

## THE COLLEGE CLIMBS DOWN.

We have received from Miss M. S. Rundle, Secretary of the College of Nursing, Ltd., a lengthy statement repudiating Dr. Chapple's claim in the House of Commons on June 13th that

"The Nursing College Council has expressed itself as in entire sympathy with the complaints of the nurses who are being denied the privilege of coming under the Act."

The Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd., strongly repudiate Dr. Chapple's right to quote their letter in support of his proposal. Their description of the position is as follows:—

"At the request of its members the Council of the College approached the General Nursing Council in the letter quoted by Dr. Chapple, asking that the door of admission should be opened wider to the *bona fide* practising nurse, following which the General Nursing Council framed Rule 9 (1) (g), which admitted on their individual merits nurses in practice before 1900 and in 1919, and this Rule was entirely approved by the College Council as meeting the case of the older practising nurses."

Sir Arthur Stanley, Chairman of the Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd., has also written to Dr. Chapple, and sent a copy of his letter to the press, accusing him of misleading the House of Commons, while fully aware of the position taken by the Council of the College in this matter.

Dr. Chapple's misfortune is that he placed faith in the permanence of a conviction embodied in an official letter from the Secretary of the College, when he should have been "fully aware" that no reliance can be placed on such convictions.

We regret that the limited space at our disposal does not permit us to do justice to the subject in this issue. We shall refer to it again. In the meantime we draw the attention of our readers to the following facts, which can be proved from official documents:—

(1) *June 16th, 1923.*—Letter read by the Chairman at the meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales from Miss M. M. C. Herbert, 8, Porchester Square, W., Member of the College of Nursing, Ltd., and formerly in its office, asking the Council to consider the advisability of "having a Clause inserted under Rule 9 empowering the Council to deal with, on their individual merits, all those cases, whether for the General or Supplementary parts of the Register, in which the applicants' training or qualifications conform to no definite standard, but yet who under the Existing Nurses clause of the Act are obviously entitled to be State Registered."

(2) *July 21st.*—The General Nursing Council for England and Wales approved a new Rule (Rule 9 (b)).

### Rule 9 (b).

"Notwithstanding anything in the preceding Rules the Council shall have power to consider any

application for registration which shall be referred to it, in detail, by the Registration Committee as being of an exceptional character, and, if it thinks fit, to approve the applicant for registration."

That Rule would have enabled the Council to deal with "hard cases," while still maintaining standards. The Scottish Council took exception to it, and it was not submitted to the Minister.

(3) *December 15th.*—The General Nursing Council, on the recommendation of the Registration Committee, adopted Rule 21 (3) (d) of the Scottish Rules, which did not require training in a General Hospital, and would have practically annulled Rule 9 (1) (b), requiring evidence of not less than one year's training in a General Hospital and enabling the Council to put V.A.D.s and semi-trained specialists on to the General Register. Rule carried by the Council by the vote of the College members, in spite of a proposal by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick that it should be referred back to the Registration Committee for further consideration, and the opinion she expressed that one less injurious to the interests of the nurses on the General Register might easily be drafted.

### Letter from the Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd.

(4) *March 16th, 1923.*—At the meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales a letter was presented in the Report of the Registration Committee from the College of Nursing, Ltd., officially signed by its Secretary, Miss M. S. Rundle, from which the members of the College on the General Nursing Council took no steps to dissociate themselves at that date. [The letter, dated December 29th, 1922, was referred (unread) to the Registration Committee at its meeting on February 16th.]

The letter, addressed to the Chairman of the G.N.C., stated:—

"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."

Dr. Chapple may be pardoned for supposing that a principle with which the College of Nursing, Ltd., was in entire sympathy on March 16th would have its sympathy three months later, but in the meantime it had

(1) (According to Miss Seymour Yapp) been memorialised by 15,000 of its own members against its disastrous policy;

(2) Agreed to support Rule 9 (1) (g) of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales,

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