

(3) Direct and adequate representation of Nurses on all bodies dealing with the health of women and children.

She said, further, that, if in the audience there should happen to be any nurses who trained under her Matronship, they would know that the principles she advocated to-day were those she had always advocated. In Committee and in public she had stood firmly for the nurses' right to govern their own economic affairs, and to draw up the laws under which they desired to work.

For while it was both reasonable and desirable to work in unison with the medical profession, it was not reasonable, and therefore not desirable, to allow that profession the right to govern us. From the choice of uniform to the more vital matter of the standard of training, we must, and would, have our views respected.

After all, who should know better than the nurses the kind of Syllabus that should be the basis of their training?

The Medical Profession, and many of the laity, were, let us hope unwittingly, always trying to keep the nurses under; they could not get away from the early history of nursing, when nurses were drawn from the uneducated classes. That was past history. The nurses of to-day were educated—so educated that they realised to have the standard of teaching lowered and to be robbed of the control of their economic affairs, was to thrust them under the heel of oppression.

Miss Helen Pearse.

MISS HELEN PEARSE, Superintendent of School Nurses under the London County Council, was the next speaker.

She said that she wished to endorse, with all the strength she had, the policy of the pioneers, to express her gratitude to those who had kept the flag flying on the General Nursing Council during the past year, and to pay her tribute to their courage and sagacity. She hoped they would be returned in the forthcoming election; it would be a disgrace to the nursing profession if it were not so.

As one who was coming in as an independent candidate for election for the first time, she was feeling burning indignation at the proceedings of the Council in regard to the electorate, but she would take her chance as a candidate standing in support of self-government. Throughout her professional career she had endeavoured to deal justly with nurses, but she had at times felt it was extraordinarily difficult for a Matron to voice the views of the nurses as well as to look after the interests of the Committee under which she was working. During the past few years, the number of nurses working outside hospitals in Public Health work had greatly increased, and would increase, and it was an urgent matter that on the General Nursing Council there should be representatives of the nurses who had not only had experience of nursing work inside, but also outside hospitals.

Miss Pearse further expressed the opinion that the standard of nursing education must be raised, and that could only be done by maintaining the Syllabus upon which so much time and thought had been spent. Opposition was to be expected from training schools which found it difficult to give the necessary teaching to prepare pupils for the State Examination, but, it would have to be done if they were to get probationers in the future. Doctors and lay people should not be put in positions of authority on the General Nursing Council, but should hold watching briefs for the public whom they represented.

In conclusion Miss Pearse said that if elected to

the Council she would do her best to secure strict economy in its expenditure.

Miss S. M. Marsters.

The next candidate to speak was Miss S. M. MARSTERS, Superintendent of the Paddington and Marylebone District Nursing Association Q.V.J.I.

Miss Marsters most strongly endorsed the programme outlined by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick and also Miss Pearse's remarks as to representation on the Council by, and of, nurses outside hospitals, whether district nurses or school nurses. Her policy, if elected, would be to administer the provisions of the Nurses' Registration Act with economy, efficiency, and expedition, to advocate uniformity in the rate of pay and hours of work in institutions, to see that justice was done to all nurses, to support the Nursing Syllabus framed by the General Nursing Council.

In connection with her candidature, Miss Marsters said that she had been immediately concerned with district nursing in all its branches, as well as with health work, and the training of nurses for the Queen's Roll for the last twenty years. Her Committee only accepted nurses for training holding a three years' certificate in general training, but the diversity of knowledge which those certificates represented had demonstrated to her the great necessity for a uniform system of training. If this were maintained there would be a great improvement all round in the Nursing Service of the country.

The Syllabus was a true statement of what the training of nurses should be, and would be a great help in securing uniformity of training.

Emphasising the necessity for economy, Miss Marsters said that the money to carry on the work of the Council was obtained from the fees paid by the nurses, and they must see that it is spent to the best advantage, if not, they would not be fighting the nurses' cause in a true and honest spirit.

Miss Marsters concluded by saying that, if elected a member of the General Nursing Council, she would do her best to carry out the policy which had been defined, for the good of the public, the profession, and her fellow workers.

Mr. Frederick W. Stratton.

THE CHAIRMAN then asked Mr. FREDERICK W. STRATTON, Male Nurse, trained at the Hackney Union Infirmary, to address the meeting.

In stating that he had been invited by Registered Male Nurses to stand as their representative, Mr. Stratton said that, so far as he knew, no other male nurse had offered himself as a candidate. He hoped, if returned, to watch the interests of male nurses, and at the same time to do his best for every Registered Nurse in any section. He agreed with the principles laid down by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, and though the present was his first experience of public speaking, when he got used to the Council, if successfully elected, he had no doubt he would be able to give expression to his views.

Discussion.

Questions and discussion were then invited, in which several of those present took part, including Sister L. Warriner, Miss A. M. Macdonald, Miss Kathleen A. Smith, R.R.C., and others.

Among the questions asked were: Whether the ballot would be secret, which was answered in the affirmative; whether it was true that the College of Nursing, Ltd., had nominated, as representative of private nurses, one who had only been trained for two years, and had not a certificate.

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