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## EDITORIAL.

### AN INEXCUSABLE APPOINTMENT.

When the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, in February last, gave the now notorious "Instruction" to the Registration Committee, in connection with applications for Registration, "to examine only those cases which were submitted to them by the Registrar as being doubtful," it was evident that the last had not been heard of this matter. In the first place, it reversed the Instructions given to the Registration Committee on July 14th of last year—on which day the Rules framed by the Council under the Nurses' Registration Act were signed by the Minister of Health, and the State Register of Nurses opened—authorising the Committee to consider applications for Registration, and to scrutinize testimonials as to character and professional efficiency; and, secondly, it placed upon the Registrar the duty of examining in detail the majority of applications. Presumably the Council will now realise how much devoted and expert service was rendered gratuitously in this connection by a few members of the Registration Committee.

At the meeting of the Council on July 21st (as reported on page 85) the Council was informed by the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee that it considered essential the appointment of a Secretary to the Registrar, this notwithstanding that a clerical staff numbering in all 18 persons—and including an Assistant Registrar, a Registration Clerk, and a skilled stenographer—is already provided for the working of the office, at a cost of £60 a week.

The Committee not only recommended the creation of this new post, but, it transpired at the meeting, that before asking the Council to authorise the appointment it had interviewed a lady in respect to the post, and recommended that Miss Darbyshire should be appointed from September 1st to this position, at a salary of £250 per annum.

When it was pointed out that if the post were created it should be advertised, according to precedent in appointing to vacancies for the senior posts filled by nurses, the majority of the Council voted against the proposal, when attention was drawn to the decision of the Council (on the recommendation of the Finance Committee) as recently as May 19th, "that prior to engagement all applicants for employment by the Council shall produce a certificate of health," this also was ignored, though it was known that the lady recommended had had two serious illnesses recently; when it was urged that if the Council appointed a Secretary to the Registrar she should have had secretarial training, and Miss Macdonald, after repeated questions, elicited the fact that the nominee of the General Purposes Committee had had none, this was discounted; and the report of the Finance Committee that the proposal had been before it, and that it had withheld its approval was ignored. The fact that the lady recommended was a close personal friend of the Registrar appeared to be the dominating factor, and the recommendation was approved.

As the point was made that it was not necessary to advertise the post because the permanent reorganisation of the office staff would be left to the new Council, we may direct attention to the terms of the recommendation under which Miss Darbyshire's appointment has been sanctioned. It makes no mention of a temporary arrangement, but expressly provides "that the post be offered to Miss Darbyshire, at a salary of (not at the rate of) £250 per annum."

The officers employed by the Council are subject to the consent of the Minister of Health as to numbers, and it is high time that a secretarial expert examined and reported on the number of staff required for the efficient working of the office of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and that the Geddes axe should fall on any in excess of that number.

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