

A CAMPAIGN OF CALUMNY. A PERSONAL STATEMENT.

Many of my colleagues have evidently, from correspondence received, read with outraged feelings the report which appeared in this Journal last week of the proceedings of the Meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, held at the Ministry of Health on Friday, May 19th, and they are unanimous in condemning the disgraceful Perversion of the Truth put forward in excuse by the Chairman of the Registration Committee, supported by Sir Jenner Verrall and the more aggressive of the College Matrons' group—in defence of their policy to thrust upon the Nursing Profession, a Statutory Register containing the names of persons whose credentials have not been seen—and therefore not investigated—by members of the Statutory Body entrusted by Parliament with this public duty.

Inaccurate Information Supplied to Minister.

It will be within the memory of the readers of this Journal that when the Minister of Health supported the new Rules in the House of Commons, to which a large section of the Nursing Profession took strong exception—he did so—as we proved at the time, upon inaccurate information, presumably furnished to him from an official source, placing the blame for the inexcusable delay in registering applicants, upon myself—as Chairman of the Registration Committee—instead of upon the person responsible for organising the office work, so that the evidence required under the Statutory Rules for scrutinising credentials and references by members of the Council authorised to inspect them, should be available.

In the first instance Sir Alfred Mond was led to misinform the House of Commons on the number of persons registered. He stated that only 1,500, instead of close on 3,000 nurses had been registered between September, 1921, and March, 1922. And, secondly, he made the unjustifiable statement that this failure to register applicants was the result of the "meticulous and ridiculous" method pursued by myself.

The reason applicants were not registered was that for want of efficient organisation in the office the references required by the Rules were not to hand—so that in March some 1,400 applications were lying in the office, some having been waiting for months, which I, with the help of my colleagues on the Council, could have easily scrutinised and submitted to the Registration Committee for recommendation to the Council for registration had they been in order.

I therefore again repudiate these mendacious excuses supplied to, and presumably used in ignorance by, the Minister of Health, in his determined support of the new Rules, as calculated and intended to injure my professional reputation.

The new Rule drafted with the intention of removing from office, members of the Council who were in opposition to the bureaucratic and disastrous policy of the ignorant majority of the Council, has fulfilled that object, and I have been

removed from the Chair of the Registration Committee, to make room for Dr. E. W. Goodall, who took such an active, if somewhat secretive, part in creating the vacancy!

Thus, from February 25th last, I have had no responsibility whatever for the persons recommended for registration, and decline to be made responsible for the inevitable inefficiency of the new system—giving discretion to one official, and making it practically possible to compile a State Register of persons concerning whose credentials and characters members of the Council know nothing.

The Question of Conjoint Certificates.

On September 30th, 1921, the first list of applicants for registration were recommended to the Council, and amongst those approved was a Nurse holding a three years' conjoint certificate from the Dreadnought Hospital, Greenwich, a general hospital for men, and the Hospital for Women, Soho Square, W.

At a future meeting the Registration Committee had under consideration the question of such conjoint certificates. It was agreed that such training was not strictly in conformance with the letter of the law of the Statutory Rules, although the Rules did not define a general hospital as one for both sexes.

To remove ambiguity and do justice to these experienced nurses, I proposed that a Rule should be drafted to cover their special case. This was agreed, and I drafted a Rule which was submitted to and approved by the Council, was submitted to the Scottish and Irish Nursing Councils; and both bodies subsequently notified the English Council that they had no objection to it. The Rule was then submitted for the approval of the Minister of Health, returned with a slight amendment and was agreed to by the Council on March 17th last in the following form:—

(a.a) A certificate or certificates that the applicant has before the 1st November, 1919, had not less than two years' training in a Hospital for Men only approved by the Council for training, and not less than one year's training in a Hospital for Women only similarly approved, or alternatively, not less than two years' training in a Hospital for Women only approved by the Council for training, and not less than one year's training in a hospital for Men only similarly approved.

The Rule applies to Existing and Intermediate Nurses.

During these deliberations, covering a period of five months, a certain number of applications from Nurses holding the Dreadnought Hospital conjoint Certificate were received. The copies of these certificates were, presumably verified by the Registrar, but when such applications were, amongst others, down on the list for scrutiny by members of the Council they were put aside until they were eligible for consideration under a new Rule approved by the Minister, and a note to this effect—*referring them for future consideration*—was made on the Pass List, and often an additional chit to this effect was pinned on to the referred Form:—

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)