

## THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL.

### THE RULES.

Clause 3 (1) of the Nurses' Registration Act provides that the General Nursing Council shall make rules for the following purposes:—

(a) for regulating the formation, maintenance and publication of the register.

(c) for regulating the conduct of any examination which may be prescribed as a condition of admission to the register, and any matters ancillary to or connected with any such examination.

(f) for enabling the Council to constitute committees and for authorising the delegation to committees of any powers of the Council.

Clause 3 (2) rules under this section shall contain provisions:—

(a) requiring as a condition of the admission of any person to the register that the person shall have undergone the prescribed training, and shall possess the prescribed experience in the nursing of the sick; and

(b) That the prescribed training shall be carried out either in an institution approved by the Council in that behalf or in the service of the Admiralty, the Army Council, or the Air Council; and

(c) enabling persons who, within a period of two years apply to come on to the register . . . under conditions which appear to the Council satisfactory.

Before the Rules can be put into force they must be prescribed by the Council, and it is this most important matter which will require very careful consideration and intimate knowledge, not only of general hospital training, but of the work carried on in special hospitals—in Fever, Mental, Military and Naval Hospitals—and it is well that the Acts provide for consultation between the three Nursing Councils, and also that even when defined they must be approved by the Minister of Health and laid before each House of Parliament for not less than twenty-one days before they can be put into operation.

### DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE COUNCIL.

In connection with the above rules, it will be seen that, as soon as the General Nursing Council is appointed, its work will be enormous, and it would be well that those prepared to accept office should realise this. It is not too much to say that the *personnel* of the Council will make for success or otherwise in interpreting the Act:—

### REGISTRATION.

(a) The qualifications, knowledge and personality of the Registrar are of the first importance in the formation, maintenance and printing of the Register.

During the two years term of grace in England and Wales, it is probable that 50,000 nurses will register, and the responsibility of compiling a State Register must be borne in mind. Once placed on the Register, it means professional

ruin to any woman to be removed from it. The utmost care will, therefore, be necessary in (1) verifying the applicant; (2) verifying professional qualifications; (3) verifying personal credentials. For this important work the Council, and not an official, must be ultimately responsible, so that it will be necessary for sub-committees of members to verify carefully every application, certificate and reference, no slipshod methods will suffice. To do their duty in this particular alone will mean hours of conscientious work, if only 25,000 nurses are registered in each of the two years of the term of grace. That would mean roughly enquiring into and passing 500 applications a week! And if 50,000 nurses apply for enrolment on the State Register in the first year—which is not improbable—1,000 must be registered per week! The clerical labour will also be enormous, and a highly skilled contingent of clerks will be necessary, some of whom should also be trained nurses with a sound knowledge of training school routine, and hospital matters, so that they can distinguish professional credentials without loss of time.

Nurses desirous of qualifying for these posts should add clerical skill to that of nursing, and such work should be well paid, and would be eminently suitable for hospital office Sisters and others who have retired from institution life.

The Registration Department would need to be highly organised as an expert unit, as would other departments supervised by the Council.

### EXAMINATIONS.

(c) After regulating the conditions of admission to the Register the Council is empowered to regulate the conduct of examinations which may be prescribed after the term of grace, as a condition of admission to the Register.

This will be a matter of the very utmost importance, and we all know that for years trained nurses have strongly advocated a uniform examination, following on the system now prescribed for midwives. But the uniform examination for Nurses is by no means the easy matter it is as it affects midwifery.

To begin with, the Act provides for four Registers; classified as follows:—(1) General, (2) Male, (3) Mental, (4) Children; so it goes without saying that four different standards of examinations will be necessary. We may take it, however, that for admission to the General Register every nurse will be required to pass the same examination, on certain dates, in defined localities. This is, of course, the only method of encouraging a uniform standard of training and a just system of registration.

There will have to be defined examinations to test the efficiency of male nurses, exclusive of sections of nursing which they do not practice; also of male and female mental nurses, and of nurses trained only in the care of sick children.

These State Examinations will give an enormous impetus to thorough instruction and training in the Training Schools, and will have

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