

An Unfounded Accusation.

MISS LLOYD STILL asserted that it was to meet the wishes of Miss MacCallum that the ballot should be a secret one that the work was given to an outside firm.

MISS MACCALLUM denied this statement, and pointed out that it was the returned ballot paper, marked with the signature of the nurse concerning which it was necessary to preserve secrecy, and not the blank ballot paper sent out. She had never proposed, and did not know, that the clerical work in connection with the Election had been entrusted to an outside firm.

MISS SEYMOUR YAPP here asked the Chairman to enquire from a gentleman standing at the reporters' table what paper he represented, and why he was standing there. The gentleman replied that he represented the *National Asylum Workers' Magazine*, and that he was standing because no one had offered him a chair.

MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK said that the Council had had one interregnum of ten weeks' duration during which the business of the Council had been held up; presumably there would now be another before the new Council could come into office.

THE CHAIRMAN gave the date of the next meeting of the Council as February 16th.

MISS MACCALLUM moved:—

"That the whole of the clerical work in connection with the forthcoming Election be conducted in the Council's Office, by the Staff responsible to the Council, and that each envelope containing a ballot paper be tied off by responsible officials."

This was seconded by MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, who said she presumed the staff of thirty were still employed.

THE CHAIRMAN said that this could be done if other work was held up.

MISS MACDONALD, MISS CATTELL and MISS COX DAVIES supported the Resolution that the work should be done in the Office.

DR. SMEDLEY advocated the envelopes being addressed outside. He had inspected the Office and the Staff were overcrowded and working under adverse conditions.

DR. GOODALL wished to make it quite clear that if the addressing were done in the Office a lot of other work would have to stop.

MISS VILLIERS said there were complaints that nurses who were registered in June and July had not yet got their certificates. If the work was so far behind did another week or two matter so very much to allow of this urgent piece of business being put through efficiently?

SIR JENNER VERRALL thought that on the whole the Council would save money by getting the work done in its own Office. He said that the money would come out of the general funds. He was getting tired of constantly hearing about the "Nurses' Money." The nurses were getting what they believed to be an advantage when they got Registration, and it was a little hard when members of the Council wished to do their best to be

told they must not do this or that because it was the nurses' money.

MISS MACCALLUM said that the whole of the money for the upkeep of the Council's work was subscribed by the nurses, and not by the State, but the working nurses' representatives had been excluded from the General Purposes Committee, so that they had little power over expenditure.

MISS SEYMOUR YAPP here asked whether the motion before the Council was Miss MacCallum's motion; if so, might they have it read again?

THE CHAIRMAN said Miss MacCallum's motion was "that the whole of the clerical work should be conducted in the Council's Office."

MISS COX DAVIES moved, and MISS SPARSHOTT seconded, an amendment to insert the words "with the exception of the addressing of envelopes."

MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK said the risk of mistakes would still be run. She had been addressed as a spinster. (Laughter.)

The amendment was then put to the meeting and carried by 12 votes to 8.

The amended resolution was then put as a substantive motion, and carried by 14 votes to 5.

On representations being made by Mr. CHRISTIAN the Chairman agreed that on the voting papers for the mental representatives the spaces for the voters' marks should be left at the end of the line instead of the beginning, but said it could not be done in the other sections.

MISS MACCALLUM moved that "full 21 days be allowed for the return of the Ballot Papers." The Council had no authority to disfranchise any nurse. The very large majority of nurses moved about, in which case their letters had to be re-directed once, and often twice.

This was seconded by MISS MACDONALD.

THE CHAIRMAN said he could only allow a fortnight. The Papers could be sent out on January 10th and must be returned by the 24th. It took a long time to open the envelopes. It had taken him two hours to open 500.

MISS MACCALLUM expressed astonishment that the envelopes had been opened. She understood they would be opened in the presence of Assessors, and she had intended to be present.

MISS YAPP said she objected to Miss MacCallum being present.

MISS MACCALLUM replied that every candidate had this right under the Rules, and Miss Yapp had no power to prevent it.

THE CHAIRMAN here said, "I believe this Council is partly insane"—(Loud laughter, in which the press joined heartily)—To uncover the Identification envelope did not affect the secrecy of the Ballot Paper.*

MRS. FENWICK enquired what had been done with the spoiled Ballot Papers.

* This may be so, but it does reveal the identity of the voter. Covering envelopes ought to remain intact until the election takes place in presence of the Assessors and such candidates as desire to be present.—ED.

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