

A BREACH OF FAITH WITH NURSES ON THE GENERAL REGISTER.

The following Statement was forwarded by the Secretary, on December 21st, to the Minister of Health, on behalf of the Committee of the Registered Nurses' Society, 431, Oxford Street, London, W.1, which is of opinion that the new Rule recommended by Dr. Goodall and the Registration Committee, and agreed to by a majority of only two votes by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales at its meeting on December 15th, would, if approved by the Minister of Health, constitute a very serious breach of agreement with the Nurses registered on the General Part of the Register under the present Rules to which they have agreed.

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE REGISTERED NURSES' SOCIETY.

(A Society of Thoroughly Trained Nurses Engaged
in Private Practice.)

The Registered Nurses' Society was founded 28 years ago to supply nurses to the public who have had at least three years' training in General Hospitals of high reputation, and to secure for the nurses full remuneration for their work.

Since the passing of the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, it requires as a condition of membership of the staff that nurses should be registered by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

THE PROPOSED NEW RULE OF THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL.

In the opinion of my Committee the adoption by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales of Rule 21 (3) (d) of the Scottish Rules, as passed at its meeting on December 15th, would be most detrimental to the interests of the public and of the nurses.

My Committee is aware that during the two years' term of grace nurses must be admitted to the Register who have not attained the standard to be enforced after July 14th, 1923. At the same time, they considered it right that all members of the staff should register in order to give the public the guarantee of the State that they have "adequate knowledge and experience of the nursing of the sick." (Nurses' Registration Act, Section 3 (2) (c).

REGISTRATION OPTIONAL, NOT COMPULSORY.

As unregistered nurses are not prohibited from practising for gain, but only from taking or using the title of "Registered Nurse," it was possible from the first under the Nurses' Registration Act to protect the public from dangerously inefficient nursing, and the Registered Nurses from the economic competition of totally untrained persons.

THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATION.

The minimum qualification for admission to the General Part of the Register agreed upon by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and incorporated in the Rules signed by the late Minister of Health was:—(Rule 9 (1) (b))

"Evidence that the applicant has had not less than one year's training in a Hospital or Infirmary approved by the Council as aforesaid, together with evidence that she has subsequently been *bona fide* engaged in practice as a Nurse in attendance on the sick for not less than two years before the 1st November, 1919."

REGISTRATION, ON THE STATE GUARANTEE OF A MINIMUM STANDARD OF GENERAL TRAINING.

On the strength of this Rule the members of the staff of the Registered Nurses' Society had their names enrolled on the State Register, although many of them consider this minimum standard insufficient, even during the period of grace, as the great majority of General Hospitals and Poor Law Infirmarys had required their nurses to attain the standard of three years' training and certification, for at least a quarter of a century before the Act was passed.

NEW RULE IS DIRECTLY OPPOSED TO RULE 9 (1) (b).

The new Rule passed by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales at its last meeting which apparently has not been given any number in the English Rules, would take away the minimum amount of protection afforded by Rule 9 (1) (b), and would enable nurses to be admitted to the General Part of the Register who have had no general training—specialists whose qualifications are not sufficient to admit them to the Supplementary Parts of the Register for the speciality in which they are engaged, women who may never have been trained in a hospital at all, but have had partial experience in private nursing homes, military hospitals, special hospitals, and in district nursing, thus throwing the General Part of the Trained Nurses' Register open to semi-trained specialists of all classes.

PRINCIPLE INVOLVED IN THE RECOGNITION OF PRIVATE NURSING HOMES.

In regard to the recognition of Private Nursing Homes as Training Schools, several points are involved.

Cases are not admitted or classified from the point of view of clinical teaching but merely from that of profit, nor are the nurses systematically taught the theory and practice of Nursing. In many such Homes the standard of nursing is deplorably low, and their organisation has long called for State regulation.

Further, the public pay highly for admission to Nursing Homes in order that they may receive skilled nursing, and we beg the Minister, in the public interest, not to sanction a practice whereby the proprietor of a Nursing Home may, on the one hand, receive exorbitant fees for providing a patient with skilled nursing and, on the other, for the sake of obtaining cheap labour, and thus increased profits, employ unskilled probationers.

IMPORTANCE OF ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF PRIVATE NURSES.

It is of the utmost importance that an adequate supply of well-trained nurses should be available

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