

which he and the Registrar had with the Scottish Board of Health, and after discussion it was arranged that Miss Milnes, the Vice-Chairman of the Council, should attend the meeting in London on the 21st inst., with the representatives of the English and Irish Nursing Councils.

On the Report of the Education and Examination Committee, the position of nurses now commencing training was considered, and it was resolved that, up to April 1st, 1924, an applicant who had passed the first part of the examination of any existing examining body should be exempted from passing the first or intermediate examination provided by the Council's Draft Rules in regard to future nurses.

NURSING IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

On Wednesday, the 20th inst, the following appeared upon the Question Paper:—

NURSES' REGISTRATION ACTS.

Mr. F. Hall (La., Normanton) asked the Minister of Health whether he is aware that, though Acts to provide for the registration of nurses received the Royal Assent on December 23rd, 1919, the English Act has, so far, not been carried into effect, and that efforts are being made departmentally to coerce the General Nursing Council of England and Wales to agree to provisions incorporated in the Rules framed under the Scottish Act, of which that Council does not approve; whether such provisions, if adopted, would have the effect of reducing its authority in certain important directions to that of a recording body under the Scottish Board of Health, without power of discrimination; and whether he will inquire into this matter with a view to satisfactory Regulations being brought into force without further delay?

Sir A. Mond: The Hon. Member is under a misapprehension. The General Nursing Council submitted a rule purporting to give them a discretion to refuse to admit to their register nurses already on the Scottish and Irish registers. I am advised on the highest authority that this is *ultra vires*, and I am bound to ask the Council to amend the rule in question, so as to bring it into conformity with the Act. Subject to the submission of an amended rule to give effect to the reciprocity provisions of section 6 (3) of the Act, I am prepared to sanction at once the rules for the admission of existing nurses. I cannot accept the suggestion contained in the latter part of the question, but in any case I have no power to sanction a rule in the form desired by the Council.

We presume replies to questions are usually prepared by departmental officials for their Ministers, and in the reply given to Mr. F. Hall, we are of opinion that it is the new Minister of Health (Sir Alfred Mond) who "is under a misapprehension," as his reply is inaccurate. So far as has been made public the General Nursing

Council for England and Wales have never submitted a rule for the Minister's sanction "purporting to give them a discretion to refuse to admit to their register nurses already on the Scottish and Irish registers."

In drafting a Rule "enabling persons registered as nurses in Scotland and Ireland . . . to obtain admission to the register of nurses established under this Act; and with a view to securing a uniform standard of qualification in all parts of the United Kingdom," as provided in the Act (Section 6 (3)), the Council recommended that there should be reciprocity of registration between the nurses of the United Kingdom "provided the standard for qualification is equivalent to the standard adopted by the Council for England and Wales," and they are of opinion that they cannot carry out Section 3 (1) (b), which states that the Council shall make rules "for regulating the conditions of admission to the register" or Section 3 (2) (3), which provides that existing nurses must produce "evidence to the satisfaction of the Council . . . which appear to the Council to be satisfactory for the purposes of this provision," unless they have equivalent standards of qualification as to the conditions of admission to the register.

The Minister of Health states in his reply that he is "advised on the highest authority" that for the Council to claim "discretion" in this matter "is *ultra vires*." It would be exceedingly interesting to the Council, and to the nursing profession at large, to have pointed out by the legal luminaries who have advised the Minister, in which sections of the Nursing Acts "automatic" registration is defined and made compulsory, and why it is *ultra vires* for the Council to claim responsibility "for regulating the conditions of admission to the register" Section 3 (1) (b).

We can only hope that Sir Alfred Mond will do as Mr. F. Hall suggests and inquire further into this matter.

BRENTFORD BOARD OF GUARDIANS (STAFF DISMISSALS.)

Mr. T. Griffiths (La., Pontypool) asked the Minister of Health whether his attention has been drawn to the action of the Brentford Board of Guardians in discharging a number of their staff with only a few hours' notice; whether he is aware that several nurses, whose homes are in the North of Scotland and Ireland and who are without friends in London, were dismissed at short notice without giving them time to make arrangements for their return home; that these nurses have been discharged for reasons of a frivolous character; and that discontent has been created amongst the remainder of the staff; and whether he will have full inquiry made into all the circumstances and advise the reinstatement of these nurses whose careers will otherwise be ruined?

Sir A. Mond: I am already in communication with the guardians on this subject, and will communicate further with the Hon. Member on receipt of their reply, which I expect to have this week.

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