

infirmery, followed by two years' experience before November 1st, 1919—a very low standard when it is realised that in most hospitals of repute the three years' standard of training and certification has been in force for at least thirty years.

Moreover, the Act prohibits no one from nursing for gain, but only provides penalties for the unlawful use of the name or title of "registered nurse."

The attention of the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council has been called to two recent proposals.

1. *Draft Rule 9 (1) (g)*. Approved by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, at its meeting on March 16th ult., which, it is understood, has not yet been approved by the Minister of Health.

"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."

This Rule, if approved, would open the General Part of the Register to numbers of nurses who have not had the minimum training defined in Rule 9 (1) (b) which, as already pointed out, has been approved by Parliament, and on the strength of which some 20,000 nurses have applied and paid for Registration. Many of them would certainly not have done so had the General Nursing Council for England and Wales stated that they proposed to open the General Part of the Register to untrained persons, and, by giving them this status, which they have not earned, would place them in professional and economic competition with nurses who have conscientiously qualified themselves for the performance of their responsible duties, and would mislead the public.

In this connection we desire to draw attention to the following paragraph in a letter addressed by the late Minister of Health to the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, dated February 7th, in relation to the minimum qualification for the admission of an Existing Nurse to the Register:—

"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." . . .

The second proposal for "widening the power of access to the first Register for Exist-

ing Nurses" emanates from the Parliamentary Medical Committee, the effect of which would be to flood the Register with every class of untrained nurse, village nurses, cottage nurses, women who without previous experience have been employed as nurses in private nursing homes, which profess to supply the patients with skilled nursing and charge fees on this basis, V.A.D.s, and others, and thus place them on economic equality with Registered Nurses.

Both these proposals, in the opinion of the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council, contravene the intention of the Nurses' Registration Act, which requires the General Nursing Council to satisfy itself that applicants for Registration have "adequate knowledge and experience of the nursing of the sick"; and it is open to legal argument whether, if such breaches of faith with Registered Nurses occur, those already registered, who wish to remove their names from the Register, are entitled to recover the fees paid by them to the Council, on the guarantee of the present Rules.

In this connection the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council desires to inform the Parliamentary Medical Committee that the First Register of Nurses has already been published, and is obtainable from the offices of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

The Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council begs, further, to point out that if the suggestion of the Parliamentary Medical Committee were carried into effect, there would no longer be any necessity for the Supplementary Registers provided for in the Nurses Registration Act, since all "Existing Nurses," ineligible for the Supplementary Parts of the Register, for which they have had insufficient training or experience, will be eligible for the General Part of the Register, from which, consequently, it will be obviously unfair to exclude those who are qualified for the Supplementary Parts.

That the Rule, as drafted by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, applies only to the General Part of the Register, the standards defined for the Supplementary Parts of the Register remaining intact. It is obviously most unjust that specialist applicants, ineligible for the Supplementary Parts of the Register, should be admitted to, and thus degrade, the General Part of the Register, which is largely composed of the most highly skilled nurses in the profession.

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