

being a general hospital, which proves to their satisfaction that it provided adequate training in nursing, either separately or in conjunction with other hospitals, and such approval may be limited to such periods as the Council may determine."

The Minister anticipates that the adoption, after consultation with the other Councils, of such a proviso purely for the purpose of removing the doubt as to the construction of the paragraph would not raise any controversial issues.

The Minister recognises, however, that the Council may also have had in view the need of giving more elasticity to the existing rules, and that the adoption of the proviso above suggested by itself would not meet all the cases for which the Council desires to provide. I am, however, to point out that the Rule 9c is open to objection on grounds of drafting, since its language is so vague and so wide as to leave it uncertain what standard the Council propose to adopt in dealing with applications for admission to the Register during the remainder of the period allowed for the registration of existing nurses. The Minister feels bound to inform the Council that strong representations have been made to him by certain nursing organisations that the wording of the rule and particularly the use of the vague term "institution," has given rise to the apprehension in some quarters that the Council contemplated the admission of V.A.D.s trained during the war in Auxiliary Hospitals. The Minister understands that in fact no such intention has ever been entertained by the Council, but he feels sure that they will appreciate the unwisdom of seeking powers far in excess of any which they in fact desire to exercise. Such a course is bound to give rise to misconceptions and uneasiness in the minds of nurses who have already registered or contemplate registration.

The Minister is not unmindful that the intention of Parliament was undoubtedly that existing nurses should be admitted on the most generous terms compatible with the due protection of the public; and he entirely shares what he takes to be the feeling of the Council that the application of the existing rules may result in injustice to individuals whose right to registration would be generally admitted by the nursing profession.

At the same time, it has been represented that a very large number of nurses have now applied for registration on the basis of the existing rules and that it would be inequitable at this late stage to make any substantial alteration, unless it was clearly endorsed by the bulk of the profession. The Minister cannot but recognise the force of this contention, and for this reason he feels strongly that the draft rule should be re-considered by the newly-elected Council. The right of the new Council, whose nurse members are fresh from their constituencies, to speak on behalf of the profession cannot be seriously questioned, and the Minister will be prepared to give sympathetic consideration to any proposals which they may make, after consultation with the other Councils concerned, with the object of rendering the rules more elastic; but at the same time he would urge upon them the unwisdom of seeking wider powers than they anticipate in the light of past experience they will require to exercise.

I am, Madam,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) L. G. BROCK.

LETTER FROM THE COLLEGE OF NURSING, LTD.

29th December, 1922.

DEAR SIR,—The Council of this College has received numerous complaints regarding the undue stringency

with which the General Nursing Council is alleged to have carried out the provisions of the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, concerned with "Existing Nurses" and the class of nurses now known as "Intermediate." The Council is in entire sympathy with these complaints, and begs respectfully to urge that the door of admission to the first State Register should not be closed to any "Existing Nurses" who can show that they were in *bona fide* practice as nurses of the sick for three years before November, 1919, and that they possess adequate knowledge and experience of the nursing of the sick, however such knowledge and experience may have been acquired. They believe that a result fairer and more substantially just will be attained in the compilation of the Register if individual applications are judged on their merits rather than if an attempt is made to discriminate between applicants by a rigid system of rules which, even if suitable to present conditions, cannot equitably be enforced in the case of nurses who entered on their careers in some cases many years before any uniform system of training or standard of education had been evolved in the Nursing Profession.

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

(Sd.) M. S. RUNDLE, *Secretary*.

The Committee recommended—

(a) That the following rule be approved by the Council, and if agreed to by the Scottish Council, submitted to the Minister of Health for his approval, together with a copy of this report.*

"Rule 9 r (g).—In the case of a nurse who was at 1st November, 1919, engaged in actual practice, and who was also *bona fide* engaged in nursing prior to 1st January, 1900, and who does not comply with the above requirements, such special evidence of knowledge and experience as may be accepted by the Council in each individual case."

The Report further stated:—

The Committee think it desirable to point out to the Council the fact that the rule now proposed is a rule which was included by the Scottish Council in the first draft of their rules submitted about two and a-half years ago. The English Council did not then see their way to agree with it. The Committee are of opinion that the experience of registration gained since that date, and especially the adoption of a very lenient condition (one year's training in a hospital of not less than ten beds with two years' subsequent experience of nursing), under which many nurses have been admitted to the Register as "Trained" and even "Certificated" nurses, justify them in advising the Council now to approve the rule. Moreover, as is pointed out in the Ministry's letter, the majority of the present Council have recently been elected and their right to speak on this subject, on behalf of the profession, cannot be seriously questioned.

IV.—PROPOSED NEW RULE 9.C.

Considered.—Letter from the Ministry of Health dated February 7th, 1923, referred to the Registration Committee by the Council at its meeting on

* Item III of the Report of the Registration Committee, which deals at length with the question of the admission of *bona fide* nurses to Registration.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)