

be directed to submit to the Council through the Registration Committee, for their approval, all applications which are clearly in order and covered by previous decisions."

What could be clearer? This unconstitutional Instruction gives the Registrar the power of discretion, as to which applications she chooses to report to the Registration Committee, and commands the Registration Committee to recommend for approval to the Council all applications (of which it knows nothing) which are *in the judgment of the Registrar* in order. The Committee is *ordered* to examine *only* doubtful cases reported by the Registrar, so that Miss Swiss's statement that "any application would be forthcoming at any time for scrutiny by any member of the Registration Committee" is not in accordance with the Instruction (and is entirely contrary to its intention) as passed by the Council.

Was ever a Standing Committee of a Statutory Body placed in a more untenable position? Only persons totally devoid of any sense of personal responsibility and self respect would submit to it. —ED.]

THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE RULES FOR REGISTRATION.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Before I decided to register with the General Nursing Council, I carefully studied a copy of the Rules, and they appeared to me very just and fair. Now only a few months after they have been signed, and passed by Parliament I find from the reports in the press, certain members of the Council proposing to alter them and inaugurating a system of registration under which I for one should certainly not have placed my name on the Register. We were given to understand under Application Form 1 that our certificates and the certified copies thereof would be carefully scrutinised, and the latter filed in our office from which to compile a correct State Register and for future reference; and that references of recent work and character would be scrutinised by members of the Registration Committee as announced in the press. Now, if the Minister signs Dr. Goodall's new Rule, these safeguards may be dispensed with and our Register produced at great cost to us, will be quite unreliable and useless.

Why do the doctors on the Council need to interfere and cause confusion in such a matter of organisation? Surely, they are there for educational purposes. But I find from the report of the meeting on February 17th that one doctor—for a reason not far to seek—puts forward this new superficial arrangement, and another considered thoroughness "too costly," and argued that at the time when the Medical Acts (sixty years ago) and the Dentists' Acts were passed "everyone was taken in at one fell swoop." Well! we don't want all the V.A.D.s and Cottage nurse-midwives, and incompetent women—many of unreliable character—"swooped" into our Register (and why should not another new Rule be thrust upon us

to include them?). With safeguards removed we shall find it much more costly to remove black sheep than to systematically inspect documents, by which means the admission of doubtful persons to the Register is avoided.

I most strongly object to the Council shuffling off its responsibility in this connection to irresponsible Secretaries of Nurses' Societies who are not responsible to us or to Parliament, and for whose faulty memories and mistakes we shall have to pay. We are all well aware "College" tactics have brought about this proposal, and I strongly resent that preferential arrangements are to be made for its members to come on to the Register "with one fell swoop," without producing documentary evidence of their credentials to the General Nursing Council. It makes one fear that this new Rule is to save the face of persons of influential social position who made a pledge to "College" nurses they cannot redeem under the present Rules. Our Council has no right to condone such proceedings.

This gives one furiously to think! The General Nursing Council is a semi-judicial body and cannot be too careful not to give cause of offence in this connection. It is only by strict impartiality that it can inspire us registered nurses with confidence in its proceedings. We do not forget that it has disciplinary powers through which we may be removed from the Register. The present Rules governing the penal powers are very carefully drafted to ensure justice; but what guarantee have we who have registered under them that they will not be altered at any moment by "one fell swoop"? None; unless the Minister of Health puts his foot down and refuses further tinkering with the Rules. We do not hear of this policy in Scotland and Ireland, and it is high time the high-handed majority on the English Council realised we are not going to submit silently to it here. Amazing as it may seem to these members, the nursing profession does not regard them as indispensable.

I am glad to note that a Protest Meeting is to be held in London on March 10th, and sincerely hope those present will not hesitate to express the deep feeling of distrust with which recent events in the General Nursing Council have inspired many real registrationists.

Yours,

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NOTICE.

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OUR PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTION.

March 18th.—Describe the hygiene of ventilation as applied to the sick room and hospital ward.

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