

Royal British Nurses' Association.

(Incorporated by



Royal Charter.)

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

BILL FOR STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

PROVISION FOR EXISTING NURSES.

During the last few weeks letters have showered upon us indicating that nurses have been led to believe that the Bill of the Central Committee is calculated to allow V.A.D.s and other partially trained people to have their names placed on the State Register on the passage of the Bill into law, and apparently some people have even gone the length of stating that the Register of the R.B.N.A. has been thrown open to the same unqualified workers, without any attempt on the part of those responsible for the statement to prove the accuracy of the information given by addressing an enquiry to the office. As, every day, a considerable amount of time has to be given up to explain the position of affairs in connection with the sub-section dealing with the qualifications of those whose names shall be entered on the Register during the three years' term of grace, it seems desirable that we should publish some explanation in the official organ of the Corporation.

In the first place, in order to be perfectly frank with the members, we may state that, during the period of grace, a number of nurses will be able to have their names put on the Register who do not possess a three years' certificate of training, because, whatever may be the views of the nurses individually, the promoters of the Bill of the Central Committee and of the Bill of the College of Nursing all realise that Parliament would never consent to take from women who have attained to a certain standard of training and who have been in bona-fide practice for numbers of years, the means of earning their livelihood. We must recognise the fact that if the Bill were to provide that only those who hold a certificate of three years' training should be admitted to the Register during the three years' term of grace, several Matrons and Superintendents of Nurses, who hold or have held high positions in the nursing world, would not be permitted to register and there are many others besides who, if they have not attained to positions of equal prominence, have upheld quite as faithfully and as well the traditions and standards of their honourable profession.

In order that no injustice may be done to such and also to avoid the necessity for nurses, now in practice, sitting for examination, a special clause had to be drafted to be operative only during the first three years after the Bill becomes law. In another part of each of the Bills, a clause is inserted dealing with the qualifications for admission to the Register after the period of grace is over.

It is with the sub-section, dealing with the qualifications for admission to the Register during the three years' term of grace, that this article is principally concerned and we will now quote this sub-section (a) as it appears in the Bill as drafted by the Central Committee and submitted to Standing Committee E, (b) the corresponding sub-section in the Bill of the College of Nursing and (c) the sub-section in the Bill of the Central Committee as amended by Standing Committee E of the House of Commons. It will be noted that the Bill as drafted by the Central Committee is the only one which stipulates for "training" as a qualification for admission to the Register.

The following is the sub-section, regarding which misunderstandings have arisen as it appears in the drafts above referred to:—

(a) "produces evidence satisfactory to the Council of *Training* prescribed by the Rules formed under the provisions of this Act, and has, in addition, been for at least three years in bona fide practice as a nurse."

(b) "Any person who, within three years from the passing of this Act, claims to be registered thereunder shall be so registered, provided such a person is at least twenty-one years of age and is of good character, and is qualified for Registration under such conditions as may be prescribed by Rules under this Act."

(c) "*produces evidence satisfactory to the Council of having been for at least three years in bona fide practice as a nurse in attendance upon the sick, and as to the conditions under which she was so engaged.*" In communications placed before the nurses in connection with this clause, as amended by the Standing Committee, we have invariably found that the words in italics have been omitted. When we examine the sub-section in the College Bill, as quoted above, it is contemptible to find the promoters of this Bill scrambling desperately on to a pedestal of virtue and pointing an oppo-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)