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EDITORIAL.

THE VOTE COVERS ALL.

The Report of the Select Committee on the General Nursing Council, which was eagerly awaited, has been issued with commendable promptitude, and will be received by the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council, and those who supported its demand for an open election of Direct Representatives of the Nurses on the General Part of the Register of Nurses for England and Wales with much gratification.

As we stated in our last issue, the Select Committee was appointed to consider the Rules of the General Nursing Council "with regard to the prescribed training for nurses, and the reservation of seats on the Council for Matrons."

PRESCRIBED TRAINING.

In regard to the first point the Committee clearly states that the word "prescribed" when used in statutes relating to a rule-making authority means "prescribed by rule," and that "clearly, therefore, the wording of the Act lays an obligation upon the Council to make Rules in relation to four matters:—(1) The conduct of the examination; (2) the training; (3) the experience; (4) the place of training of candidates for admission to the Register."

The Committee, therefore, are agreed that it is the duty of the Council to make Rules in relation to training. Where we differ from its conclusion is that the Report claims that "the rules proposed by the General Nursing Council in regard to the prescribed training for nurses do, in fact, comply with the provisions of the Act." We differ from this legal point of view, because the Act (Section 3) lays down that "Rules under this section shall contain provisions requiring as a condition of the admission of any person to the Register that that person shall have undergone the prescribed training" and the Council has not made a Rule for "prescribed training" only appending the scheme for training to a Rule for a compulsory examination, thus, we hold, evading the direct instructions of the Act.

Until, therefore, the Law Officers of the Crown have been consulted, and given a written pronouncement in reference to the legal aspect of the question, there will be a sense of injury on the part of every candidate who fails to pass the Final Examination of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and, in consequence, fails to obtain admission to the Register of Nurses.

At the same time, a long step has been taken in the Rules issued by the General Nursing Council for England

and Wales in 1925, as the scheme, while not guaranteeing to pupil nurses a training prescribed by Rule, is, so far as it goes, not permissive, but compulsory.

SCHEME OF ELECTION.

In regard to the second point—the Scheme of Election—the unanimous findings of the Select Committee are a complete justification of the persistent demand of the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council in Parliament through Sir Richard Barnett—and to the Minister of Health, that justice should be done, and the eleven seats for the Direct Representatives of the Registered Nurses on the General Part of the Register should be open to all duly nominated Registered Nurses.

It will be remembered that on March 14th, 1923, Major Barnett moved in the House of Commons an Amendment to the Scheme which had been made by the General Nursing Council under the Nurses' Registration Act, signed by the Minister of Health, and laid before Parliament, which provided that of these eleven Direct Representatives six should be Matrons, and two more seats should be restricted to other classes of nurses, leaving only *three* seats open to any Registered Nurses.

In moving a Humble Address to His Majesty that the Scheme might be modified, Major Barnett said:—

"Under the Scheme as it stands six of the representatives must be past or present matrons and the other five may be. The Amendment I put forward is that the Registered Nurses should elect eleven nurses to represent them, and they may be matrons or not exactly as the nurses please."

The Minister of Health, Mr. Neville Chamberlain, who had only been in office a few days, in view of the fact that the 21 days in which an Address might be presented to His Majesty expired that day, invited Major Barnett to withdraw his Motion, in which case he undertook to request the General Nursing Council to examine Major Barnett's Amendments, and to ask them to submit to him such alterations as they might be prepared to make within the next 12 months, to which Major Barnett acceded.

At the end of 15 months the General Nursing Council replied by submitting a scheme for the Minister's approval leaving only two seats out of the eleven to the unrestricted vote of the Registered Nurses.

The Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to consider the question have now unanimously reported.

"Your Committee cannot fail to recognise the advantages that accrue from a free election. It secures for the elected body a measure of confidence and support which it might not otherwise obtain. It puts the pro-

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