

Disciplinary Case.

The case of Mrs. Elizabeth Mary Shipman, S.R.N., 113174, and R.S.C.N., 3917, was before the Council.

Mrs. Shipman was charged at the Clerkenwell Police Court, and pleaded guilty to stealing five £1 notes from someone at University College Hospital. She asked that three other charges be taken into consideration. She was bound over in her own recognisance in a sum of £5 for twelve months.

The Council discussed the case *in camera* and the Registrar was directed to remove the name of Mrs. Elizabeth Mary Shipman from the Register of Nurses.

Next Meeting of the Council.

The date of the next meeting of the Council was fixed for December 17th.

REMARKS—PLEASE NOTE.

It should be noted as a matter of the utmost importance that the General Nursing Council for England and Wales recently asked the Minister of Health for a grant to cover the expense of employing four salaried inspectors of institutions where Assistant Nurses are in training.

In reply the Minister informed the Council—of which they should have been aware—that these expenses must be met out of the fees paid to the Council, and referring the Council to Rule 19 of the Nurses Act, 1943.

Just so! Under the Act the Minister has no power to finance the cost of the education, inspection and registration of Assistant Nurses. Under the now notorious Rule 19, should the fee of one guinea, which is all the Assistant Nurse has to pay for enrolment, fail to meet expenses, the fees of £5 5s. subscribed by Registered Nurses to cover the cost of examination and registration are pooled to meet the deficit—a scandalously unjust provision which Parliament must be called upon to rectify, and the sooner the better.

We were in the House of Commons to watch Mr. Ernest Brown, late Minister of Health, when on March 24th, 1943, he presented the Nurses Bill for Second Reading, and noted that he practically prevented discussion on finance.

Mr. Brown spoke at some length on the various clauses until he came to Clause 4, when he hurriedly remarked—
“I need not trouble the House with Clause 4, except to say that it deals with necessary fees.” He then hurried in to explain Clause 5.

As far as we can gather, and we have studied the Debates on the Nurses Bill, 1943, *no discussion whatever took place either in the House of Commons or in the House of Lords on finance!*

When the Nurses Act, 1943, had received the King's Assent it contained the following Clause in Part III, under the heading Miscellaneous and General.

CLAUSE 19.

Any sums received by the Council by way of fees under this Act shall be dealt with by the Council as if they had been fees and received by way of fees under the principal Act, and any expenses incurred by the Council in carrying Parts I and III of this Act into effect (including expenses in connection with examinations or prosecutions, and any travelling expenses or subsistence allowances duly allowed to members of the Committee) shall be defrayed out of fees received by the Council.

Already the Council has announced that the sum of £1,375 6s. 9d. has been expended in equipment for the Assistant Nurses Department.

IS IT REALLY THEIR BUSINESS?

The Council having read the communication from the British College of Nurses Ltd., and its schedule of the necessary annual expenditure for the enrolment and contro

of Assistant Nurses, we note that the Countess of Limerick enquired—

“Is it really their business?”

Her ladyship appeared to doubt that highly qualified Registered Nurses, the electors of the majority of the Council, had a right to express an opinion upon their own professional affairs.

We claim that we have not only a right but that it is our duty to do so.

It would be interesting to know what qualifications an Irish peeress has for governing English nurses—especially in time of war when Eire is neutral, and maintaining a German Embassy in Dublin! Moreover, the Registered Nurses are compelled to pay the travelling and subsistence allowances of the Countess of Limerick in attending G.N.C. meetings, an obligation they naturally resent.

Our advice to Lady Limerick is to realise that the day is past when professional women are content to be governed, much less insulted, by ignorant nominees on their professional Council.

THE REGISTER OF NURSES.

Every year we receive from the General Nursing Council for England and Wales a copy of the Register of Nurses with the sincerest satisfaction.

This year's issue is published in three volumes, the third containing the names of specialists in the Supplementary Parts of the Register.

As usual, we have pleasure in highly commending this invaluable work, the accuracy with which it has been edited, and the excellence with which it has been published.

This is the 22nd year of the publication of the Register of Nurses, after a strenuous demand covering a thirty years' struggle, and costing the advocates of legal status for trained nurses the substantial sum of £20,000, since which time, 1919, £928,503 7s. 2d. has been contributed by Registered Nurses in the upkeep of their professional status.

In what form the Registers, now diluted through the fatal legislation in 1943 will appear in future remains to be seen, but in welcoming the Register of Nurses for 1943 we fear that its fine standard will inevitably be lowered.

THE FALL OF MR. ERNEST BROWN, M.C., M.P., LATE MINISTER OF HEALTH.

When last month it was officially announced that the Premier had relieved Mr. Ernest Brown of the office of Minister of Health and appointed a successor—we were not surprised; the day for absolute political autocracy has passed, and Mr. Brown was not apparently aware of the fact. Suffice it to say that the *coup de grâce* was given when Judge Hargreaves gave judgment recently at West London County Court for two Gibraltarians, against whom the Minister of Health claimed damages for trespass, and awarded costs against the Minister, and in doing so expressed the opinion “that he could not find sufficient justification for such short notice as was given or for such drastic measures as were taken.”

Quite so! If only the Registered Nurses had proved their mettle by protesting against tyrannical legislation promoted by Mr. Ernest Brown, without consultation with them, in his Nurses Act, 1943, they would not have been hurled into the abyss from which they must now climb if their professional self-respect is to be regained. Personally, we should prefer “Holloway” to being compelled to pay one penny should a deficit occur in compiling and administering the Roll of semi-trained nurses, whose ignorance may endanger the lives of the sick poor.

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