

(I am not complaining of it ; I do not think it is at all too much), they want their pound of flesh.

233. I understand from your Memorandum that the College of Nursing desire to establish at a later date (this is on page 5, the middle paragraph) Tuition Courses which will be under the direction of a Tutor, and will be specially designed to coach nurses who have received their training but who have failed to pass their State Examination. Would not the establishment of such Tuition Courses go a very large way to meet the objections that you feel?—No, it would not, because although of course, I quite realise that there are a limited number of stupid people who cannot pass examinations and would require more coaching than others, I think it is the schools who have had the benefit of their three years' work who should be made responsible for teaching them properly. This no doubt would be a very valuable course for post-graduate instruction and work, but how are they going to get their practical work in connection with these courses if the hospitals do not keep these nurses in the hospital? We all know that even under the examination systems of hospitals if a nurse fails in her final examination she is not kept on the staff ; and a very good reason for that is that she is a teacher after she has her certificate ; she is a teacher of the new probationers in the wards, and if these probationers are being prepared for the State Examination they certainly do not want to be taught by a person who has failed in the examinations, and therefore she would leave the hospital, and it would be very disastrous for her from a professional point of view.

234. Now I will turn to your evidence on the Prescribed Scheme for the Election of Registered Nurses, if I may?—Shall I, Mr. Chairman, have an opportunity of saying something which was not brought out in evidence yesterday, about the feeling of the minority on the General Nursing Council for this syllabus of training?

235. Certainly, by all means. Would you say it now?—I should like to say that the whole time, from first to last, there has been a minority on the General Nursing Council who are anxious for this syllabus of training to be a statutory rule. Three times during my term of office we sent this forward to the Minister, and you will see by the correspondence which I have quoted from the Minister that there was an absolutely determined and persistent opposition to making this a rule ; and in the second Council, which was appointed in 1923, there is still a minority, 5 or 6 or 7 persons, who are strongly in favour of this ; and I think they were under the impression that their expressed opinion would be brought forward in evidence yesterday by their representative, but, although I could not hear everything that was said, I did not hear anything to that effect.

236. We are calling a member of the minority.—I am very pleased to hear that ; that will satisfy me.

237. Now we will come to your evidence on the Prescribed Scheme for the Election of Registered Nurses—the reservation of seats. You are decidedly against any reservation, Mrs. Fenwick?—Yes, I am.

238. And you say on page 2 of your Memorandum at the bottom of the first paragraph : “ The present and proposed schemes of election for the nurses on the General Part of the Register are undemocratic and undesirable, and the method of filling in the voting papers at the Election in January, 1923, in seven different sections, proved restrictive, complicated, vexatious, and productive of official pressure.”—Yes.

239. I should rather like to have just a little further evidence on that, if you would expand it a little?—I do not know whether you have had placed before you the Election Paper which we had to fill up.

240. Yes ; the Election Scheme has been circulated.—It is exceedingly complicated, and when it was delivered, young women, who had never voted at all upon any question, found it exceedingly difficult and complicated

241. Were there many spoilt voting papers?—That I do not know ; I was not one of the scrutineers ; but I do know this, that it had to be taken to the Headquarters in a large number of cases for advice. That I consider a very bad system.

SIR CHARLES FORESTIER-WALKER.

242. What had to be taken to the Headquarters?—The election paper was taken by a large number of nurses to Headquarters, and they received kindly advice as to how to fill it up.

MR. ROBERT WILSON.

243. Could we have a résumé of the method of nomination and election?

*Chairman* : A paper is just being circulated.

*Witness* : It was all in watertight compartments, as it is proposed to be now.

CHAIRMAN.

244. Then you go on at the bottom of page 2 to say : “ As a class, the Matrons of Hospitals are devoted to their responsible duties and are highly respected by the rank and file of the nursing profession, and there can be no doubt that a sufficient number of Matrons would be elected on to any General Nursing Council to represent expert professional opinion as to nursing education.”—I am quite sure there would be quite enough.

245. I gather that the object of these reservations was not merely to secure the election of Matrons, but to secure the election of persons representing different types of nursing experience ; and the question which occurs to me is whether under a system of complete freedom, those different types of nursing experience would be elected, assuming it is valuable that they should be on the Council.—I think the principle of a free election supersedes every other consideration. I go as far as that ; because, after all, the nurses now are going to be trained ; they are going to be examined ; they are going to have a certain amount of knowledge ; and it is not only the Matrons in hospitals who have that experience which is necessary ; there are a large number of other branches of nursing entirely outside hospitals where nurses are instructed.

246. This point was put to us yesterday. It was put to us that the Poor Law Nurses were more numerous than the other nurses put together ; that it would be possible under a system of absolutely unrestricted voting for the Poor Law Nurses, though very unlikely, but at any rate conceivable, that the Poor Law Nurses might obtain all the places on the Nursing Council ; that the Mental Nurses would be unrepresented ; that the Matrons dealing with Children's Hospitals would be unrepresented ; and that various types of nursing education, the representation of which it is desirable to secure in the interests of the patients and of the public, would not find a place on the Nursing Council. That is the point that has been put to us.—Yes. I think it is very unlikely that the Poor Law Nurses would co-operate to “nobble” the Council—I do not think that would be done for a moment. Of course, the Mental Nurses and Sick Children's Nurses do not vote for the general candidates ; they have their own representatives, so that they will always be represented. I do not think it is necessary to have this system of classification of representatives ; they have not got them in Scotland, and they have got an excellent Council.

247. You think the system works quite well in Scotland?—I believe it works quite well in Scotland, although it is over-loaded with Matrons, but the nurses put them there ; they have confidence in them, and they elected them.

248. You speak at the end of your Memorandum of the acute shortage of suitable applicants for training in many hospitals. You say that that “proves indifference upon the

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)