

"Having received enquiries from Nurses as to whether the College would arrange a Course of Instruction for Student Nurses who have failed in their final State Examination, the Council has decided to establish, at a later date, Tuition Courses, which will be under the direction of a Tutor, and will be specially designed to coach nurses who have received their training, but who have failed to pass their State Examination."

The first General Nursing Council for England and Wales 1920-1922, of which I was a member, on three occasions agreed to submit the Syllabus for Education and Training in General Nursing to the Minister of Health for his approval and signature, but the present Council has decided to issue this Syllabus under its own authority, a decision which I submit is *ultra vires*, as the Nurses' Registration Act gives the Council no discretion in this particular, but enjoins it to make Rules containing provisions for a "prescribed training" carried out in approved institutions.

I trust that I have shown cause for my earnest conviction that the present permissive and evasive provisions for Education and Training in Nursing are contrary to the wording of the Act, and to the intentions of Parliament, that they will perpetuate the present unsatisfactory conditions of nursing education and are most unjust to nurses in training.

I would therefore very respectfully submit to this Committee that the Rules for Prescribed Training under the Act should be framed and made compulsory on all hospitals, approved by the Council, which train nurses (as the Syllabus of Examination should, of course, be framed on the Syllabus of a Prescribed and compulsory Syllabus of teaching and training), and that the Minister of Health should sanction and sign such Rules.

II.

CONSISTENT OPPOSITION TO THE RIGHTS OF THE NURSES TO A PRESCRIBED SCHEME OF TRAINING IN HOSPITALS.

Apparently from the summary of extracts attached from the correspondence between the Ministry of Health and the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, the consistent policy of the Ministry, under six administrations, has been from first to last one of determined opposition to the right conferred by Parliament on Nurses in training to a syllabus of Prescribed Training in the nursing of the sick, being incorporated in the Rules, as a condition of admission to the Register.

Summary of Demand for a Compulsory Syllabus of Training.

The procedure of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales in relation to the question of "prescribed training," may be summarised as follows:—

1920-1921. Education Committee sat weekly and drafted the Syllabus of Training, and Nursing Schools were informed that it was available.

At first it was not realised that the "prescribed" Syllabus of Training came under the Rules and required the consent of the Minister of Health; but in 1921 the Minister intimated to the Council that this was so, and that the Rules must be approved and signed by him, and be submitted to Parliament in due course. The Council conformed to this instruction, and sent forward the Syllabus of Training for signature.

In October, 1921, Mr. L. G. Brock wrote from the Minister: "As regards the Syllabus of Training adopted by the Council, the Minister (Sir Alfred Mond) notes that this will be incorporated in the Rules which will be submitted in due course for his sanction."

In November, 1921, Mr. Brock wrote: "With regard to the Syllabus of Training and the Draft Rule relating to it,

which was also enclosed in your letter under 'Reply,' I am to state that the Syllabus is now under consideration; but in view of the difficulty of appreciating its precise effect, apart from the other rules governing the admission of future nurses, and, in particular, the Rules relating to examinations, and any Rules which may be made for the affiliation of the smaller hospitals to larger centres for purposes of training, the Minister proposes to defer giving any definite decision until the whole body of the Rules are before him."

Thus the Rule *re* prescribed training was held up for a whole year, presumably by influential opposition from employers of probationary nurses.

This was apparent in the Education Committee, which began to waver on the demand for a Syllabus of "prescribed" training.

In September, 1922, the Education Committee recommended to the Council "that it is thought sufficient for the present to issue the Syllabus of Subjects for Examination with the Nurses' Chart attached as a guide to training," and the Council laid down the regulation "that a Nurse presenting herself for Examination may be questioned on any of the subjects contained in this Syllabus."

Thus a Nurse was to be examined on subjects without being taught on a "prescribed" syllabus.

On October 6th, 1922, the new Chairman of the Council, Sir Wilmot Herringham, informed a deputation from the Association of Poor Law Unions (which had asked the Minister *not* to sanction the Syllabus of Training) that the Syllabus "was nothing but a model for the help of the Training Schools. No nurse would be asked whether she had been trained on the Syllabus or not. It was a mere model."

This misleading statement was made by Sir Wilmot Herringham without consulting the Council. Presumably he had never read the Nurses' Registration Act, which in Section 3 (2) (a) and (b) provides for a compulsory scheme of training.

At the next meeting of the Council, on October 27th, 1922, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick moved, in accordance with notice:—

"That the Minister of Health be requested to inform the General Nursing Council what modifications, if any, he considers advisable in the Syllabus unanimously approved by the Council, for the future training of nurses in general nursing, so that it may be approved by him, and thus a standardised system be substituted for the present chaotic conditions of nursing education."

Miss Lloyd Still, Chairman of Education Committee, said that it was understood the Minister was not prepared to give his sanction to the Syllabus of Training. It was desired to postpone it, as a temporary measure.

In the meanwhile nurses in training were deprived of their right to a prescribed scheme of training.

On December 15th, 1922, the Minister, Sir Alfred Mond, wrote to the Council condoning Sir Wilmot Herringham's pronouncement, and said: "There is no longer any necessity to incorporate the Syllabus in the Rules made under the Act, and it consequently does not require the Minister's approval," and pointing out "that the preface to the Syllabus, as it stands at present, is calculated to convey a contrary impression, and the Minister would, therefore, suggest that in circulating these documents it is desirable that the preface should be revised, so as to make it perfectly clear that the Syllabus is advisory only and not obligatory."

The letter then advises the Council how it can evade Clause 3 (2) (a) and (b) in the following paragraph:—

"I am, however, to point out that Section 3 (2) (a) and (b) of the Act refer specifically to the 'prescribed' training, and it will, therefore, be necessary for the Council to submit a rule prescribing in general terms the training which candidates for examination will be required to have under-

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