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EDITORIAL.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY.

We ask our readers to study carefully the Report of the proceedings of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales on September 22nd, more especially in relation to the Syllabus of Training in General Nursing, and the proposal, on the recommendation of a meeting of four members of the Education and Examination Committee, at which there was not a quorum, to discard this Syllabus, and to put forward authoritatively only the Examination Syllabus, with the Nurses' Chart attached. The members of the Committee making this recommendation were the Chairman of the Council, Lady Hobhouse, Miss Seymour Yapp, and Dr. Goodall, Dr. Goodall being the only member of the Education Committee which drew up the Syllabus of Training.

The object of the Nurses' Registration Act, to obtain which trained nurses worked for over thirty years, was not merely to secure the publication of the names of nurses in a Register, but to establish a minimum standard of nursing education qualifying for admission thereto, and the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, places upon the General Nursing Council for England and Wales the duty of regulating the conditions of admission to the Register; and of regulating the conduct of any examinations which may be prescribed as a condition of admission to the Register, and any matters ancillary to, or connected with, any such examinations. This the Education Committee has done, and incorporated the standard of education which it considered adequate in the Syllabus of Training. This standard was unanimously approved by the Council, and submitted to the Minister of Health for his approval and signature. It is noteworthy in this connection that at the meeting of the General Nursing Council on July 14th, 1921, when the amended Syllabus was adopted, Dr. Goodall expressed the opinion that "those who opposed the Syllabus had not properly studied it. Opposition must be expected in

these days whenever any advance was proposed. If he had to choose a Syllabus he would choose this one."

To deprive the Nursing Profession of the benefit of this Syllabus because there is some opposition would be an injustice as great, if not greater, than the proposal to deprive Registered Nurses of the record of their certificates on the published Register.

It must be remembered that the Syllabus of Training is not intended for probationers in training, but as a guide to those responsible for the training of nurses, and incorporates the considered opinion of the body authorised by Parliament to control Nursing Education as to the lines on which the subjects contained in the Syllabus of Examination can best be taught. As Sir Jenner Verrall pointed out at the meeting of the Council on September 22nd, the Syllabus of Training, and the Syllabus of Examination, stand or fall together.

This is evidently realised by the Minister of Health, who, when the Syllabus of Training was submitted for his signature, informed the Council that he preferred to defer signing it until he had before him the Syllabus of Examination.

Upon the Minister, therefore, devolves the responsibility of approving, or otherwise, the Syllabus of Training. It has been presented to him as incorporating the expert opinion of the General Nursing Council as to what is necessary for the efficiency of Registered Nurses, and the Council, at its meeting on September 22nd, declined to recede from this position, on the recommendation of a few members of the Education Committee who did not take part in framing it.

Public and professional confidence in the General Nursing Council for England and Wales is already badly shaken. What respect can it expect, what respect would it deserve, if, in a craven fear of an uninformed agitation, it hauled down its colours, and, having unanimously approved the Syllabus, and asked the Minister of Health to approve it, it now asked him not to sanction it? Action so invertebrate, and lacking in principle, would deserve the contempt which it would assuredly receive.

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