

## NURSING IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

## Scottish Nursing Council.

RULE 9 (A).

FEBRUARY 22nd.

MR. R. YOUNG (Lab., Newton) asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department, as representing the Ministry of Health, whether he is aware that under Rule 9 (A), passed by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and approved by his predecessor, members of the College of Nursing, an organisation representing employers and hospital officials, have the right to be placed upon the Register without producing their qualifications as all other nurses are required to do; and that the Scottish Nursing Council have refused to recognise this rule, with the result that there is no reciprocity of registration, as provided in the Act; and whether he will take steps to have this rule reconsidered.

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks: The hon. Member is under a misapprehension as to the effect of Rule 9 (A), which does not confer any such right on the College of Nursing, but merely provides members of any organised body of nurses recognised by the Council with an alternative method of proving that they possess the necessary qualification. It is the case that the Scottish Council objected to the rule, but my right hon. Friend is not aware that they have refused any application for admission to the Scottish Register in virtue of an English registration. This rule, which was confirmed by a vote of the House last year, cannot now be rescinded except by the Council itself.

*Remarks.*—Sir W. Joynson-Hicks's reply to Mr. R. Young would have been more accurate if he had informed him that Rule 9 (A) was drafted, with the approval of the Ministry of Health, to facilitate placing members of the College of Nursing, Ltd., on to the Register *out of their turn*, in time to record their votes for College candidates at the recent election, and that, with the exception of a little League of Nurses from the Royal Free Hospital and the College Company, no other Society of Nurses would avail themselves of the preferential system of placing second-hand entrants on to the Nurses' Register. They claimed that the highly-paid officials responsible to the Council, should secure credentials *first-hand*.

The Ministry of Health, in its reply to Mr. Young, evades the question of the College of Nursing representing employers and hospital officials, and did not inform him that four out of five Executive Officers are male employers—the Treasurer of St. Thomas' Hospital, the late Medical Superintendent of Guy's Hospital, a surgeon on the staff of Middlesex Hospital, and a financier on the Committee of the London Hospital, together with a past Matron-in-Chief! Moreover, with the exception of three amenable nurses, the rest of the Council is composed of leisured women of title, doctors, and Matrons.

Rule 9 (A) was specially designed to give preferential treatment to College members by exempting them from producing direct personal evidence of training and certification to the officials

responsible to the General Nursing Council. Such nurses are accepted for registration as second-hand entrants, with very little trouble to themselves, whilst nurses who refused to be coerced into becoming members of the College have to present original certificates or certified copies of the same—a most unjust discrimination.

The Scottish Council refused reciprocity with the English Council under this tricky Rule 9 (A) on the following unassailable grounds:—

The Registrar of the Council for Scotland wrote:

"My Council do not feel able to pass any similar resolution. They are not aware of the list of organised bodies of Nurses whom you propose to accept, and they feel that in any event the proposal forms a delegation of the statutory duties of the Council, and is likely to lead to many unnecessary difficulties. I am instructed to state that my Council trust that, on reconsideration, your Council will withdraw that part of the proposed new Rule, and I am to add that meantime my Council have not thought fit to adopt any reciprocity Rule. It is evident that to do so would be equivalent in the present state of your Rules to allow Scottish Nurses to register in England and transfer their registration here without ever producing the original training Certificate, or even a duly certified copy thereof."

Rule 9 (A) was thrust through Parliament by Sir Alfred Mond, in spite of the objection of the Scottish Council—although it was therefore *ultra vires*—and he threatened to have the Nurses' Registration Act annulled if it was not agreed to; a threat which aroused the deepest indignation amongst the *British* nurses, who had worked for years and paid not less than £30,000 for their Act, owing to the bitter opposition of the Training Schools to State Organisation of Nursing.

## General Nursing Council.

THE NURSE PAYS.

FEBRUARY 28th.

MR. J. WIGNALL (Lab., Forest of Dean) asked the representative of the Ministry of Health whether, in view of the fact that the whole of the expense connected with the General Nursing Council is paid for by the Registered Nurses, there being no State subsidy for its upkeep, the Chairman, who was also Returning Officer, and therefore responsible for the mismanagement which rendered the second election necessary, is to be asked to reimburse the money thus wasted; or will the nurses, who were deprived of all knowledge and control with regard to this matter, be obliged to bear the cost?

Viscount Wolmer: Such additional expenditure as is not recoverable from the distributing agency responsible for the miscarriage of the voting papers will fall upon the funds of the Council. The Council have not suggested that any part of the loss shall be borne by the Returning Officer, and my right hon. Friend would not regard such a suggestion as equitable or in accordance with the practice of similar bodies.

*Remarks.*—The Returning Officer—the Chairman of the Council—assumed most dictatorial authority

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