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EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, REGISTERED NURSE.

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## EDITORIAL.

### THE SCHEME FOR THE ELECTION OF SIXTEEN PERSONS TO BE MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

The most important event for Registered Nurses since the publication of our March issue is that the Scheme made under paragraph 4 of the Schedule to the Nurses' Registration Act, for the election of sixteen persons to be members of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, has now been made public by that Council.

It will be remembered that when, on March 14th, 1923, Major Barnett moved that an Address be presented to His Majesty praying that the Scheme laid before Parliament should be modified in certain particulars, the present Minister of Health had only been in office a few days, and March 14th was the last of the 21 days on which an Address might be presented to His Majesty in this connection.

The Minister realised that unless Major Barnett obtained some assurance from him, he would be obliged, if he withdrew his motion to forego the right which was his, and that that was a position which he ought to meet. He, therefore, stated that if the motion was then withdrawn he would undertake to request the General Nursing Council to consider Major Barnett's amendments, and submit to him (the Minister) such alterations as they might be prepared to make. These alterations to the Scheme, if they were approved by him, would then be laid on the Table of the House, and be open for discussion. The General Nursing Council, after some fourteen months' vacillation and indecision, has now put forward its Scheme, and the result shows that it is even more restrictive than that to which Major Barnett took exception.

The Nurses on the General Part of the Register are entitled to elect as their direct representatives eleven persons on the Council, and the "College" Matrons and their friends have proposed that six of these eleven seats shall be reserved for past or present Matrons, who are Registered Nurses, as follows:—

Two Matrons of Metropolitan General Hospitals, two Matrons of Provincial General Hospitals, one Matron of a Metropolitan Poor Law Hospital, one Matron of a Provincial Poor Law Hospital.

The majority of seats having been secured to the Matrons, three more are allotted to a Registered Nurse who is or has been employed in the Health Service, or engaged in District Nursing, one Registered Nurse who is, or has been, engaged in Private Practice, and one Registered Nurse who is employed as a Sister-Tutor at a Training School approved by the Council.

Thus nine out of the eleven direct representatives would under this Scheme be tied up in watertight compartments, and only two seats are left open to the Registered Nurses of England and Wales—at present over 40,000, and soon, we may anticipate, many more.

The claim that the Matrons should thus have the monopoly of the seats is most reactionary, and it is noteworthy that under the General Nursing Council for Scotland, the Registered Nurses have a free right of choice of their representatives, as they do in connection with the Special Registers. Moreover, the Matrons on the present Council have failed to protect the rights granted to Nurses, trained and in training, under the Act, in important particulars, and those in training still await the Syllabus of Prescribed Training to which they are entitled.

We advise Nurses Registered on the General Part of the Register to demand a free right of choice of their direct representatives on the General Nursing Council, such as is enjoyed by their Scottish Colleagues and those on the Supplementary Parts.

### NURSING HOMES (REGISTRATION) BILL.

We referred last month to the Nursing Homes (Registration) Bill introduced into the House of Commons on February 25th, on behalf of the College of Nursing, Ltd., by Mr. Gerald Hurst, K.C., which still awaits its Second Reading.

There are few people who will not admit the desirability of the Registration of Nursing Homes, there are few directions in which the public need protection more, and so long ago as 1904 the Royal British Nurses' Association proposed such registration, and incorporated it in its first Nurses' Registration Bill, but subsequently realised that the two things are distinct.

It should be noted that there is no provision in the Bill making obligatory the presence of even one State Registered Nurse as a condition of registration of a Home. Registration may be refused after 1930 if the Matron or other person having the management and control of the nursing of the patients is not a State Registered Nurse on the General Part of the Register; or a person *eligible to be registered* on the General Part of the Register.

This clause, therefore, is so watered down as to be useless. Many Matrons of Nursing Homes at the present time are themselves trained nurses, but some of them employ semi-trained and untrained persons to attend upon the sick under their care.

The public who pay for skilled nursing are entitled to receive it, and the General Nursing Council for England and Wales is the only body in this country which has the right to say whether nurses are entitled to be registered.

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