

NURSING IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

NURSES REGISTRATION (SCOTLAND) ACT
1919 (DRAFT) RULES.

In the House of Commons on the night of Tuesday, October 25th, the following Debate, which we print (abridged) from the Official Report, took place on the Draft Rules framed under the Nurses Registration (Scotland) Act, 1919 :—

Lieut.-Col. HENDERSON : I beg to move :

"That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty praying His Majesty to modify the Rules made by the General Nursing Council for Scotland under the Nurses Registration (Scotland) Act, 1919, drafts of which were presented to this House on the 2nd day of August last, in the following respects :—

Rule 16, page 3, delete the words "(1) a supplementary part containing the names of nurses trained in the nursing of persons suffering from infectious diseases and."

Rule 19, page 4, delete the words "supplementary part containing the names of persons trained in the nursing of persons suffering from infectious diseases and a."

Rule 21, page 5, paragraph 3 (a), delete the words "for the general part of the Register."

Rule 21, pages 8 and 9, delete paragraphs 8 (a), (b), (c), and (d).

Rule 22, page 11, delete paragraph (6).

Rule 30, page 17, delete the words "'Registered Fever Nurse' means a nurse who is for the time being registered in the supplementary part containing the names of nurses trained in the nursing of persons suffering from infectious diseases."

In moving this Motion, I would remind hon. Members that the privilege of objecting to Draft Rules and Draft Orders is one of the few privileges which remain to Private Members, and I ask them to bear with me for a few moments. When the Scottish Nurses Registration Bill was passed in 1919, it was laid down that there should be a register for trained nurses consisting of a General Register, but there was no mention of a Supplementary Register for fever nurses in the infectious diseases hospitals under the local authorities. There was also a provision under the Act that nurses who were trained and held a certificate under the Local Government Board and the Scottish Board of Health should be entitled to be placed on the register if they applied. I think it was the general sense of the House at the time the Act was passed that that position entitled not only general nurses, but also fever nurses who hold certificates, to be placed on the General Register and not on any Supplementary Register. But the Draft Rules now lying on the table lay down specifically that fever nurses are not to be placed on the General Register, but only on the Supplementary Register.

I maintain that we had a definite promise in this House at the time the Act was passed that they should be placed on the General Register if they held a certificate from either the Local Government Board or the Scottish Board of Health.

Mr. GIDEON MURRAY : I beg to second the Motion.

Mr. Macquisten and I desire to enter a protest against the legality of the Supplementary Register. The nurses do not want to take any hostile action unless they are driven to it; they wish to act in a constitutional way. I would point out to the Parliamentary Secretary for Health that . . . nurses under this system will always be tied to fever hospitals, and will never get away from them. Once a nurse gets that qualification it will be impossible for her to get into the general hospital without beginning her career all over again. She has the same training as the general nurse, the same qualifications, and she has the fever training in addition. She might, after serving for a time in a fever hospital, wish to take up general nursing. This classification excludes such nurses. . . There is no substance or justification in it, and it is not fair as between the nursing profession as a whole. I therefore cordially support the motion.

Captain ELLIOT : I think one point, and the governing point, has not been mentioned by either of the two previous speakers. It is surely this, that we should have, so far as is possible, reciprocity with England, so as to secure uniformity throughout these islands. . . It is of far more importance to us that we should get our staff on a basis with England than that we should strive after certain impossible ideals in the country of Scotland itself. It is all very well to say that this is not just and right as regards the fever nurses. After all, we have the position as it stands at present, which is that there is a Scottish Register and an English Register. I deeply deplore that. It is an interesting sidelight on Scottish home rule that when you have secured complete autonomy politically you may find a big economic drag from the southern half of these islands based on this difference. The English market is worth more to the Scottish nurses than the Scottish market is to the English nurses. The English, therefore, can dictate their own terms. They have got the whip hand and they are exercising it just now. We cannot force them, all we can do is to reason with them. If we make separate rules for Scotland from those they have in England they will not recognise our Register. The result of that will be that we may as well have no Scottish Register. We shall not secure any additional advantages for our own nurses if we, at this time, present this Prayer and reject these Rules. There will be for a while no Register in Scotland, and after that an inferior Register, because it will not be recognised by England, and our nurses will go on the English Register, and all our efforts will be of no avail.

The Scottish nurses recognise that. I have here two communications from the Scottish nurses themselves. The first is from the nurses at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary. . . . These 237 nurses passed this Resolution :

"That we, nurses trained and in training in Glasgow Royal Infirmary, approve of the regulations drawn up by the General Nursing Council for Scotland for the admission of existing nurses to the Register, as already

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)