

At the next meeting of the Council, on October 27th, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick moved, in accordance with notice:—

"That the Minister of Health be requested to inform the General Nursing Council what modifications, if any, he considers advisable in the Syllabus unanimously approved by the Council, for the future training of nurses in general nursing, so that it may be approved by him, and thus a standardised system be substituted for the present chaotic conditions of nursing education."

Miss Lloyd Still, Chairman of Education Committee, said that it was understood the Minister was not prepared to give his sanction to the Syllabus of Training. It was desired to postpone it, as a temporary measure.

In the meanwhile nurses in training were deprived of their right to a prescribed scheme of training.

On December 15th, the Minister, Sir Alfred Mond, wrote to the Council condoning Sir Wilmot Herringham's illogical pronouncement, and said, "There is no longer any necessity to incorporate the Syllabus in the Rules made under the Act, and it consequently does not require the Minister's approval," and pointing out "that the preface to the Syllabus, as it stands at present, is calculated to convey a contrary impression, and the Minister would, therefore, suggest that in circulating these documents it is desirable that the preface should be revised, so as to make it perfectly clear that the Syllabus is advisory only and not obligatory."

The letter then advises the Council how it can evade the Law in the following paragraph:—

"I am, however, to point out that Section 3 (2) (a) and (b) of the Act refer specifically to the 'prescribed' training, and it will, therefore, be necessary for the Council to submit a rule prescribing in general terms the training which candidates for examination will be required to have undergone. For this purpose the Minister is advised that the requirements of the sub-section will be met by a simple rule providing for the total period of training required for each part of the Register, and providing also that the nurse shall have received instruction in all the subjects included in the Syllabus of Examination, which will be scheduled to the rules."

Thus were the nurses deprived of their right to "prescribed" training, and the Nursing Schools exempted from conforming to the Act and providing it.

On December 15th, 1922, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick stated the letter from the Minister of Health *re* Syllabus of General Training had not been reported on by the Education Committee as directed. She proposed:—

"That the Minister of Health be invited at once to sign the Syllabus unanimously agreed to by this Council to carry into effect Section 3 (2) (a) and (b) of the Nurses' Registration Act."

This was carried by nine votes to four, the effect of the Resolution being that Recommendation (4) of the Education Committee in regard to issuing the Syllabus under its own authority, thus leaving it optional, was deleted from the Report.

The new Council came into office in February, 1923. At the meeting on February 16th the Minister of Health wrote that as regards the training Syllabus he would be glad if the Council would give further consideration to the proposal that it should, at any rate for the present, be treated as advisory, and that its adoption should not be made a condition of approval of Nurse Training Schools.

On March 16th, 1923, Mr. Donaldson moved an amendment to the Report of the Educational Committee, namely: "That the Syllabus of Training be returned to the Minister, with the request that he will sign it." This was lost.

Miss Villiers moved that the Minister be asked to point out what modifications he thinks it is desirable to make in

the Syllabus of Training. This was lost, and the Council decided to issue the Syllabus as amended on the authority of the General Nursing Council, which, we contend, was an illegal action.

On June 15th, 1923, the Minister (Mr. Neville Chamberlain) wrote that he was not at present prepared to issue a compulsory Syllabus of Training.

Since which time the Council has lapsed into futility so far as the rights of the Nurses are concerned in this connection.

It will thus be realised that bureaucratic obstruction at the Ministry of Health has prevented for upwards of three years the organisation of systematic Nursing Education, as provided for in the Nurses' Registration Act, and has perpetuated the autocratic power of the Nurse Training Schools in relation to probationers in training, by exempting them from any obligation to conform to, and provide, a "prescribed" scheme of training before approval and recognition by the General Nursing Council as efficient Schools.

Probationary Nurses are thus placed in the invidious position of submitting to a State Examination to secure legal status without any guarantee of "prescribed" teaching by approved Nurse Training Schools, a right secured to them in the Nurses' Registration Act.

II.

THE PRESCRIBED SCHEME FOR THE ELECTION OF REGISTERED NURSES BY THE NURSES REGISTERED ON THE GENERAL PART OF THE REGISTER AS THEIR DIRECT REPRESENTATIVES ON THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

On behalf of this Deputation, and those whom it represents, I desire earnestly to support the Amendments to the Prescribed Scheme for the Election of Registered Nurses, by the Nurses registered on the General Part of the Register, as their Direct Representatives, on the General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

The Registered Nurses are entitled to vote for eleven Direct Representatives, but under the Scheme tentatively in force their free choice is greatly restricted. Six seats are reserved for Matrons of General Hospitals, or Poor Law Infirmaries with Nurse-Training Schools attached, the remaining five seats being allotted to Registered Nurses (Matrons of Hospitals or otherwise), one of whom must be, or have been, engaged in Private Practice, and one directly employed, or have been employed, in the Public Health Service, or engaged in District Nursing.

The Nurses registered on the General Part of the Register are thus deprived of that free choice in the selection of their Representatives which is secured to the Nurses registered in the Supplementary Parts of the Register. We plead that the Election of Registered Nurses on to the General Nursing Council for England and Wales shall be in accordance with the same principle, and that no privileged positions be reserved for Matrons of Hospitals, or other classes of Nurses registered on the General Part of the Register.

The qualification of persons to be elected should therefore be, simply, "11 Registered Nurses," to be elected by the Registered Nurses (*i.e.*, Nurses registered on the General Part of the Register).

We ask for this amendment, firstly, because a curtailment of the free choice of the Nurses is most undemocratic; and, secondly, because the method of filling in the voting papers at the Election in January, 1923, in seven different sections, was most restrictive, complicated, and confusing.

The opportunity of making the provision for which we ask is opportune, because, although the election in January,

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