

NURSING ORGANIZATION IN NEW ZEALAND.

Dr. J. P. Frengley, F.R.C.S.I., D.P.H., has in the absence of Dr. Valintine, Inspector-General, and Chief Health Officer in New Zealand, presented the Annual Report of his Department for the year ending March 31st, 1914, to the Hon. the Minister of Public Health.

The Report, as usual, includes one from Miss H. Maclean, Assistant Inspector, which is of such extreme interest that we should like to quote it in full.

THE NURSES' REGISTRATION ACT.

During the year two examinations under the Act have been held by the State in nine different centres.

In regard to the personal suitability of candidates for the nursing profession, Miss Maclean emphasises the fact that "it is during the term of training that those who are unsuitable for the high profession of nursing should be weeded out. . . . The manner in which to obtain some guarantee that the nurses registered by the State will be the right stamp of women is for the Hospital Boards to realise the great power which is in their hands, and to make careful and judicious selection of the women they put in charge of their training schools. Having done this they should invest the Matron with sufficient responsibility, and allow her to select to the best of her judgment the material she is to train, and allow her also to reject the material which on trial she finds unsuitable.

"There appears to be a sufficient number of young women coming forward in the larger schools to train as nurses, but some hospital authorities have found it advisable to reduce the age for entrance from twenty-three to twenty-one or twenty years of age. This is a wise step. It is not so much the age as the personality, development and circumstances which count. Many suitable applicants are lost because the time between completing education and entering a hospital is so long that the girl, perhaps obliged to achieve independence, drifts into some other occupation."

Miss Maclean then quotes some remarks of a Matron at a Conference of the New Zealand Trained Nurses' Association. "When should a girl begin her nursing training? To answer this one naturally asks, When does a girl usually begin to train for her life's work? We will be surprised to find that for every other profession she begins her training at school while in her early teens. Does she intend to follow medicine, she selects her subjects for that career when studying for her matriculation, probably at the age of fourteen years. Should law be the object of her ambition, or an Arts degree be her goal, the same early period of her youth marks the selection of her subjects, always bearing in mind that the subjects for each examination are all preliminaries to the highest position she can attain to in that special profession. Why should the girl who early decides that nursing is to be her chosen vocation

not be educated on these lines, and in the subjects that can and will be of most use to her in that profession. We now know that physiology, anatomy, hygiene, and cooking are to form big factors in modern teaching for the successful home life of the wives and mothers of the future, so also is the domestic science course; therefore I claim that we should be prepared to select for the girls who intend to be nurses those subjects most necessary for the successful fulfilment of their ambition." In regard to the age at which probationers should be accepted for training the same authority points out that a girl may enter for a medical course and be a fully-qualified medical practitioner, when she is permitted by law to prescribe for any ailment, and treat any case, however critical, by the time she is twenty-one, but she is debarred by an unwritten law from learning to nurse such a case until she is twenty-one years old."

Miss Maclean further reports that there has not during this year been the former shortage of trained nurses for the staffs of the various hospitals. The output of the training schools has been largely increased, and as many of the registered nurses have agreed to remain after registration for a fourth year in their training schools, there has not been the urgent call for outside nurses. The hospitals which exact this agreement from their probationers are now offering some special advantages for the nurses in this fourth year. The Auckland Hospital has an excellent scheme to give post graduate courses in hospital management, dispensing, midwifery, massage, and electrical treatment. The Dunedin Hospital has a similar scheme, and others are considering the same."

From which we gather that the effect of a Nurses' Registration Act is to decrease the shortage of nurses, to systematise nursing education, and to afford increased opportunities for valuable post graduate experience.

MAORI NURSES.

It is interesting to learn that there were four Maori candidates for examination during the year. "Two passed very well, two others passed in all but one subject, and are sitting again with a fair prospect of success. More native nurses are required for country work, and it is hoped that the example of these mentioned may stimulate them to go through their training, and may also encourage the teachers to persevere in their rather uphill work. It is perhaps expecting a good deal to make these Maori girls pass the same examination as the European nurses, but so far all who have been registered have done so, and taken very fair places among their fellow trainees, and therefore it would be inadvisable to accept any lower standard. The qualities the Maori girls are lacking in are not intelligence and adaptability, but application and reliability.

We congratulate the New Zealand authorities on the statesmanlike course which they have adopted.

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