

## THE SCOTTISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

We print below two letters sent by the Scottish Nurses' Association on the subject of Rule 9 (A) passed by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales and approved by the Minister of Health, without reference to the General Nursing Councils for Scotland and Ireland.

LETTER SENT TO THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND.

SCOTTISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION,  
Glasgow.

April 10th, 1922.

The Secretary,  
The General Nursing Council for Scotland,  
13, Melville Street, Edinburgh.

THE REGISTER OF THE NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

SIR,—We are instructed by the Executive of the Scottish Nurses' Association to express our sense of the danger that the new Rule 9 (a), passed by the Nursing Council for England and Wales, offers a doorway for the admission to the English Register of Nurses who do not reach the standard, which the Scottish Council takes special pains to guard, and to express the opinion of the Executive that an unyielding attitude, in reference to this Rule, would be in accordance with the wishes of the great body of Scottish nurses.

We are, Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

(Signed) J. MCGREGOR-ROBERTSON, *President*.  
C. H. MCARA, *Secretary*.

LETTER SENT TO THE SCOTTISH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

GLASGOW, April 14th, 1922.

SIR,—We are instructed by the Executive of the Scottish Nurses' Association to beg your serious attention to the danger threatening Scottish Nurses by the operation of a new Rule—No. 9(a)—adopted by the General Nursing Council of England and Wales, and added to their Regulations for admission to the Register.

In accordance with the Nurses' Registration Act, the General Nursing Councils ought to consult one another in reference to the rules for registration. This new rule was adopted by the English Council without consultation with the Scottish Council; and, if reciprocity is maintained, nurses admitted to the English Register will be entitled to be admitted to the Scottish Register, if they wish, without further scrutiny of their qualifications.

Now by the new rule

"the Council may accept . . . where the applicant is a member of any organised body of nurses recognised for this purpose by the Council, a declaration signed by the Secretary or other responsible officer of that body that, on the admission of the applicant to membership, a certificate or a certified copy thereof was produced and was verified by that body."

This permits the delegation of the scrutiny of a nurse's qualifications to an official of a nurses' organisation, which may be a purely political body, and thus there

may easily be admitted to the Register, in large numbers, nurses of a lower standard than would be admitted after scrutiny by the Council itself.

In Scotland a nurse's certificates of qualification are carefully scrutinised by the Registrar and a Committee of the Nursing Council, and, if need be, verified by inquiry.

Under the new Rule nurses could evade this scrutiny, if members of an English Nursing Organisation, by gaining admission to the English Register and then, by the reciprocity rule, applying for transfer to the Scottish Register. It would thus be even possible for a nurse, rejected by the Scottish Council's scrutiny, in spite of it to gain access to the Scottish Register.

In any case the delegation to other organisations would inevitably lead to the degradation of the qualifying standard. It could not be expected that a nurses' organisation would guard the standard as the Nursing Council itself would be expected to do. The temptation to enlarge their membership by being able to boast of a large number placed on the Register could not be resisted.

But there is a more immediate and still more grave danger. The present Council is a nominated one, holding office till a Register has been created, by the votes of whose members an elected Council will replace the nominated one. Under the Act this election should take place in November. It will be possible under the new Rule—9 (a)—for a nurses' organisation with a large membership to rush on to the Register a sufficient number of voters to swamp the election.

It is not open to doubt that this is one of the main objects of those who have promoted the adoption of the new Rule; it is a renewal of the old fight, which everyone desirous of the real interests of nurses, apart from school or party, had hoped was ended by the passing of the Nurses' Registration Act.

It cannot be forgotten that the College of Nursing, Ltd., promoted a Bill for constituting themselves the Nursing Authority, not for England and Wales only but for the United Kingdom. By the operation of the new Rule they hope to be able to dominate the English Council by their nominees and so secure, in this indirect way, a large part of what Parliament refused to grant. There is no other nurses' organisation which, at the time of the passing of the Registration Act, could boast of a register of 16,000 members, members secured by the pledge that, on the passing of the Act,

"If you are on the College Register you will automatically and without further fee be placed upon the State Register when the Nurses' Registration Bill is passed."

Such a disaster in England to the nurses' cause, which the passing of the Act was supposed to have rendered secure, could not fail very seriously to affect the interests of Scottish nurses also; and the Scottish Nurses' Association, therefore, begs and hopes that Scottish Members of Parliament will bring such pressure to bear that it will be impossible for the majority of the English Nursing Council to bring their new Rule into operation.

We are, Sir, your obedient servants,  
J. MCGREGOR-ROBERTSON, M.A., M.B., F.R.S.E.,  
*President*,  
C. H. MCARA (Registered Nurse),  
*Secretary*.

We congratulate the Scottish Nurses' Association in the exceedingly able manner in which they have set out their case.

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