

REGISTERED NURSES' PARLIAMENTARY COUNCIL.

A meeting of the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council was held at 43r, Oxford Street, London, W., on Friday, October 5th, Councillor Beatrice Kent was in the chair, and received a warm welcome upon her return from a greatly-needed holiday in Switzerland.

Agenda.

1. The first business transacted was the nomination of two representatives to the Grand Council of the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland. The President had a seat *ex-officio*, and to fill the vacancies Miss Drakard (Fever Section) and Miss Marsters (District Nursing) were nominated.
2. New members were elected.

Registered Nurses' Grievances.

The serious disadvantages from which Registered Nurses are suffering owing to the lack of understanding and sympathy on the part of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales in the administration of the Nurses' Registration Act were emphasised from the chair by Councillor Beatrice Kent. She laid stress on the fact that twice provisions of the Nurses' Registration Act had been broken by those whose duty it was to administer it. Those who were present in the House of Commons on March 22nd, 1922, would remember the sorry figure cut by Sir Alfred Mond (then Minister of Health) when, in contravention of Section 6 (3) of the Nurses' Registration Act, which provides that "with a view to securing a uniform standard of qualification in all parts of the United Kingdom, the Council shall, before making any rules under this Act with respect to the conditions of admission to the Register, consult with any Nursing Councils which may be established by Parliament for Scotland and Ireland respectively." In direct contravention of this Rule Sir Alfred Mond thrust a Rule through the House of Commons dealing with the conditions of admission to the Register.

The General Nursing Council for England and Wales and the Ministry of Health had also contravened Section 3 (2) (a) of the Act by depriving nurses in training of a "prescribed training." The Act was imperative, not permissive, and if one Act of Parliament could be broken another could. The infringement of an Act of Parliament was a very solemn thing, and she thought the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council should represent to the Minister of Health the lack of security which had been engendered by these breaches of faith, and intimate to him that they expected him to show greater consideration.

The conduct of the law-makers who were law-breakers was most reprehensible. After all the toil and labour to secure a "prescribed training," through their action we were in the same position in regard to the security provided to pupils by a prescribed training as before the Nurses' Regis-

tration Act was passed. The provisions of the Act were being ignored and evaded and it was the duty of the Registered Nurses' Parliamentary Council to insist that they should be enforced.

An animated discussion took place. Mrs. Fenwick observed that an unprofessional autocracy controlled by medical practitioners, supported by the College group of nurse members, had been established, to which policy bureaucratic support was extended by the Ministry of Health. It might appear somewhat hopeless under such circumstances to expect any redress, yet to submit to it without protest would be demoralising and wrong. The citizens who submit to a form of government are the accomplices of that government, and it was their duty to publicly protest against the policy and incompetence of those who now controlled their Governing Body, in the hope of preventing further injustice and professional degradation.

The members present expressed warm sympathy with Mrs. Fenwick's opinion, and it was unanimously agreed by a vote taken on each item, to call the attention of the Ministry of Health in the first instance, in hope of redress to the following grievances.

Breach of Faith of the General Nursing Council with Trained and Certificated Nurses.

1. The gross breach of faith of the Council with nurses registered under the 1921 Statutory standards, initiated by the College of Nursing, Ltd., of admitting to registration on the General Part of the Register, totally untrained and in consequence dangerously ignorant persons, and to petition that such unqualified persons shall be placed in a separate list, as permitted by the Nurses' Registration Act, Section 2, sub-section (2) (e).

"Prescribed Training."

2. Strong disapproval of the substitution of a Syllabus of Examination for a Syllabus of "prescribed training" to which probationers in training have a right under the Nurses' Registration Act (section 3 (2) (a)), and the recognition by the General Nursing Council of hospitals as qualifying training schools which do not agree to comply with the "prescribed" standard of training and teaching as laid down in the Act (Section 3 (2) (b)).

Unprofessional Examinations Officer.

3. Disapproval of the appointment of a lay clerical clerk as Examinations Officer in preference to a highly-trained Registered Nurse well qualified for the position, and of the excessive salary of £375 per annum, rising to £400, being paid to her—remuneration largely in excess of that paid to the Assistant Registrar, who only receives £300—after three-and-a-half years' service, and who is moreover compelled by the Council to "cover" the unprofessional official.

Unjustifiable Recommendation by the Registration Committee.

4. Condemnation of the conduct of the Registration Committee in recommending to the Council.

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