

MISS COULTON AS A CAT'S PAW.

Miss Coulton, whose health had not permitted attendance at the Council or Committee meetings for upwards of six months, and who, therefore, knew nothing of their necessities, had permitted Dr. Goodall to give notice in her name of a new Rule 43 (2), known as the General Post rule. It was designed to reconstitute all the Standing Committees nine months before the termination of the life of the Council. Its true object was to provide power to eject independent members from office, whose policy was repugnant to the College Caucus.

Sir Jenner Verrall seconded this "ostrich."

I opposed it, without subterfuge.

The Chairman objected to my remarks. I repeated, that if every time members of the Council expressed opinions which were unpalatable to the majority, steps were to be taken to have the Rules altered, such a method of suppression was indefensible. As this new Rule had been specially drafted to remove me from the Chair of the Registration Committee, I called for the names of voters for and against, and they were thus put on record on the Minutes of the Council.

THE COX-DAVIES INSTRUCTION.

Miss Cox-Davies proposed, and Miss Swiss seconded, the Instruction to the Registrar, placing the Registration Committee in the invidious position of being compelled, by this official, to recommend to the Council for registration applicants whose credentials they were not permitted to scrutinise, and consequently of which they knew nothing but their names. Imagine the futility of a Committee bound by such an Instruction to its salaried officer, and the lack of discipline introduced in their relations. This disastrous "Instruction" commended itself to the hopeless majority, and it was carried.

Thus the whole crafty programme, considered and agreed during the strike, was thrust through, and the Chairman gave notice to summon (quite illegally) a Special Meeting a week hence, on the 24th inst., "as it would be a pity to wait a month to give effect to the decisions." Presumably Sir Alfred Mond, who had to approve the Rules under the Act before they could take effect, was aware, before the members of the Council, what demands were to be made upon his pen.

Someone, presumably, intimated to Sir Wilmot Herringham that to hold this Special Meeting without due notice, according to the Statutory Rules, would be out of order. Anyway, it was cancelled and he had to preserve his soul in patience until the next monthly meeting before giving effect to the College programme.

PITHECANTHROPUS ERECTUS.

"In these meanwhiles" the Chairman had an opportunity of showing his valorous quality in dealing with me as Chairman of the Registration Committee. Apparently he did not know that an "Instruction" was not a Rule, and that passed by the Council on February 17th was forwarded for the signature of the Minister of Health.

For the next fortnight I therefore continued my

work as heretofore, with the help of Miss Villiers, awaiting the Instruction to be put in force. On March 9th the Registrar refused us access to Forms and References, informing us "The Minister says I am to scrutinise papers."* As Chairman of the Registration Committee I had received no official information to this effect from the Chairman, and I expressed my indignation at the discourteous and undisciplined methods of conducting our business in no uncertain terms. I was well aware that Miss Riddell was the fount of mischievous suggestion which inspired the policy of insult to which I had been subjected, and told her so.

On March 11th I received the following letter from Sir Wilmot Herringham:—

Great Roke,
Witley, Surrey.

DEAR MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK,—I have had a complaint from Miss Riddell of your treatment of her in reference to instructions which she received from me. I should be glad if, before I take other steps, you would kindly let me hear your version of what took place.

Yours very truly,

W. P. HERRINGHAM.

It would be preferable if you would write to me at the address in the country as above.

To which I replied:—

March 11th.
20, Upper Wimpole Street,
London, W.

To the Chairman,
General Nursing Council
for England and Wales.

DEAR SIR WILMOT HERRINGHAM,—As I have determined not to submit to any further indignities from the Registrar of the General Nursing Council, or to ignore any repetition of secret personal detraction at the Ministry of Health by members of the Council, I have placed your letter of March 10th in the hands of my solicitor, Mr. Theodore Goddard, 10, Sergeant's Inn, E.C.4, to whom please address any further communication on the subject with which it deals.

Yours faithfully,

ETHEL G. FENWICK,
(Member General Nursing Council.)

No reply!

On March 17th, the Monthly Meeting of the Council was held. After the Minutes were amended, agreed and signed, the Chairman said he had a statement to make of an entirely private nature, and asked strangers to withdraw.

Then, behind closed doors, he arose in his wrath, and abused his authority as Chairman, by making a very violent attack upon me as a member of the Council, but not by name. No more disgraceful scene can ever have been experienced by any body of civilised persons—yet not a word of protest was forthcoming!

Of course, I rose and demanded that the Chairman should read my letter. This he refused to do.

* The Minister said no such thing. Mr. Brock, an assistant secretary at the Ministry of Health, informed the Chairman of the G.N.C. in a letter dated March 9th, "I am directed by the Minister of Health to state that his sanction is only required to rules made under the Act, and that the resolution in question (the Cox-Davies Instruction), in his opinion, deals with a matter within the discretion of the Council, which does not require to be embodied in a rule."

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