

Register. When we thought of the labour, energy, money, self-sacrifice, and health expended to gain our Registration Act, it behoved us to jealously guard the purity of the Register.

The chairman expressed the opinion that in approving the Rule (Rule 9A) which authorised the new procedure the Minister of Health was acting unconstitutionally, as the Act provided that "the Council shall, before making any Rules under this Act with respect to the conditions of admission to the Register consult with any Nursing Councils which may be established by Parliament for Scotland and Ireland respectively." This had not been done in the present instance, and if the law maker became the law breaker what security was there for the rightful administration of the Act?

Statement by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick.

NOMINEE TO THE MINISTER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE FOR THE STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, who was the first speaker, presented an exhaustive Statement, surveying the cause for the whole controversy in the General Nursing Council.

We give here the briefest outline, as, by request of a large number of her colleagues, this Statement will be reprinted *in extenso*, so that the truth may be made known.

She prefaced her remarks by saying that the history of the movement for the State Registration of Nurses before the passing of the Nurses' Registration Acts on December 23rd, 1919, was within the cognisance of the members of the Nurses' Societies affiliated to the Central Committee, on behalf of which the Bill, which was drafted in 1910, was introduced annually into the House of Commons until 1914. It was therefore only necessary to recall the outstanding facts since that date.

1. In 1916 a Company of Laymen, Limited by Guarantee, was formed known as the College of Nursing Ltd., the constitution of which was almost identical with that drawn up by Sir Cooper Perry and others for an earlier society. Its initial purpose was not to obtain State Registration of Nurses; but, realising the feelings of the Nurses, it speedily adopted this policy, and drafted a Bill with this object, which proposed that the Council of the College should be incorporated in the Bill as the Governing Body of the Nursing Profession.

It was important to remember this fact, because the *causis belli* in the Nursing Profession to-day was the arrogant claim of the College of Nursing, Ltd., to assume its entire control. Although Parliament denied the right of the Council of the College to become the Governing Body of the Nursing Profession, and provided for an independent and impartial General Nursing Council in the Nurses' Registration Act, the officials of the College had never ceased to use their social influence in furthering their previous demand. The College also desired to control the affairs of the profession on its economic and benevolent sides, and to these claims the Free Nurses would never submit.

Moreover, trouble was bound to arise in the General Nursing Council when members of that Statutory Body were also on the Governing Body of a Limited Liability Company running a rival Register. It appeared impossible for them to be loyal to both.

MRS. FENWICK said that the members of the nurses' societies might rest assured that she and the three other members of the General Nursing Council belonging to societies affiliated to the Central Committee—Miss Villiers, Miss Macdonald, and Miss Cattell—were actuated solely by the consideration that, as members of a Nursing Council, set up under a Nursing Act, it was their duty to secure as much professional recognition as possible for the Profession of Nursing. That was their guiding principle throughout.

Unfortunately, the Council was not composed exclusively of nurses, out of a membership of twenty-five persons there were nine lay and medical members over whom the nursing profession had no control, although they had to pay their attendance expenses. But after giving hours and hours of anxious consideration to the construction of the Constitution and the Rules, they were satisfied when the Minister of Health signed the Rules on July 14th, 1921, that they were just and as good as they could hope to make them.

The troubles that had since arisen in the Council have been caused:—

1. By the proposal of Miss Cox Davies to deprive Nurses of the record of their certificates on the State Register, a proposal to which Mrs. Bedford Fenwick immediately took strong exception, and which was eventually defeated.

2. By the new Rule proposed by Dr. Goodall, authorising the acceptance by the Council of second-hand entrants.

3. By the new Rule, proposed by Miss Coulton, providing for the re-constitution of the Standing Committees; and

4. By the Instruction, proposed by Miss Cox Davies, the effect of which was to deprive the Registration Committee of the power to examine, and present to the Council for approval, the credentials and references of applicants for registration other than those which the Registrar, in her discretion, permitted them to inspect, the effect of the Instruction being to give absolute power to the Registrar to withhold from the Committee any applications which she considered in order, and to place the members of a Statutory Body in a most invidious position, by denying to them authority to carry out the responsibilities entrusted to them by Parliament.

5. The pre-arranged elimination of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick from the Registration Committee and its chair, and of Miss Villiers, the only expert in Fever Nursing, from the Education and Examination Committee, and Mrs. Bedford Fenwick and Miss MacCallum from the General Purposes Committee, which recommends officials and controls office expenditure.

MRS. FENWICK pointed out that the effect of placing Dr. Goodall in the Chair of the Registration Committee was that the certificates authorising

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