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EDITORIAL.
SHIFTING SANDS.

Members of the press who attend the meetings of the Central Midwives Board are accustomed to hear the reply given by the Board, to those who write proposing alterations in the Rules laid down by the Board, that the points will be noted for consideration at the next revision of the Rules, which are approved by the Minister of Health for a definite period.

How necessary this is may be seen from the history of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales. In July, 1921, the Rules framed by it, after most careful consideration, for the benefit of the Nursing Profession as a whole, irrespective of any group whatever, were approved by the Minister of Health, and by last November had been laid before both Houses of Parliament for the prescribed period. They were good and just Rules, and some thousands of nurses applied for Registration and were accepted, in accordance with their provisions. But immediately attempts were made to substitute others, and it is instructive to notice the reasons for this action.

(1) It was found that a member of the College of Nursing, Ltd., could not be accredited in the State Register with a certificate of training, for the very sufficient reason that she did not possess one, but notice was immediately given by another member of the College Council of a Resolution which, if carried, would have had the effect of depriving all nurses who possessed certificates of efficiency of the record of these on the State Register, reserving the use of the word "certificate" for nurses admitted to the Register in the future, as a result of State Examination—a most cruel injustice to the highly qualified nurses, certificated after examination, already in practice.

(2) A new Rule was proposed and carried, the effect of which is to give preferential treatment to members of the College of Nursing, Ltd., who apply for Registration, by relieving them of the necessity for submitting direct documentary evidence as to their qualifications to the authority appointed by Parliament to compile the State Register.

(3) The Rules sanctioned by Parliament in November provided that the term of office of the Standing Committees should expire with the term of office of the present Council. A new Rule was proposed by a member of the Council, who is also a member of the College of Nursing, Ltd., for a perfectly obvious reason, in substitution of the original Rule, whereby new Standing Committees were appointed within a few months of the dissolution of the Council, giving power to remove from office persons who were opposed to preferential treatment for one group of nurses.

(4) A letter was read at the last meeting of the General Nursing Council from Miss M. M. C. Herbert, a College Member, referring to the restrictions as to qualifications imposed by the present Rules, and inquiring whether the Council had not thought any revision necessary, to enable them to deal with applications on their individual merits.

The inference is clear. It is an open secret that an Hon. Officer of the College of Nursing, Ltd., is not qualified under the present Rules for admission to the State Register, and, therefore, once again the standard of registration is in jeopardy on a purely personal issue.

The General Nursing Council has laid down one year's training in a General Hospital, or Poor Law Infirmary, with two years' subsequent experience, as a minimum requirement.

At the instigation of the College of Nursing is this very moderate requirement now to be swept aside? Are the floodgates to be opened for the admission of Cottage Nurses, V.A.D.s, and all and sundry to the State Register of Nurses, because its Council have placed untrained persons on their Register, and have taken money from these persons, upon the now notorious pledge that they shall be placed automatically on the State Register without further fee, and have thus laid themselves open to actions-at-law unless the General Nursing Council comes to the rescue?

The whole situation is an eloquent plea for the stabilising of statutory Rules for at least twelve months, once they have received Parliamentary sanction.

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