

without a very strenuous fight against the depreciation of statutory rights, a policy inspired by the College of Nursing, Ltd., executively governed as it is by one of the most reactionary anti-feminists in the medical profession, supported by hospital and Poor Law autocrats, who are combined to prevent if possible any degree of self-government for the new Profession of Nursing as provided by Act of Parliament. Fortunately, the Prescribed Scheme for the Election, signed by the Minister of Health, has to be laid before each House of Parliament for twenty-one days, during which time a humble Address may be presented to His Majesty praying that the Scheme may be annulled or modified. A recent meeting of the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council decided to invite Major Barnett, M.P., to move such an Address to modify the Schedule, and with his usual sympathy with the promoters of State Registration, and in the best interests of the whole Nursing Profession, a Notice of Motion to modify the "Prescribed Scheme" of the Schedule in its present form, appears in his name in the Orders of the Day, for Thursday, March 8th, when no doubt there will be a muster of those nurses who are in favour of a liberal scheme of election, to listen to the debate.

But whether the motion is carried or not, the vital thing is the spirit which inspires its promotion—the love of justice and fair-play which enabled the Minority of the Nursing Profession to rally to their demand for State Organisation of Nursing the support of an overwhelming number of legislators in past Parliaments—the spirit which will contest every tyrannical action designed to deprive them of rights and privileges granted to them under the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919.

The following Memorandum has been issued to Members of Parliament by the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council in support of Major Barnett's Motion:—

MEMORANDUM

Re THE PRESCRIBED SCHEME FOR THE ELECTION OF REGISTERED NURSES,

BY THE

Registered Nurses Parliamentary Council,

431, OXFORD STREET, LONDON, W. 1.

(President, COUNCILLOR BEATRICE KENT, Registered Nurse.)

Scheme made under Paragraph 4 of the Schedule to the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, for the election of sixteen Registered Nurses to be Members of that Council, now laid before each House of Parliament.

Major Barnett will move in the House of Commons, on THURSDAY, MARCH 8th, that an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, praying that certain modifications may be made to the Scheme now laid before the House.

MODIFICATIONS DESIRED.

Re the Election of Eleven Persons to be elected by Registered Nurses (*i.e.*, Nurses registered in the General Part of the Register) to be Members of the General Nursing Council.

The modifications desired by the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council are:—

I.

Re Qualifications of Persons to be elected.

To substitute for the present complicated qualifications the words:—

Eleven Registered Nurses (*i.e.*, Nurses Registered in the General Part of the Register).

N.B.—The persons entitled to nominate these Nurses are the Nurses Registered in the General Part of the Register.

Reason for Amendment.

As proposed in the Scheme at present there are seven divisions in which Registered Nurses must vote for their eleven Representatives on the General Part of the Register, which makes the filling in of the Voting Papers most complicated and confusing.

Further, out of the 11 Representatives, Registered Nurses *must* vote for six Matrons, the remaining five being either Matrons or Nurses. This is most undemocratic, and a curtailment of the free choice of the Nurses on the General Part of the Register.

No such restriction is imposed upon Nurses on the Supplementary Parts of the Register, who are free to elect any Registered Nurse to represent them, whatever position she holds in the Nursing World, and this principle has been adopted by the General Nursing Council for Scotland, with satisfactory results.

Matrons come on to the Register on their qualifications as Nurses, and should stand for election as such.

II.

Re Time Allowed for Returning Voting Papers.

To substitute *twenty-one* days for the *seven* days at present allowed for the return of the Voting Papers. The effect of this would be to require the Returning Officer to send out the Voting Papers to each person qualified to take part in the Election at least twenty-one days before they must be returned.

Reason for the Amendment.

The permanent address to be inscribed on the Register given by Registered Nurses is usually their home address, whereas a nurse may be holding a post at the other end of the Kingdom, or be at a private case, thus the Voting Paper may have to be re-addressed more than once. Many nurses will, therefore, be disfranchised if only seven days are allowed for the return of the Voting Paper.

In the first election in December last, owing to the mismanagement of the Election, resulting in a shortage of Voting Papers for some thousand Electors, there was not time to print and send out more papers within the prescribed time, and the Election had to be quashed, putting the Registered Nurses to the needless expense of a second Election, amounting to some hundreds of pounds.

III.

Re Powers of Returning Officer.

Clause 8 (2) gives the Returning Officer absolute powers, and completely exonerates him from responsibility for any irregularity or illegality, which may be perpetrated in the course of the Election, purposely or otherwise.

Amendment Desired.

It is desired that Clause 8 (2) be altogether omitted, 8 (1) being thought sufficient. No such provision is incorporated in the Schedule for the Election of the direct representatives on the General Medical Council.

If, however, the Clause stands, it requires drastic modification, as the Chairman of the Council is also Returning Officer. Under this Clause he is constituted an absolute dictator, and there is no legal protection whatever, either for the candidates or the Electorate.

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