a mean substitute, in spite of the fact that many training schools had adopted the Syllabus of General Training, and nurses were being prepared for the State Examination upon it.

The Rules were simple, and provided for equality for all nurses. It was doubtful if many nurses had studied them. It must be realised that the temperament of large numbers of nurses was apathetic, presumably because their work was so absorbing, and did not leave them with much energy to consider other things.

It would be remembered by those present that after the Nurses' Registration Act was practically won, a new Society was formed to cut across the bows of the Organisations of Nurses which had worked so steadfastly for a quarter of a century to gain this measure, and took some 17,000 guineas from nurses on the strength of a pledge made in print, that if they were on the College Register they would automatically and without further fee be placed upon the State Register when the Nurses' Registration Bill was passed. The consequence was that many members of the College of Nursing, when the Act became law, did not place their names on the State Register, and declared that they would not pay another guinea, and be bothered to fill in any more papers. The managers of the new body, therefore, became perturbed. Votes would not be there in support of its members when the election of the General Nursing Council took place. But it was known that so long as Mrs. Bedford Fenwick was in the chair of the Registration Committee there would be no preferential treatment for any body of nurses, but impartial treatment for all. It became absolutely necessary, therefore, to remove her from power. So outside the Council plans were set on foot. The majority of members paralysed the work of the Council by absenting themselves from meetings for ten weeks, when they came back with *carte blanche* from the Minister of Health to draft rules to carry out their policy. A Rule (Rule 9 (A)) was framed and carried giving permission to the Council to place certain nurses on the Register as second-hand entrants without trouble to themselves. Rule 9 (A) constituted an unfair preferential electorate, some persons taking an active part in securing this preferential treatment for one group of nurses through members of the Council amenable to their influence.

#### RECORD OF MAJORITY.

What had been the record of the majority of the Council during the last fifteen months?

1. They had attempted to deprive the nurses of the record of their certificates on the State Register.

2. They had wasted an enormous amount of time and money on drafting and printing a Syllabus of Training the promulgation of which they now proposed should be indefinitely postponed.

3. Doctors monopolised the chairs of important Standing Committees, which should be filled by Registered Nurses, and conducted their affairs in a most dictatorial spirit.

4. Silent members from all over the country cost the nurses hundreds of pounds for recording their votes on party lines.

The feeling of the free nurses was that they had no confidence in members of a Council whose votes depended upon an outside caucus.

She considered it very courageous of the six delinquents of the present Council to stand for election to the new Council, and she was aware that the fiat had gone forth to "keep Mrs. Bedford Fenwick off the Council at all costs." In permitting her name to go forward she was well aware that owing to Rule 9 (A) the nurses might not see their champions elected, and that people who had betrayed their trust might be placed in power by this unjust provision.

But the Independent Candidates who asked for their suffrages had not accepted nomination from any group, and were pledged to work strenuously for the welfare of the Nursing Profession as a whole.

#### Our Policy.

Defining the policy of the group of Independent nominees, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick then said:—

Our policy is what it has always been.

1. Self-government for the Nursing Profession upon the basic principles upon which every other profession is organised. Power of Self-expression, Power of Organisation.

2. Control of Education and of Economic Conditions.

3. Control of Finance.

4. Co-operation with Allied Societies dealing with the health of the people for the benefit of the people.

If returned, we are prepared to work for an efficient and progressing Syllabus of Education, a sound system of Examination in which Registered Nurses take a sufficient part. We are prepared to urge constant consultation between the medical and nursing professions on work mutually beneficial to the health of the people, and between the nurses of the component parts of the Empire.

We are prepared to work for an Act to amend the Constitution of the Council, that it shall be a Council entirely elected by Registered Nurses, and not, as at present, controlled by the nominees of Government Departments, a constitution which has proved most inimical to their interests.

That the Standing Committees of the Council shall have Registered Nurses as Executive Officers, and not Medical Men or lay persons.

Discipline.—We claim that a Registered Nurse accused of felony or misdemeanour, or misconduct, shall, before her name is removed from the

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