

## LABOUR MEMBERS AND THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL.

### UNCONSTITUTIONAL METHODS.

In the House of Commons on February 27th, three questions put to the Minister of Health in regard to the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, received a written answer from the Minister.

#### QUESTIONS.

MR. ALFRED DAVIES (Clitheroe) asked the Minister of Health whether he promised to sanction the new rule of the General Nursing Council before it was passed by the Council on the 17th instant; and, if not, can he explain why the chairman of the Council instantly convened a special meeting of the Council for the 24th instant to carry the new rule into effect, thereby assuming that sanction was assured?

MR. HAYDAY asked the Minister of Health whether he is aware of the wide-spread complaints regarding the treatment by many hospital matrons of the overworked nurses under their control; and whether, in view of the fact that the new rule passed by the General Nursing Council would tend to give the matrons on the General Nursing Council even greater, because more unrestrained, powers over the working nurses of the Kingdom who become registered under the Act, he will withhold his sanction of the rule?

MR. GRUNDY asked the Minister of Health whether he has received a rule passed by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales on the 17th instant, which rescinds a rule only laid before this House last November; whether this new rule provided for the dissolution of the committees of the Council which the existing rule arranged should continue to act until the present Council was dissolved not later than next December; whether he is aware of the allegation that the new rule was passed by the votes of matrons of hospitals and other employers of nurses with the object of excluding from the committees of the Council those representatives of working nurses who have been frequently compelled to criticise and oppose proposals which would have been injurious to the interests of working nurses; and whether, in view of the necessity of maintaining direct representation of working nurses, he will withhold his sanction to the proposed new rule until it has been laid upon the Table of this House for consideration?

#### ANSWER.

SIR A. MOND: The Chairman of the General Nursing Council consulted me as to these Amendments, and I informed him that I was prepared to sanction any rules consistent with the Act which the Council thought necessary to speed up registration and to secure an adequate electorate before the first elections to the Council are required by the Act to be held. These rules already provide for the annual re-election of committees

in the second and subsequent Councils, and the extension of this provision to the present Council is in accordance with the usual practice of similar bodies. The Council consider that a reconstitution of existing committees will expedite the formation of the register, and the experience of the last six months leads me to share their view. I strongly deprecate the suggestion that the matrons on the Council represent the interests of the employers, or that they are any less solicitous than other nurses for the welfare of the nursing profession, and I see no reason whatever for thinking that the new rule will be detrimental to the interests of working nurses.

It would be interesting to know upon what data Sir Alfred Mond has been induced to form a judgment on the question of "speeding up registration," and if he has been informed that Application Forms from Nurses have been held up in the office through lack of organisation, for two to three months before the reference papers have been issued, and that Certificates granted to Nurses by the Council in September were not ready for signature until the end of January? Moreover, that through the "strike" the Nurses' "interests" were ignored for ten weeks! We fear the working Nurses will not be content in the future to pay the crushing first-class expenses of Council meetings (anything from £50 to £70) if the business is already cut and dried outside between certain members and the Ministry. Such methods of business are entirely unconstitutional, and are an insult to members of a Statutory Body.

### COMING EVENTS.

*March 4th.*—Royal British Nurses' Association Club, 194, Queen's Gate, S.W.: London Temperance Hospital Nurses' League Dramatic Entertainment. 8.15 p.m.

*March 10th.*—Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council; Public Meeting to enter Protests (1) against the conduct of the members of the General Nursing Council who, by absenting themselves from the performance of their public duties for ten weeks, paralysed the business of the Council to the injury and discredit of the Nursing Profession; and (2) to object to the new Rules and Resolution carried by these members at a meeting of the Council on February 17th last, and to invite the Minister of Health to dissolve the Council so that the Registered Nurses may elect representatives in whom they have confidence. Chair, Councillor Beatrice Kent, President. 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, W. 7 p.m.

*March 11th.*—R.B.N.A. Club, 194, Queen's Gate, S.W.: Paper by Miss A. E. Macdonald, on "Mental Nursing along the Lines of Suggestion and Constructive Thought." 3 p.m.

*March 23rd.*—Central Midwives' Board: Monthly Meeting, 1, Queen Anne's Gate Buildings, S.W.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)