

representing the Ministry of Health, whether he is aware that the Chairman of the General Nursing Council demanded that a Rule should be passed by that Council to the effect that any irregularity, however grave, in the selection of nurse representatives, as conducted by him might be condoned by himself, thus depriving candidates of the right to question his decision in a court of law; whether this Rule was sanctioned by the late Minister of Health; and whether, in view of the necessity of not withholding from any persons rights conferred upon them by Parliament he will reconsider this Rule.

## ANSWER.

MAJOR BOYD CARPENTER: The Hon. Member is under a misapprehension as to the effect of the Rule, a copy of which I am sending him. It is in accordance with legislative procedure, and was adopted by the Council at the instance of the late Minister of Health. The returning officer's power under the Rule is limited to condoning irregularities which, in his opinion, have not substantially affected the result of the election, and there is an appeal from his decision to the Minister of Health. A Rule of this kind is particularly necessary in the case of elections conducted by post, and the Hon. Member will find a precedent for it in the Fifth Schedule to the Representation of the People Act, 1918.

The Rule is as follows:—

"No election held under this Scheme shall be invalidated by reason of any misdescription or non-compliance with the provisions of this Scheme, or by reason of any miscount or of the non-delivery, loss, or miscarriage in the course of post of any document required under this Scheme to be despatched by post, if it appears to the Returning Officer that the election was conducted substantially in accordance with the provisions of this Scheme, and that the result of such misdescription, non-compliance, miscount, non-delivery, loss or miscarriage did not substantially affect the result of the election: Provided that any unsuccessful candidate or her agent may, within fourteen days after the declaration by the Returning Officer of the result of the election, appeal to the Minister of Health, whose decision shall be final."

Referring to our notes of the Special Meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales of October 6th, we find that when this Rule came before the Council MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK asked for an explanation, and said it appeared to her very dangerous.

DR. GOODALL said he was informed that it was taken from the method of election on to Panel Committees.

MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK thought it serious. The General Medical Council had no such drastic provision.

THE CHAIRMAN said that if no safeguard was provided he could not undertake the duties of Returning Officer. It was nothing that they need be frightened about.

The Rule was carried by 7 votes to 2, Mrs. Fenwick and Miss MacCallum being in the minority.

The present election, as our readers are aware, has resulted in a complete fiasco, and the powers of the Returning Officer under this Rule therefore arise. We are legally advised that no action taken in a court of law could hope to succeed in the face of this Rule, and its gravity is therefore fully maintained.

## MR. ROBERT DONALDSON'S ADDRESS.

## TITULAR LETTERS.

Mr. Robert Donaldson, 8, Hinde-Street, Manchester Square, W. 1, whose candidature as a representative of Mental Nurses on the General Nursing Council for England and Wales we have previously reported, has issued an Election Address, in which he expresses disapproval of the proposals as to a State Uniform and *letters attached thereto*, as inimical to the interests of nurses on the Supplementary Parts of the Register. If, however, he studies more closely the Resolution as to distinguishing letters moved by Miss MacCallum at the meeting of the Council on October 27th, which he quotes, he will see that it had nothing whatever to do with the question of letters attached to the uniform.

Miss MacCallum moved "that nurses on the General and Supplementary Parts of the Register be authorised to use distinguishing letters *after their names*," which Registered Nurses in all parts of the world are permitted to do. It is these titular letters which will confer prestige on nurses, not letters attached to a uniform, to which we can conceive Mr. Donaldson's objections to be well founded.

Incidentally, the adoption of the protected uniform is quite optional.

## HAS THE COUNCIL BEEN IGNORED AGAIN?

One item in this Address will certainly come as information to the General Nursing Council. Mr. Donaldson says: "As you are aware men who had their training interrupted owing to serving their Country in the War, and in consequence could not finish their training prior to 1919, were compelled to pay Two Guineas for Registration, which was a great injustice to many men.

"This should have been foreseen by our representatives on the Council, but not till I took the matter up with them, and in the Press, was this injustice rectified so far as it affected Male Nurses.

"Women Nurses who were likewise affected, and having no one to champion their cause, have still to pay the two guineas, and I hold they should also be considered."

This question has never come before the General Nursing Council, either directly, or in the form of a Report from either the Registration or Finance Committee. With whom has Mr. Donaldson taken this matter up? Is it another of the questions dealt with by Dr. Goodall, Chairman of the Registration Committee, over the heads and without the knowledge of the Council?

## THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR THE STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

A meeting of the above Committee will be held on Saturday, December 16th, at 431, Oxford Street, London, W., at 3 p.m., to consider the policy of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and its failure to give effect to certain provisions of the Nurses' Registration Act, and to move a Resolution.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)