

THE NURSING CONFERENCE.

TUESDAY, APRIL 23rd.

SESSION I.

Miss Eleanor J. Law presided at the first Session of the Nursing Conference held in the Hall of the London County Council Technical Institute, Westminster, in connection with the Nursing Exhibition.

HOW TO WORK UP A CONNECTION.

Miss E. M. Waind, as we briefly reported last week, presented a well-considered paper on this important subject, and laid down that to work up a connection, time, capital, and very efficient help from all the members of an Association are necessary.

Miss Waind lays stress on the importance of careful consideration in the choice of a staff, for the early members of any Association are its very foundation stones. It is better, she holds, to start with a few thoroughly efficient, and, if possible, personally known members, than to hastily collect a large number of strangers who may, or may not, work loyally in the up-building of the reputation of the staff.

She points out further that it goes without saying that all nurses engaged in private work must have had at least three years' training in a good general hospital or infirmary, and the additional knowledge of massage, midwifery, and fever nursing is now a very usual advantage. A few years' experience as ward sister, or responsible staff nurse, of course add their value to those who have held appointments before taking up private work. All members must be able to give excellent references from the Matron or Matrons under whom they have worked, and all must be specially chosen for work in a private house. Miss Waind also emphasized the importance of personality and individuality in the private nurse.

NEW METHODS IN NURSING.

Miss Alice M. M. Park, of Guy's Hospital, formerly Matron of the General Lying-in Hospital, London, and of the Government Civil Hospital, Kandy, Ceylon, described some new methods employed in both medical and surgical nursing. Baths, diet, the preparation of patient and room for plastic operations, the various saline injections employed, and their special uses, the nursing of orthopaedic cases were all touched upon. In connection with the feeding of patients with gastric ulcer, Miss Park described why the practice of withholding food and fluid by mouth had now been largely discontinued. Scientists have discovered that whether food is given or not gastric juice flows into the stomach at regular intervals at the expectation of food, and that this is harmful. The object of the Lenhartz treatment now often used is to banish the expectation of food by spoon-feeding the patient at half-hourly intervals at

first, so as to entirely banish the expectation of food, gradually increasing the diet, if all goes well, until in three weeks time full diet is taken.

HOW TO START A NURSING HOME.

Dr. Anthony B. Bradford stated that the first Nursing Home was started about thirty years ago. It was a kind of joint stock business, run by a lady who kept lodgings and took in a few patients! She called it a *Home*, but that must have been a very unsuitable word. This curious institution was the parent of the present-day institution of that name. The reason that it has a bad name to-day, the lecturer averred, was that it had not got rid of its parentage. He strongly objected to the name as inappropriate; it should be described as a private hospital. The practice often adopted of adapting a private domestic house, to suit the purposes of a Nursing Home, he strongly condemned. The speaker very clearly showed how success might be achieved, if certain essentials were strictly observed and the tastes and wishes of patients were consulted.

As the object was or should be to supply other people's wants, so those wants should be fully and satisfactorily supplied. The chief of which was sufficient, well-cooked and suitable food. The culinary department in most nursing homes, he declared, was very defective; he attributed the reason to the fact that so many people started nursing homes without sufficient capital. Private houses were not suitable, and could not be adapted to meet the needs and comforts of the patients. Another objection was that such houses did not come under the control of the sanitary authorities. The doctor was strong on the point of good pay for good work. A good cook and a good nurse were requisite to the success of a nursing home, and both should be well paid.

The cook should receive from £70 to £80 per annum. He considered that this department was very much neglected, and was one reason of failure. To start a Nursing Home with insufficient capital is a great mistake, and one very commonly made. To do the thing properly, Dr. Bradford said, the calculation should be £250 capital per bed. The staff was the next point dealt with. Fully-qualified and efficient nurses were an absolute necessity. They should be well-paid; the salary not to be less than £52. He deplored the habit of engaging unqualified women, because of cheapness; half the Nursing Homes, he said, adopted this practice, which is unfair to the patients. Nurses should be properly paid and properly fed; they should also have liberal holidays—one month a year and week-ends. The doctor related how horrified he felt when he heard an owner of a Nursing Home boasting that she could feed her staff for 6s. a week per head!

Details are very important—small things matter, the doctor emphasised. Don't irritate patients with vexatious rules; don't dictate to patients what they shall have, if they are ready to pay for it. Adapt yourself to the people out of whom you wish to make money. Dr. Bradford concluded by

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