

the First State Examination" before the words "be eligible."

Dr. Bedford Pierce accepted this amendment and the recommendation was agreed.

The Report was adopted.

Resolution.

THE SCRUTINY OF APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRATION.

MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK then moved:—

"That, as four out of twenty applications for registration, passed as eligible by the Council on April 21st, and since scrutinised, have been found not to conform to the Statutory Rules, the instruction to the Registration Committee, granting discretion to the Registrar, passed by the Council on February 17th, 1922, be rescinded, and the former instruction, passed on July 14th, 1921, directing the Registration Committee to consider applications and scrutinise testimonials before recommending them to the Council for approval, be substituted for it; so that a correct Register may be compiled, in conformity with the Statutory Rules, and the Council be saved the risk of litigation under Section 8 (2) of the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919."

In moving the Resolution, Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK said that it was within the memory of the Council that at its last meeting a large number of applications for Registration were recommended as "in order." She had asked at the time whether the Registration Committee had considered the applications of nurses with conjoint certificates, to which a reply was given that the Rules had been complied with. She then asked whether the Applications were in the room for reference if necessary, and was informed that they were not, and she then gave notice that she would scrutinise certain of these Applications at the office.

In accordance with Rule 49 she examined twenty of the Applications with conjoint certificates passed by the Council on April 21st, recommended as "having been found to be in order"; she found that four of these did not conform to the new Statutory Rule. The Council had decided that to be eligible for registration applicants must hold a conjoint three years' certificate of training in a hospital for men and a hospital for women, not less than two years' training in one, and twelve months' in the other. She considered the fact that four applications out of twenty which were out of order had been passed by the Council for Registration proof positive of the need for further scrutiny. It was impossible that all this detailed work should be done by the Registrar. The Rule was distinct, requiring twelve months' training in a women's hospital, and the fact that in four instances out of twenty it had been disregarded and applicants recommended with only six months' training, was proof of the undesirability of handing over the compilation of the Register to one official without supervision.

Mrs. Fenwick enquired whether these four ladies had been notified that their applications had been accepted. She considered the position most dangerous. She maintained the present lack of supervision by the Registration Committee was

neglect of a public duty, and that a system which permitted such violation of Statutory Rules ought not to be condoned by the Council; a system should be in force which would protect the Council from litigation. No official could be penalised as the result of errors. The Council was responsible.

MISS MACCALLUM seconded the Resolution and enquired whether all the applications were scrutinised by the Registrar, or by clerks in the office.

DR. GOODALL, Chairman of the Registration committee, said that the Registrar scrutinised every one. As to the four applications to which Mrs. Bedford Fenwick had referred he would admit straight away that they did not conform to the Rules. The ladies in question had not been informed that their applications had been accepted, and, if necessary, they need not be so informed.

DR. GOODALL proceeded to inform the Council that all these particular forms had been scrutinised by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, put on one side, and deferred for the passing of the new Rule. The Registrar did not go through them. If any mistake had occurred it was not due to the Registrar, who, naturally, did not think of going beyond what the late Chairman had done.

One other point. The Instruction of the Council of July 14th, 1921, did not "direct" but "authorised" the Registration Committee to consider applications and scrutinise testimonials. The subsequent proceedings were rather peculiar. As a matter of fact members of the Council who were not members of the Registration Committee came and took part in the work.*

The mover of the Resolution had suggested that the Council might run some risk of a lawsuit under Section 8 (2) of the Nurses Registration Act, but that Section was governed by the word "wilfully," and unless "wilful" alteration could be proved any action at law would fall to the ground. This suggestion was, therefore, a mare's nest.

All people were liable to make mistakes—even the late Chairman of the Registration Committee. Out of persons put on the Register during the time she held office, there were several who, strictly speaking, were not eligible to go on. A nurse who had had previous training in an Eye Institution, and was then in a General Hospital from 1918-1919, but had not had the necessary subsequent experience, had gone on the Register absolutely against the Rules. A nurse who had had three years' training in an Infirmary, and only completed that training in 1920, had been put on as an "Existing Nurse," and so had got off with paying one guinea instead of the two guineas she should have paid as an Intermediate Nurse. A lady trained for three years in a hospital for men, and elsewhere for one year, was also registered. He was not going to blame the Registration Committee, or its late Chairman. Everybody was fallible. Mistakes had occurred,

* The authorisation of the Council that members should take part in scrutinising Applications are recorded on the Minutes of Meetings of the Council, October 28th and November 18th, 1921.—ED.

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