

## NURSING IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

## THE GREAT BETRAYAL.

On Wednesday, June 13th, at 11 p.m., in accordance with notice, Dr. Chapple, M.P., moved that an humble Address be presented to His Majesty praying that the Amendment laid on the 28th day of May, 1923, of Rule 9 of Rules under the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, be modified.

We print an abridged report of the proceedings from the Official Report, Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 13th June, 1923.

## OFFICIAL REPORT.

[ABRIDGED.]

## Nurses' Registration Act, 1919.

(The following Notice of Motion as it stood on the Order Paper in the name of Dr. Chapple was not in order, but by leave of the Deputy-Speaker he was permitted to move it in an alternative form.)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The Motion for an Address, as it appears on the Paper, is not in order, but the hon. Member for Dumfries (Dr. Chapple) has presented me with an alternative form, and I call upon him to move it in that form.

DR. CHAPPLE: I beg to move

"That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty praying that the Amendment laid on the 28th day of May, 1923, of Rule 9 of Rules under the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, be modified as follows:—

In line 2, by leaving out '1919,' and inserting '1916'; and by leaving out from 'who,' to the end of the Rule, and inserting 'produces the following evidences of knowledge and experience:—

- (a) a certificate of good character;
- (b) a certificate signed by a matron of a general hospital or an infirmary or by two medical men setting out that the applicant has been in attendance upon the sick in the capacity of a nurse for a period of not less than three years prior to the 1st November, 1919; and
- (c) a certificate signed by a registered nurse and by two medical men, one of whom shall be on the staff of a general hospital, setting out that the applicant has adequate knowledge and experience of medical and surgical nursing, and is competent to attend upon the sick in the capacity of a nurse.

Provided that the council may require the applicant, as a condition precedent to registration, to present herself for special inquiry before a medical officer, or officers, appointed by the council."

This Address raises a very important and very grave problem that I will endeavour to deal with as briefly as is consistent with clearness. The Nurses' Registration Act was passed in 1919, and made provision for existing nurses.

. . . This Act makes provision for the future training and future registration of nurses. Many other Acts have made a similar provision. The Medical Act made provision for the training and registration of doctors, and the same thing occurred in the case of the Act dealing with

veterinary surgeons. Every Act of this kind which has been passed has made provision for those practising *bona fide* at the time the Act was passed. Every Act of this kind confers a status upon a certain class, and it says that they shall be registered. By virtue of that it says that certain people are not registered, and therefore they are not competent. It does something for those that are competent and excludes those that are not competent. It is not correct to say that you are simply conferring a privilege on one class, because you are conferring a disability on the class that is excluded. Every Registration Act has laid down before that those who are *bona fide* qualified under the old *régime* and practising their calling shall not be asked to suffer this disqualification and be disqualified from carrying on their calling.

SIR HENRY CRAIK: May I ask the hon. Member, before entering into a discussion, to state what are the alterations in the proposal on the Paper which he wishes to make?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It is quite in order to put that question if the hon. Member for Dumfries gives way, but, at the same time, the hon. Member is also entitled to state it at his own time.

DR. CHAPPLE: I am only anxious to make the thing clear. I take the existing Rule that has been laid down on behalf of the General Nursing Council and leave out the date "1919," and I put in the date "1916." The second part of the Rule states that the knowledge and experience which an applicant has must be satisfactory to the Council. I simply state what that knowledge and experience should be instead of leaving it to the Council. I say that an applicant should present three certificates. The first, a certificate of good character; the second, one signed by a matron of a general hospital or infirmary and two medical men, stating that the applicant has had three years' *bona fide* practice nursing the sick before the 1st November, 1919. The third certificate must be signed by a registered nurse and two medical men, one of whom shall be upon the staff of a general hospital, that she is competent to nurse the sick both in surgery and medicine. I add the proviso that the Nursing Council can, if they are not satisfied with these certificates, call upon the applicant to present herself and have her certificate and character and qualifications inquired into by a medical officer or the medical officer upon the Council, so that I take more precautions to prevent any applicant who is not qualified in every respect than were ever taken in any Registration Act before. No Act passed in this House or in any other House that I know of has ever demanded more or as much as I demand in this Amendment. This is to prevent anyone who is not a qualified nurse and who has not been in practice for three years before November, 1919, and who cannot present all these certificates, being on the register.

I want to emphasise that the Act has made provision already for this class of applicant. It sets out that there must be certificates of training and qualifications for future nurses, but that for

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