

HOW THE COLLEGE CAUCUS CAPTURED THE COUNCIL.

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Although the Registrationists on the Council realised the danger of a partisan College policy, owing to the election as Registrar of Miss M. S. Riddell—a member of the College, and closely associated with those who had directed their representatives in the House of Commons to wreck the Nurses' Registration Bill on the Report stage—they were determined to perform their public duty without prejudice; and, speaking personally, I placed my expert knowledge at the disposal of the Council and of its officials. Not so the little clique of College Matrons, the majority of whom were apparently inspired by the same reactionary and "official" spirit which had influenced them to oppose the principle of State Registration, and with the Governors of institutions, whose officials they were, to sign so many futile manifestoes against it. Having made a complete *volte face* on the question, in their desire to control the administration of the Act, it was a pity they could not rise to a sense of professional responsibility, and administer it for the benefit of the profession as a whole, and not as the representatives of the College of Nursing, Ltd., governed as it is by its unprofessional male Hon. Officers; and whose interference from the passing of the Act has been a most mischievous influence in its administration so far; culminating in the unholy agreement between the Chairman of the College and Dr. Chapple to thrust totally untrained, ignorant and consequently dangerous women on to the General Part of the Register, thereby depriving trained nurses, and the public, of the protection from entirely unskilled attendants, contemplated in the Act.

The early meetings of the Registration Committee worked valiantly, and drafted in a few months a code of Rules for Registration, which secured very fair terms for Existing Nurses and for the conduct of business, and which were forwarded to the Minister for his approval. Amongst these Rules was the draft First Schedule providing for the particulars to be entered in the Register, which, of course, followed the just precedent of analogous Registration Bodies and recorded "qualifications."

It is ancient history that the Rules were held up for months, unsigned, at the Ministry, owing to the difficulty of agreement with the Scottish Council over various points on which it was advisable to have reciprocity, according to the Acts. Ultimately the Rules and Schedules, with one exception, were signed by the then Minister of Health, Sir Alfred Mond, on July 14th, 1921 (with a special silver pen which the Council secured as a memento of the historic event), nearly twelve months after the first draft had been submitted. These Rules formed a safe working basis. The Register

was opened to applicants, and hundreds of Forms were soon received at the office, 12, York Gate, N.W., which had been opened on June 10th, 1921, by the late Princess Christian, at which ceremony Mr. J. C. Priestley stated in his Address: "If I said all I should like to say about those I see around me I should take up very much of your time; that I must not do. But I may say my colleagues were well chosen and are very pleasant to work with."

After the vacation the Registration Committee began to consider applications for Registration, and submitted its first list for the consideration and approval of the Council on September 30th, 1921, under the headings: Name, Qualifications, Training School. Under qualifications the two standards defined in the Statutory Rules in force, "Certificated" and "Trained" were used. This was fair, as the Rules provided for the admission to the General Part of the Register of Nurses holding a certificate of three years' training from hospitals which had maintained this standard, some, for upwards of a quarter of a century, and also of those nurses who had received one year or more "training," together with a further two years' experience of Nursing.

My name appeared with the qualification "Trained," as I had received my training in the prehistoric "seventies," as a Paying Probationer—when few certificates were awarded—and next to it appeared the name of Miss Lloyd Still, with "Trained" also appended. This lady, like many other St. Thomas' Hospital trainees, completed training before the authorities of the Nightingale Training School agreed to award certificates of three years' training to its pupils, in 1904; just twenty years after I had advised the Treasurer and Almoners at St. Bartholomew's Hospital to award to probationary nurses a certificate after three, instead of two, years' training and examination.

Little did I think, when presenting this first typed list, on an unbiassed system, which dealt justly with all applicants for registration according to the Rules, that what later became known as the "Battle of the Certificates," inspired by autocratic vanity and supported by personal bias, would go far to wreck the whole structure and value of the State Register. Suffice it to say this was the case. In the meanwhile the Registration Committee realised the stupendous nature of its task, and twice I urged members in Council to do their duty, and take part in the consideration of Application Forms and References. Personally, I took an active part in this most necessary work, with the constant help of Miss Villiers and Miss MacCallum. Mr. Christian found time to consider in a most helpful manner the few applications which came in, at this time, from Mental Nurses, and Dr. Goodall also gave some assistance. Thus every Application submitted *with references complete* was ready for recommendation to the Council Meetings as they were held. Never once was a completed application held up. The assumption of

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