

## GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

### RIGHT OF "PRESCRIBED TRAINING" IN DANGER.

The Agenda of the forthcoming Meeting of the General Nursing Council, to be held on March 16th, is a very innocuous sheet. The custom now of giving no details under Correspondence, and referring all letters for consideration, unread, to Standing Committees, renders it impossible, as intended, for the press to acquaint the public with the details and progress of business, and permits most important matters to be privately discussed, and Rules affecting the Nursing Profession agreed on and passed by the Council by merely adopting the Standing Committee's Reports. This stultification of the use of the press is the policy of the autocratic methods of present management.

We warn the Nursing Profession that their Right to a Prescribed Training for the General Part of the Register, granted to them by Parliament in their Registration Act, is in danger, and we advise Independent members of the Council that the utmost vigilance on their part is necessary, if they are not to be misled by some tricky recommendation agreed to and put forward by the majority. The issue is clear.

Demand that the principle of a "prescribed scheme of training" be agreed. Inquire what modifications are required in the accepted "Syllabus of Training" so that the Minister of Health will sign it, and that it may thereupon receive the approval of Parliament as a Statutory Rule. Any proposal to evade this procedure means that a "Syllabus of Training" merely accepted, and put forward, by the General Nursing Council has no more force than any other pious expression of *private opinion*.

The policy of the Chairman and the majority of the new Council is apparently to deprive the Nursing Profession of the most important privilege granted to it in the Act—a legalised Standard of Nursing Education before Examination and Registration, and there is little doubt that the Ministry of Health is also implicated in this policy. The sad ignorance of the majority of the nurses lends itself to the indefensible legerdemain, by which its dictators may evade not only the intention but the letter of the law.

General nurses have the same right to the "prescribed Syllabus of Training" secured to nurses registered on the Supplementary Parts of the Register, and it is their duty to demand and secure it. Fortunately Acts of

Parliament can be debated on the floor of the House, and it is probable that further evasion upon the part of the General Nursing Council, at the dictation of the College of Nursing, Ltd., and the Poor Law Guardians' Union, will have to defend its illegal proceedings outside the Whitehall Star Chamber.

### THE RETENTION FEE.

We have been asked by the General Nursing Council to remind Nurses "that the Nurses' Registration Act provides that there shall be paid to the Council a fee in respect of the retention in any year of the name of any person on the Register, and that the amount of the fee shall not exceed two shillings and sixpence (Nurses' Registration Act, 5 (1)). The fee is prepaid for the issue of the Register next ensuing."

We thoroughly approve of a retention fee for registration, as it is the best way of keeping the addresses correct, but naturally Nurses who registered in 1921 under the agreement that the Register was to be published as soon after July 1st, 1922, as possible, have a very real grievance that, twice postponed, the Register is not yet published in March, 1923. With the enormous clerical staff employed at Headquarters, some thirty officials we believe, it is simply inexcusable that the Register is not yet in print, and available for professional purposes. Thousands of pounds have already been expended in its compilation—one wonders how many more thousands will be squandered before any practical benefit to Registered Nurses will result.

Many Nurses are determined not to send another penny until the Register is published, and one cannot blame their resentment in this matter.

The General Nursing Council for Scotland remitted the retention fee for 1922 as the Register was not published in that year. The Scottish Rules provide that "the Register shall be made up to December 31st in each year, and shall, if the Council so determine, be published as soon as possible thereafter."

Now that the English Register is eight months late it would be well to alter the date for publishing the Register, making it uniform with Scotland and Ireland, and that all nurses registered between July and December, 1922, should be included. Thus the first issue of the State Register would not be flooded with *bona fides*, should the College of Nursing, Ltd., succeed in its present attempt to make women with no hospital training eligible for Registration.

## THE NEW MINISTER OF HEALTH AND THE NURSING PROFESSION.

The King held a Privy Council at Buckingham Palace on Monday, when Mr. Neville Chamberlain was sworn as Minister of Health, and we wish him well in a difficult task.

This appointment is of great importance to the

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