

tion of steamed food, nor yet of roast, fried, or boiled, also too much pastry, nor yet an endless procession of milk puddings. I believe that the weekly routine so often adopted is too short; it should cover a fortnight, at least, and vary with the season. Some housekeepers are singularly deficient in the knowledge of what foods go best together; they will, for instance, order beef steak pie to be followed by apple dumpling, or suet pudding after pork and beans.

A knowledge of the relative prices of food stuffs is necessary; it is not always the cheapest which make for greatest economy in the long run. I should very much like to hear some expression of opinion with regard to frozen meat. Patients' food is, of course, always ordered upon a definite scale, drawn up usually by the medical staff. For the rest, there is no doubt that nurses work best on plain fare, but it should be plain fare of the best. Best materials, good cooking, and appetisingly served.

I think that more variety in puddings and vegetables should be given, more vegetarian dishes, and more "made" dishes, but it is not easy under the present conditions in most hospitals. If I seem to lay undue stress on the feeding of the nursing staff, it is because it always seems to me that, to take a girl of some 20 odd years and suddenly to give her much heavier and more exacting work than she has ever done before, and at the same time to reduce her scale of food, and to serve it without some minor refinements to which she is accustomed, is, to say the least of it, not a very sensible proceeding. The Committee must always keep in close touch with the house-keeping department. Their task is no easy one; responsible to the public who subscribe and for the overwhelming number of people requiring relief, they must necessarily enforce a strict economy in every department. The Matron is not always to blame if the staff are overworked and the economy too rigid, but she is to blame if she fails to put matters clearly before the Committee. The responsibility is theirs if, after being convinced of the need for alteration, they cannot find the means to carry it out. Vague complaints or grumblings are worse than useless; a report must be concise and supported by figures and facts. The system of "comparisons" is often very trying when reforms are under discussion—when, for example, your expenditure is compared with that of an institution which you know to be lagging behind in efficiency, you are ready to declare them "odious," and when you set to work to study them carefully you are bound to confess that they are often fallacious. So many points are not known: with regard to the patients, for instance, the relative number

of men, women and children, of medical and surgical patients—how much, if anything, they provide themselves; with regard to the staff, again, the relative number of men and women, the difference in the scale of "officers'" food; above all, whether the food is good, bad, or indifferent, which could only be decided by residence in each place in turn.

District also makes some difference; the prices of such important items as milk, butter, eggs and meat vary considerably in different parts of the country. There is no doubt at all that it is very false economy to supply food which is not appetising, and although there are still some people who seem to think that coarse, rough food is the proper thing for a nurse, and all the more ennobling if carelessly served, this is not usually the view of hospital managers, who rely on the Matron to warn them if the narrow line which divides economy from stinginess is in danger of being crossed, just as much as they rely upon her to enforce care and real economy in every possible direction.

Next week we hope to publish the discussion on this paper.

The National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland.

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the above Society was held at 431, Oxford Street, London, W., on Saturday, January 29th, at 4 p.m., Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President, in the chair.

VICE-PRESIDENT.

Owing to the unavoidable absence of the Hon. Secretary, the President reported that Mrs. Strong, late Matron of the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, had accepted the invitation of the Council to represent Scotland as a Vice-President.

The Committee received Mrs. Strong's letter with much pleasure.

STANDING COMMITTEES.

Morality and Public Health.

The following letter was read from Miss L. L. Dock, Hon. Secretary of the International Council of Nurses:—

New York City, N.Y., U.S.A.

The President, National Council of Nurses.

DEAR MADAM,—You will remember that at the London Congress resolutions were passed agreeing to bring the subject of moral and sanitary prophylaxis, and the need of better teaching for nurses on venereal diseases, before the associations in our international membership.

I am therefore writing to ask if you will, at some forthcoming meeting of your association, place this subject on the programme and appoint a Committee to work within the borders of your own country, to

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