

Register, and had to supply cash and references for that purpose. *This thousands refused to do.* Preferential terms, therefore, must be devised to rope in these votes.

About this period a friend sent me a warning: "The serpent is on the watch." As Sergeant Buzfuz would have said: "The train is laid, the mine is preparing." In other words the majority of the G.N.C. were busy plotting against me.

On November 22nd, I received the following letter from the Registrar—enclosing a copy therewith of a letter sent by Mr. Priestley to the Minister of Health, Sir Alfred Mond:—

THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

12, York Gate,
Regent's Park,
London, N.W.1.

November 22nd, 1921.

DEAR MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK,—I am requested by the Chairman (Mr. Priestley) to forward to you a copy of a letter which he sent to Sir Alfred Mond yesterday.

Yours faithfully,
MARIAN S. RIDDELL,
Registrar.

[COPY.]
12, York Gate,
Regent's Park,
London, N.W.1.

November 21st, 1921.

DEAR SIR ALFRED,—Under existing conditions I am of opinion the work of the Council cannot be carried on satisfactorily. I have no power to alter them and therefore regret I can no longer usefully remain Chairman.

As cheques must bear my signature and the Staff might suffer if none could be cashed, it would appear to be advisable for me to postpone my formal resignation until you tell me you have found my successor.

I am,
Yours faithfully,
(Signed) J. C. PRIESTLEY.

To Sir Alfred Mond.

It will be observed that no reason is given for this resignation. The right thing to have done was that Mr. Priestley should have called a special Meeting of the G.N.C. together, and straightforwardly given his reasons for resigning.

I soon learned however (without surprise) that I was to be made the scapegoat—an animal with whose long-suffering attributes I have little sympathy. I learned through a friend that a large majority of the Council had sent in their resignations in support of the Chairman's action, and that certain of them had, *behind my back*, attended at the Ministry, and made various accusations verbally against me. People capable of such cowardly tactics are capable of any lie, and I was not surprised to learn that a tissue of misrepresentation had been agreed upon and put forward, and that a Minister of alien antecedents sensed nothing ignoble in taking part in such an attack upon a British woman!

A most unprecedented position resulted. These resignations made a quorum impossible in most of the Standing Committees—and for this reason they were not summoned—so the public duties those members had agreed to fulfil when accepting office were neglected. A gross breach of duty and courtesy to the Profession, whose governing body for the time being they were.

The six members who remained at the post of duty—myself, Miss Macdonald, Miss MacCallum, Miss Villiers, Miss Cattell and Mr. Christian—were unable to support the nurses' interests owing to this disgraceful strike excepting in the Finance Committee, on that body we had a quorum, and we insisted upon the Registrar summoning it, and dealing with the necessary business. We found it necessary to report to the Minister that urgent structural alterations at the Office were required. I need only mention one. The little gas fire in the Registration Annexe left it desperately cold; the clerks had to work all day in the bitter weather in their fur coats. We requisitioned that an anthracite stove might at once be installed. We were told by Mr. Brock at the Ministry that this somewhat costly apparatus must be agreed to by the Council. The Council, when summoned on December 16th, had not a quorum, no business could be transacted, *so all winter long the staff shivered in their shoes*, and the health of one suffered seriously in consequence. Neglect of duty could hardly have resulted in more callous cruelty, and this from prominent members of the so-called services of humanity—Nursing and Medicine!

Let us turn over that black page.

My turn as a member of the Registration Committee I continued; I attended the office constantly, and with the help of Miss Villiers and Miss MacCallum scrutinised some 1,500 application forms, which were ready and agreed to by the Council which met on February 3rd, 1922.

But much of interest took place during the interim.

At this period everyone apparently was buzzing and fussing in what they described as "support of peace." I am not a peace-at-any-price person, so I continued calmly to perform my public duties, within the limits of the Constitution, and was not perturbed by the buzzing.

Firstly, Sir Jenner Verrall, with the best of intentions, no doubt, wrote me lengthy epistles from which I gathered I was to place myself in a thoroughly invidious and untenable position, making it feasible by biting the dust, for the Chairman to withdraw his resignation over my prostrate form. I dislike biting the dust, especially under false pretences, so I replied I had decided to take no action outside the General Nursing Council.

GAGGING FREE SPEECH AND THE PRESS.

On January 12th, 1922, whilst engaged at the office scrutinising application forms and references, Miss Alice Cattell, having seen Mr. Priestley at his Chambers, brought with her a "Memo," in his handwriting (a truly unique document) which though not addressed to me, presumably required

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