

The First Nursing Board.

POOR LAW CONFERENCE IN LEEDS.

A conference attended by a large number of the representatives of the Poor Law Unions of Yorkshire, was held on Saturday afternoon at the Union Offices, Leeds. Its object was to discuss the training and certification of workhouse nurses in Yorkshire, and to consider a report that had been prepared by a special committee that was appointed by a similar conference at the beginning of the present year. On that occasion the feeling was general that there should be a uniform standard of training and examination for nurses in Workhouse infirmaries, and a committee was chosen in order to draw up a workable scheme for the examination of candidates for the position of certificated nurse, and for giving certificates to them. This committee included representatives of the Guardians of Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, Hull, York, Huddersfield, Halifax, Wakefield, Dewsbury, Keighley, and other towns, and on Saturday it submitted its scheme to the re-assembled conference.

THE BASIS OF THE SCHEME.

The Chairman of the Leeds Board (Mr. Arthur Willey) was invited to preside over the meeting, and there was also present Dr. De Burgh Birch, Dean of the Medical Department of the Yorkshire College; Mr. Henry Briggs, Leeds; Mr. J. H. Ford, Leeds; Mr. F. W. Mee, Hunslet; Mr. F. H. Bentham and Mr. Edward Milnes, Bradford; Mr. G. F. W. Newsholme and Mr. J. C. Stott, Sheffield; Mr. Walter Moorhouse, Chairman of the Wakefield Board; Mr. George W. Lilley, Chairman of the Sculcoates Board; Mr. William Clough, Chairman of the Keighley Board; Mr. E. Whitewam, Chairman of the Huddersfield Guardians; Mr. P. Atkinson and Mr. R. Winter, Hull; Mr. T. Snaith, Mr. J. Leeming and Mr. G. C. Walker, York; and Mr. J. W. Tillotson and Mr. A. Longbotham (hon. secretary), Halifax. The conference was also attended by many Superintendent Nurses in the county.

Mr. Tillotson (Halifax) submitted the proposals of the Committee. It recommended that a board be formed from the contracting Unions to be known as the Yorkshire Poor Law Nursing Board; that applicants for the position of Probationer Nurse should serve a period of at least two months on trial, and if found suitable they should enter into an agreement with the Union, engaging to train for a period of at least three years; that the training to be given in all the contracting Unions be assimilated as far as

possible, regard being paid in providing for this to conditions prevailing in the smaller workhouse infirmaries; and that a supervising training committee, consisting of five lady Superintendent Nurses, be formed to give advice and assistance on matters of training to those Unions seeking it—such Committee to have charge of the examination of Probationers from all the contracting Unions in their practical nursing work.

THE YORKSHIRE COLLEGE AND THE MOVEMENT.

The Yorkshire College, Mr. Tillotson explained, had been approached for the purpose of holding through their medical department periodical examinations, and in order that certificates might be given to successful candidates, to be known as the Yorkshire Standard Certificates—it being the desire of the contracting Unions to secure for Yorkshire-trained Nurses a high qualification in theoretical medical and surgical knowledge, as well as practical nursing. With this desire the Yorkshire College had, he said, expressed sympathy, and its willingness to assist in that part of the scheme which consists in testing the theoretical knowledge of those Nurses whose practical efficiency was satisfactorily guaranteed by the Poor Law Union. "For this end the Yorkshire College," wrote Dr. De Burgh Birch, "is willing to draw up (through the Board of Medicine) a schedule of those subjects with which, in their opinion, a Nurse should have theoretical acquaintance; and that in testing such theoretical knowledge the Poor Law Unions should have the assistance of members of the medical staff as examiners, provided that it be understood that such examiners certify only to results of their examination in the subjects of the schedules, and do not make the College responsible for any opinion on the practical skill of the Nurses." The communication concluded with the following expression of opinion: "And the Yorkshire College also feels that in the case of all Nurses presented for such examination, it should be understood that the practical training which they have received, has been given at least for a certain minimum length of time in hospitals, which reach a certain standard as to the number of beds and variety of cases and methods of instruction. This standard to be the subject of agreement between the Yorkshire College and the Poor Law Unions."

These proposals of the College the Committee regarded as eminently satisfactory and encouraging, and considered that, coupled with a certificate of practical training, to be given by the Nursing Board, the certificate of the College would be of great value, and would place Yorkshire Nurses in the foremost rank of their profession.

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