

Workhouse Infirmiry Nursing Association.

SUPPLEMENTARY MEMORIAL.

From the Executive Committee of the Workhouse Infirmiry Nursing Association to the Right Hon. Walter Long, M.P., President of the Local Government Board.

SIR,—We, the members of the Executive Committee of the Workhouse Infirmiry Nursing Association, beg to lay before you the following objections to:—

(a) The proposed reduction in the number of Superintendent Nurses.

(b) The recommendation that in Workhouse Infirmiries containing from 60 to 100 beds the appointment of a Superintendent Nurse should be optional with Boards of Guardians.

(a) If the reduction of Superintendent Nurses from 227 to 136 is carried out, the standard of nursing organisation of 91 workhouses will be in time materially lowered; these workhouses will no longer be subject to the rules of the Nursing Order of 1897, which are now in force, and it is therefore probable that a state of friction will continue. Superintendent Nurses will be succeeded by trained Nurses, the qualifications of whom are defined but not their status as regards (1) their responsibilities in relation to the Master and the Matron; or (2) to the nurses and servants under them; nor even (3) as to the extent of their own duties. Definitions as to these important questions remain as they were laid down in the Order of 1847, at which time trained nurses were practically non-existent.

This recommendation appears to have been supported in the Report by the opinion of one witness only.

(b) In relation to par. 63 (1) and 72, we beg to point out that, considered as a principle, the joint appointment of a workhouse Matron as trained nurse, or as Matron and Superintendent Nurse, may have serious drawbacks, among which we beg to draw attention to the following:—

1. That a Matron who acts also as Trained Nurse may have only "qualified nurses" to carry out her directions, who would themselves be insufficiently trained.

2. That a Matron who also holds office as Superintendent Nurse could not give the necessary time for training Probationers.

3. That there would be grave danger of carrying infection by a Matron whose joint duties would necessarily lead her into all parts of the house, including the sick wards, and who would frequently be in charge of maternity cases.

We desire further to point out that should a revision of the Grant to Guardians under section 26

(1) of the Local Government Act, 1885, be decided on, it is desirable that a clearer definition should be made of the *qualifications* of nurses in respect to whose salaries the grant would be paid.

The difficult question of efficient nursing in small workhouses appears to be inadequately dealt with in the recommendations contained in the report. That the question can be met is shown by reference to the Order of the Irish Local Government Board of July, 1901, which deals with small as well as large workhouses, and which we understand is working in a satisfactory manner.

We are, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

For the Committee,

MURIEL S. TALBOT,

Vice-President and Chairman of the Executive Committee.

LOUISA TWINING,

Vice-President,

J. WILSON,

Treasurer.

THE "QUALIFIED" NURSE.

At the annual meeting of the Matrons' Council, the following resolution was proposed from the Chair by Miss Isla Stewart, Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital and President of the Council, and carried unanimously:—

"That in the opinion of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland (an Association of Superintendents of Trained Nurses) the granting of a certificate and the title of "Qualified Nurse" by the Local Government Board to probationers after one year's training would be an injustice to these probationers, and would also be unfair to fully qualified nurses and to sick persons. This Council therefore ventures to hope that the recommendation of the Departmental Committee, appointed by the President of the Local Government Board to inquire into the Nursing of the Sick Poor in Workhouses, as to the creation of an inferior class of nurses, may not be carried into effect."

The resolution has been forwarded to the President of the Local Government Board.

A strong resolution condemning the proposition incorporated in the Report of the Departmental Committee of the Local Government Board in relation to applying the terms "qualified" and "trained" nurses to probationers of one year's standing in a minor training-school, has been passed unanimously by the Bath Board of Guardians, on the proposition of Dr. Ellis. At the same time it was decided to circularise all Boards of Guardians in England and Wales with a view to their adopting a similar resolution. The resolution points out that should these probationers leave the Poor Law Service, they are supplied with a certificate which gives them the position, before the public, of fully qualified nurses,

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