

Register, have the right to be tried by her peers' and therefore the Disciplinary Committee (which has legal advice according to the Rules) shall be composed of Registered Nurses.

In asking for your Suffrages you will notice that a certain proportion of the candidates are independent of economic control. These persons, like myself, have nothing to lose by fighting privilege, therefore it is most necessary at the present crisis in the Profession that there should be a substantial leaven of independent nurses upon the Council.

We also possess that most valuable asset, free time to devote to our duties, and when you realise the huge amount of work, such as the attendance at committees, studying Reports and Minutes, and guarding the constitution and the liberties of the profession, it will be understood how important it is that you should have some women upon your Council whose professional duties do not necessitate their depriving themselves of rest and relaxation to keep in touch with the work of the Council.

Knowledge, goodwill, loyalty, and courage are required for this task, and the Independent Candidates are prepared to place them at your service.

Mrs. Fenwick resumed her seat amidst applause.

#### Miss S. A. Villiers.

The Chairman then called on Miss S. A. VILLIERS, Member of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, to address the meeting.

Miss Villiers, in saying a few words upon the use of the vote at the forthcoming election of the General Nursing Council, laid stress on the following points:—

In the first place she asked members of the audience to consider carefully before voting for a candidate whether she was likely to look at any matter from the nurse's or the employer's point of view.

One of the things which had been forcibly borne in upon her since she had been a member of the General Nursing Council was, she said, how very important it is to any body of workers to have the management of their own affairs. As long as we had a Council one-third of whom were not nurses, we should have great difficulty in getting our measures passed. We *must* try for more self-government.

People were very fond of managing women's affairs, especially those of nurses. We used to hear a good deal at one time of born nurses, but she thought those wonderful women were in a small minority compared with the number of people who seemed to think they were born to manage the nurses' affairs. She was afraid we had ourselves to thank for much of this. She heard recently of a nurse who actually wanted to stand for election to the Council who had never registered herself. So little did she know about it that it had to be pointed out to her that that was a disqualification. So long as we did not take the trouble to read and think for ourselves we should have the benevolent laity stepping in to manage our affairs for us.

Miss Villiers further urged her hearers when they had decided for whom to vote, and had probably got most of their candidates returned, to take their own paper (*THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING*) and keep in touch with them, and also strengthen their hands by joining those societies standing for self-government, so that when battles had to be fought, as they would

have to be in all Councils, the nurses' representatives might feel that they had a strong body of professional opinion behind them.

In conclusion, Miss Villiers said that some of those present might have seen her name on the list of candidates supported by the College of Nursing. That did not mean that she had departed in the least from the Independent standpoint. The Secretary wrote and asked her the simple question, was she standing for election, to which she replied that she was. No sort of pledge was asked or given.

#### Miss MacCallum.

The next speaker was Miss E. MAUDE MACCALLUM, member of the General Nursing Council.

Miss M. MacCallum spoke of herself as a candidate, and an unwilling candidate, for the forthcoming election. She wished the meeting to understand that membership of the General Nursing Council was no joy-ride if one happened to be a working nurse. She had always found that if she spoke as a working nurse a little section of the Council began to giggle. It was hard, in that kind of atmosphere, to say out what one had to say.

She hoped the new Council would be more broad-minded than the present one. She had never heard one of the nineteen majority members say, "What would the nurses like?" but they were concerned as to how a certain Association could be given prominence.

She gave the following illustration of outside interference with the affairs of the Council. The September meeting of the Council arranged that of the eleven representatives of the nurses on the General Register six should be past or present matrons of institutions with General Training Schools, in London or the provinces, and five should be nurses who were not, and had not, been matrons. At a meeting held at St. Thomas' Hospital, on October 21st, to consider the nomination of candidates, the Treasurer of St. Thomas' Hospital (Chairman of the Meeting) announced he had reason to believe that the latter regulation would be altered by the Minister. She was so astonished that an outside layman should be in possession of this information before it had been communicated to the General Nursing Council that she asked the Chairman whether he had got his information from the Minister. He replied in the negative. The only conclusion she could arrive at was that Sir Arthur Stanley had been behind the backs of the nurses, and of the Council, at the Ministry on this matter. Were the nurses going to stand that kind of thing? If they returned to office women who approved of such methods they were making a rod for their own backs. They should put in people who were going to stand by the nurses. They must remember that the next Council would have control for five years, and as they voted so they would be governed. They would do well to bestir themselves and vote for independent people.

For herself she would continue to work for the interests of the nurses whether she was elected or not, and she was sure the other "Independents" would do the same.

#### Miss M. Heather-Bigg, R.R.C.

The next candidate to address the meeting was Miss MILDRED HEATHER-BIGG, R.R.C., late Matron of Charing Cross Hospital.

Miss Heather-Bigg said that she, too, appeared as an Independent Candidate, and as such, if elected, would never waver from the following principles:—

- (1) Absolute self-government for the Nursing Profession;
- (2) Maintenance of the high standard of training prescribed by our Registration Act; and

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