

THE FIRST REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE WITH RESPECT TO POOR LAW ORDERS.

In January, 1911, the President of the Local Government Board appointed Sir Samuel Butler Provis, K.C.B., James Stewart Davey, Esq., C.B., Walter Tapper Jerred, Esq., and Thomas Smith, Esq., Clerk to the Guardians of the West Ham Union, "to be a Committee to examine the Orders issued by the Poor Law Commissioners, the Poor Law Board, and the Local Government Board, under the Acts relating to the Relief of the Poor, and for the time being in force, with a view to their consolidation with amendments into one or more new Orders, and from time to time to report the result of such examination, together with recommendations as to the provisions to be included in the new Orders." Sir Samuel Provis was appointed Chairman, and Mr. Herbert W. S. Francis and Mr. I. G. Gibbon, joint secretaries to the Committee.

The Committee have now presented their First Report to the President of the Local Government Board, and it has been presented to both Houses of Parliament, and printed as a Blue Book.

The Committee state that they have held in all fifty-one meetings and have received much assistance in their labours from the Legal Adviser and other officers of the Local Government Board. They have in particular been in frequent communication with the General Inspectors, the Poor Law Medical Inspectors and the Lady Inspectors of the Board, and their Secretaries have from time to time attended general meetings of the Inspectorate at which these proposals have been discussed. They also invited the assistance of the principal associations concerned with poor law matters, to whom a draft of the Order relating to the management of poor law institutions, the issue of which they now recommend, was communicated in the course of last year, and they received from them valuable criticisms and observations. Suggestions and criticisms were also received from individuals and associations interested in poor law administration.

It was necessary when communicating with the associations to send out a considerable number of prints of the draft Order. The Committee regret to have to record that, in spite of their request that their communication should be regarded as confidential, descriptive notes and, in some cases, actual extracts from the draft Order appeared in certain newspapers.

THE SUPERINTENDENT NURSE.

The Committee further state that under the present Regulations, which are contained in the Nursing in Workhouses Order, 1897, the guardians are required to appoint a Superintendent Nurse in every institution in which three or more nurses are employed. The expression 'Superintendent Nurse' therefore covers, as at present used, a wide range,

from the nursing officer in charge of two other nurses to the administrative officer in charge of the nursing and of the training of nurses in large infirmaries or sick wards, which may contain several hundred beds. The two extremes included in the one expression thus differ in kind and not merely in degree, and not unnaturally much dissatisfaction has been caused to Superintendent Nurses of the latter kind by the fact that technically their position is identical with that of the nurse who acts practically as the forewoman of three.

The Committee now propose to restrict the appointment of Superintendent Nurse to those institutions which have large and important sick wards, and to extend the policy of the Order of 1897 with regard to the appointment of fully trained nurses wherever this is practicable. Where there is no Superintendent Nurse, they propose to recognise the Matron as the officer in charge of the sick wards as well as of the female side of the institution and of the nurseries. If, however, when the Matron is not a fully trained nurse, a fully trained person is employed in the institution as Head Nurse, they propose that in matters relating to the treatment and nursing of the sick the Head Nurse shall act immediately under the directions of the medical officer. They say that of course the Matron would not in any case interfere with the technical details of a trained nurse's work unless herself possessed of adequate nursing qualifications, and that their proposals have been much facilitated by the growing tendency on the part of guardians to appoint Matrons who have had professional training as nurses.

DRAFT POOR LAW INSTITUTIONS (NURSING) ORDER, 191--.

TO THE GUARDIANS OF THE POOR of the several POOR LAW UNIONS for the time being in ENGLAND AND WALES:—

And to all others whom it may concern.

WHEREAS by various Orders both general and special issued from time to time by the Poor Law Commissioners, the Poor Law Board and the Local Government Board and hereinafter referred to as "the recited Orders," it is required that Boards of Guardians shall appoint fit persons to hold the office of Nurse, and, by the Nursing in Workhouses Order, 1897, further provision is made with regard to the nursing of the sick poor in Workhouses;

And whereas the Nursing in Workhouses Order, 1897, is rescinded by the Poor Law Institutions Order, 191 , which will come into operation from and after the day of 191 , and it is expedient that such further provision as is hereinafter contained be made:

NOW THEREFORE, We the Local Government Board, do hereby Order that, from and after the date of the operation of this Order, the Regulations hereinafter contained shall (except so far

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)