

course the preliminary examination is very simple, and it is all set out.

CHAIRMAN: I think we have all that.

SIR GEORGE BERRY.

286. I mean to say are the failures on the whole failures in actual nursing, or failures in appreciating the points from a medical point of view.—It is very difficult to say that; I do not know; I am not an examiner. As a practical teacher in a hospital I should certainly lay great stress upon the practical ability of a woman. A theoretical training is necessary, but it is not always the case that the best theoretical nurse is the best practical nurse, but theory and practice must be taught.

287. There is only one other point, an unimportant one, but I should like to know, Mrs. Fenwick, what is the reason why there is such a shortage of nurses coming forward? Is it because there are a great many other occupations open to women now, or is it because there is a greater demand for recreation and excitement among the young women of the present day? What is your view?—My view is, of course, that evolution in every possible way has made it possible for a very much larger number of the people to what we call *enjoy life*, that is really what it comes to. I do not blame them. You know the old altruistic spirit of the *religieuse* has been decreasing for many, many years. I think we ought to do everything to encourage that amongst the young women of the day, but it is very difficult; there are many distractions, as you say, so many distractions in life.

MR. HURST.

288. How old is a woman when she becomes a probationer normally—what is the usual age of entry?—The age has been lowered within the last few years. In the old days it was 25. Then we came down to 23, 22, then 20, 19, and I believe, in some of the hospitals they take them in at 18.

289. In your evidence in chief you rather suggested that young women were prevented from joining the profession by reason of the syllabus not being compulsory, and by reason of election to the Council. That is not meant seriously, I suppose, is it?—What I mean is that if you are going to encourage intelligent women to take up a profession you must give them a certain amount of liberty of thought, action and speech.

290. I suggest to you that the answer you gave Sir George Berry about the hard conditions of the service as compared with other occupations represents the true reason why women do not come forward rather than the syllabus and the election.—Until girls have come into the nursing world they know nothing about the syllabus and the election, or the Council; but I am very strongly in favour of encouraging them to know about them.

291. You referred to the individual striving for individual expression being among the characteristics of the age—that is one of the characteristics of the hospitals too, is it not?—Yes.

292. Would it not be the normal wish of a hospital to have its own method of training?—Yes, but there can only be one underlying basis of theory upon which you can practice.

293. With regard to this scheme of election, the present scheme as I understand it, that scheme was adopted by the Council some time in 1922; it must have been as the election took place on it in January, 1923.—Yes, very hurriedly at the end of 1922.

294. Do you know who drew it up?—I think the scheme for election was drawn up by either the Registration or the Education Committee; I forget which.

295. I suggest to you it was drawn up by the Registration Sub-Committee, was it not?—I think it was.

296. Were you Chairman of the Registration Sub-Committee?—Yes, I was Chairman at that time of the Registration Committee.

297. So that this scheme is really drawn up by yourself?—No, it was not entirely drawn up by myself, and when it was later altered and presented to the Council I stated that I considered that it would be very much better if we had an open election. I was told by the Chairman that it was too late, that it must be sent to the Minister immediately, or the election, according to the Act, could not take place.

298. How many persons were there on the Registration Sub-Committee who drew up this scheme?—It was the Standing Committee on Registration.

299. How many members?—I am not quite certain; eight, I think. It is all in the Regulations.

300. Do you really say that you dissented from this scheme?—I dissented from it in Council.

301. Was it not you who presented this as a Report of your Committee?—Yes, as a Report, and I later dissented from it.

302. Now before the election of January, 1923, took place was your criticism of this scheme well known to the nurses?—No; the nurses know nothing about what goes on in the Council.

303. So you did not carry your criticism beyond that protest at that time?—Yes, I did, in the Journal.

304. Is the Journal widely read?—It is read by the intelligent minority.

305. So that the merits or demerits of this scheme were well advertised before the election in January, 1923?—I think they were.

306. And do you think that that issue was considered by the electors when they voted?—It is very difficult to say. It is the very first time the nurses have had an election, and I do not think that the large majority of them really took very much interest in it.

307. Would it not appear from the result of the elections as if the majority of the electors did not sympathise with your criticisms?—No, I do not think so because the whole of that election was like most other elections. It was manoeuvred. For instance, the College had their candidates, and what we call the Free Nurses Organisations had their candidates; they were run in groups, and the College is very much the richest; there are many more nurses in the College than there are in the other Associations, and, therefore, each group put up its own candidates, just as the British Medical runs the direct representatives on the General Medical Council.*

MR. ROBERT WILSON.

308. There are just three questions, Mr. Chairman, which arise out of observations made by Mrs. Fenwick. In reply to a question from you, Sir, you asked whether Mrs. Fenwick believed that the yellow syllabus should be modified. Mrs. Fenwick replied that she thought it ought to be, but she did not know in what particular way. I should like to know, because later on she said: "There is no minimum standard for training," whether the yellow syllabus should be considered above or below the standard set for training?—I have no recollection of saying that.

309. I made a note of it at the time.—There is no minimum, I quite agree to that, but I did not say that I wanted the syllabus modified.

310. No, you said it ought to be altered, but you did not know in what particular way.—What ought to be altered?

* In reference to the inspired questions of Mr. G. B. Hurst, K.C., Mrs. Bedford Fenwick asked the Chairman if she might be recalled to amplify her evidence in reply to certain questions.

This she was permitted to do—such evidence appears on page 219.

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