

GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR SCOTLAND.

Sir John Lorne MacLeod, G.B.E., LL.D., occupied the Chair and 11 Members were present at the meeting of the General Nursing Council for Scotland, held at 18, Melville Street, Edinburgh, on Friday, 28th February, 1930.

The Annual Report to be presented to the Department of Health for Scotland in terms of the Nurses' Registration Act was approved and signed by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman on behalf of the Council.

Col. D. J. Mackintosh, C.B., M.V.O., Convener of the Education and Examination Committee, submitted the report of that Committee. This was approved, and in terms thereof it was resolved that at the Final Examination for General Nurses and Sick Children's Nurses the Paper on Surgical Nursing, etc., should consist of 4 questions, of which 3 must be answered, and the Paper on Medical Nursing, etc., should similarly consist of 4 questions, of which 3 must be answered.

Various arrangements in regard to the holding of the Examinations were approved, and the Council authorised the names of a number of Nurses who had already passed the Final Examination and had now attained the age of 21, to be placed on the Register.

LEGAL MATTERS.

FIRST PROSECUTION UNDER THE NURSES' REGISTRATION ACT.

THE first prosecution under the Nurses' Registration Act for unlawful assumption of the title of Registered Nurse took place at the Bromsgrove Petty Sessions on February 22nd, before Mr. R. L. Impey, Chairman, and Mr. John Gibbins, when the General Nursing Council for England and Wales prosecuted Annie Violet Tilt (25), of Church Mills, Stoke Prior, for unlawfully using the title of Registered Nurse.

Mr. Douglas Jenkins (instructed by Messrs. Crockford and Son, Birmingham), prosecuting on behalf of the General Nursing Council, said the facts fully justified the Council in bringing the case forward in their own interests and to deter others from acting as the defendant did. The Council was established by statute in 1919, and one of the things it did was to keep a Register of Nurses. The individuals were not lightly recorded, and only those who had received full training were accepted. Defendant represented herself to be a State Registered Nurse, when she was nothing of the sort, and her action might have even cost the life of some unfortunate patient committed to her charge.

In November of last year the Matron of the Oxted and Limpsfield Cottage Hospital, Surrey, advertised for a Night Sister. Defendant applied for the post, and in her letter she said she was a fully trained State Registered Nurse, trained at Stratford-on-Avon and the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford. She left Stratford on account of the ill-health of her mother. For two years and nine months she had also been in a small surgical hospital at Redditch. Defendant, Mr. Jenkins continued, had never been to the Radcliffe Infirmary, and a testimonial she forwarded purporting to be from the Matron at Stratford-on-Avon was a forged document. In the recital of the facts of the case it would be quite apparent that other very serious criminal offences had been committed. The Council thought their interests would be sufficiently supported by proceeding on the one charge, however, and they had not sought to go on with the other matters.

The Forged Testimonial.

The forged testimonial stated:

"It gives me great pleasure to recommend Miss A. V. Tilt. She had two years' training at this hospital, and afterwards completed her training at the Radcliffe Infirmary, ending in May, 1928. She came back to me as a staff nurse. After three months I promoted her to Sister-in-Charge of both male and female wards, and later on as Out-Patient and Night Sister. During the whole time her work gave the greatest satisfaction. She is a good disciplinarian, quick, conscientious, and a most reliable nurse, always loved by her patients and fellow colleagues. Her reason for leaving was due to the ill-health of her mother. I was indeed sorry to part with Miss Tilt, and I feel sure that if given the chance as Sister-in-Charge, either day or night duty, those by whom the decision is made will have no cause for regret."

It was signed "T. H. Tippler."

The Matron at Oxted engaged Miss Tilt on those recommendations, and in her ingenuity in continuing the fraud, defendant rang up the hospital and said it was the Matron at Stratford-on-Avon speaking. She said she had to go to France quite quickly, and in view of her immediate departure she wished to give Miss Tilt a helping hand.

The Matron at Oxted was not at all satisfied with defendant's work, however, and a few days afterwards she rang up the Stratford-on-Avon Hospital. She then found out that the testimonial was a fabrication, and Miss Tilt was discharged. A summons was served on her by a police officer, and she would have been at the Court on the return day, but the next thing defendant did was to leave the district. Apparently she had gone to Guernsey, but passing on the way she stopped at Lifton in Devonshire.

A Medical Certificate.

Later a medical certificate signed by "Stephen Nockolds, M.A., M.B.," was sent to the Nursing Council, which read as follows:

"In my opinion Miss A. V. Tilt is suffering from insanity and is in no way responsible for her actions."

If anyone wished to raise the defence of insanity, said Mr. Jenkins, they would have to call proper witnesses. It seemed rather curious that there was no such disease as insanity. One doctor could not certify a person as insane, and the certificate had no weight in the matter. The case was a serious one and of very great interest to the public at large.

Miss Marion S. Riddell, R.R.C., S.R.N., Registrar to the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, said that the defendant was not a State Registered Nurse. She had only passed a Preliminary Examination, not the Final one.

Miss Alice Barrett, Matron of the Oxted and Limpsfield Hospital, gave evidence in support of Counsel's statement. Miss Tilt began work at the hospital on November 14th, and was dismissed on December 3rd.

Replying to Mr. Jenkins, Miss Barrett said she observed no sign at all of disease of the mind.

Miss Lucie Tippler, S.R.N., Matron at Stratford-on-Avon, said she had never written a testimonial for Miss Tilt. Defendant did spend two years at Stratford-on-Avon, and during a great deal of the time she was unwell, chiefly from trivial complaints. She advised defendant to give up nursing when she left the hospital in April, 1919. Defendant was not suitable for the profession. She resented being corrected by the Sister. She never went to Radcliffe Infirmary.

Mr. A. V. Holyoake (instructed by Messrs. Graham-White, Llewellyn and Wilson, Launceston) pleaded guilty on behalf of the defendant, who did not appear. He said he did not think the things defendant did were ingenious. They were palpable on the face of it, and he contended defendant's mind was so unsound that she did not know

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)