

If the syllabus of training were made compulsory the inevitable result would be to make it into a cast-iron code. It would stereotype training, and it would make any adjustments and modifications very difficult.

Miss Wilkinson questioned Mr. Brock as to the protection of the nurse which she considered was the object of a compulsory syllabus, as well as to procure a compulsory standard. Did not the Minister feel that the smaller hospitals were not getting anything like what they wanted by the present method of merely an advisory syllabus? There were still a large number of nurses who were not being protected.

Mr. Brock replied that a compulsory syllabus of training would only have been effective in so far as it coerced the smaller hospitals into doing things which they were not doing at present. If rules had been laid before the House which would have produced that effect he could imagine the smaller hospitals would have made themselves exceedingly vocal.

Miss Wilkinson considered that it would be better for them to be vocal than that a large number of Nurses, employed in these small hospitals, should be, to use the Chairman's word, exploited, and at the end of that training find themselves not able to pass the examination. It seemed to her that the root difficulty of the whole thing was that the nurses in the smaller hospitals were being left without protection because the Council, or the Ministry, was afraid of their opposition.

SIR RICHARD BARNETT CALLS FOR THE OPINION OF THE LAW OFFICERS OF THE CROWN.

Questioned by Major Sir Richard Barnett as to who advised the Ministry as to the legal question in connection with prescribed training, namely whether there was compliance with the words of the Statute, the witness replied the legal staff of the department.

Asked whether the Ministry of Health has availed itself of the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown, Mr. Brock replied that it was not considered sufficiently doubtful to necessitate reference to the Law Officers.

Sir Richard Barnett then said: I think that this matter has been on the tapis, so to speak, under three different Ministers of Health, and there have been three different sets of Law Officers whose opinions would have been available. May I ask whether this opinion which is quoted to the Committee is the opinion of a solicitor or of a barrister?—It is the opinion of a barrister.

But the opinion of the Law Officers has not been taken on it?—That is so.

Major Sir Richard Barnett: I call for the opinion and the case stated.

After the witness had been cross-examined by the other members of the Committee, and before he withdrew, Sir Richard Barnett addressing the Chairman said:—

Before Mr. Brock leaves us, would you kindly ask him to let us have the case stated and Counsel's opinion?

Chairman: I think I must see the Minister of Health upon that. You want an opinion referred to the Law Officers.

Major Sir Richard Barnett: I should like that certainly, but may we not have the legal opinion quoted to us. It is on page 4 of Mr. Brock's proof: "The Minister is advised that the rules in their present form are in compliance with the provisions of the Act." I should like to see the statement put before Counsel, and Counsel's opinion. We are entitled to call for papers.

Chairman: Where, in the ordinary course of Departmental administration, a legal point arises, it is referred to the legal adviser to the Department in question and the legal adviser gives his opinion.

Major Sir Richard Barnett: It was Counsel's opinion in this case.

Chairman: It was not the legal adviser of the Minister of Health, Mr. Brock?

Witness: The legal adviser of the Ministry is Mr. Maurice Gwyer, who is a barrister.

Sir Charles Forestier-Walker: I understood the witness to say they did not go to the Law Officers of the Crown; that they thought it was so evident that they dealt with it by their own legal adviser in the Ministry.

Witness: I think there may be a written opinion, but I would not like to say definitely there was. I will certainly have search made, and if there is an opinion in writing I will submit it.

Chairman: Thank you very much.

The witness withdrew.

SIR WILMOT HERRINGHAM, K.C.M.G., C.B., called and examined.

#### RESERVATION OF SEATS FOR MATRONS.

Sir Wilmot Herringham, Chairman of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, called and examined, expressed the opinion that the main work of the Council is the education of nurses, that this is in charge of the Matrons of the Nurse-Training Schools, and that the presence of a body of these experts upon the Council should be placed beyond any risk.

#### THE SYLLABUS OF TRAINING.

In regard to the second point the prescribed Syllabus of Training, Sir Wilmot in his précis stated:—It is not advisable to make the Syllabus of Training (the Green Syllabus) compulsory. (1) Judging by the 5th paragraph of its preface, compulsion was not originally intended. He qualified this in his evidence before the Committee by saying: I should just like to say that I cannot make out what was originally intended, and perhaps I ought to safeguard that statement by saying so. I once interpreted the meaning of the Council to a Deputation of the Poor Law Association by that paragraph—I was afterwards told that I had not interpreted what the original meaning of the Council was, and the Council did, after that, apply to the Minister to make that Green Syllabus compulsory.

When compulsion was proposed such opposition was raised that the Minister refused to sanction it. Questioned by the Chairman as to whence the opposition came, Sir Wilmot said:—I was not on the Council at the time, but I have always understood from those who were that it was fairly general. The leading opponents were the Poor Law Association, who were very strong indeed about it, and I think that almost equally strong were a great many of the hospitals.

#### THE HONEST TRUTH.

Asked by the Chairman what objections were raised at that time, Sir Wilmot replied:—They thought it was too hard. To tell you the honest truth, I do not understand the Syllabus myself. I have often read it through, and I think it a very difficult thing to understand, if you ask me. He thought the objection was to the substance of the Syllabus rather than to the fact that it was compulsory, because objection was not taken to the subjects for examination being made compulsory.

Sir Wilmot further stated that the Syllabus of Subjects for Examination (the Yellow Syllabus) sets out the subjects in which a nurse ought to be instructed and will be examined. It thus ensures that she will be taught them. Enlarging upon the last sentence he explained to the Committee that before a nurse can come up for examination the authorities—the authorities of her hospital—have to sign a certificate to say that she has been taught them.

Questioned as to whether the General Nursing Council took steps to see that the teaching in the various teaching centres was adequate, Sir Wilmot said that was what they certainly would do. They had hitherto been very, very busy, because they had been putting out their system of

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