

opinion as regards nurses' hours, as he was strongly of opinion they should be reduced.

Miss Cox-Davies endorsed the opinion that this fact should be made clear to the Press.

The Chairman: "I am confident that many feel that it was so closely allied to the letter which has been postponed for further consideration until our next meeting, and it must be clearly understood by everyone here that the feeling of the Council is that they won't express an opinion on the question of hours."

The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried.

### 3.—LETTERS FROM CHAIRMEN AND SECRETARIES OF SMALL HOSPITALS WITH REGARD TO THE SHORTAGE OF PROBATIONERS.

The Chairman said that the next business to which he had to draw the attention of the Council was a large bundle of letters, which had accumulated during the vacation from Chairmen and others connected with small hospitals, calling attention to the shortage of probationers available for staffing such hospitals. The following letter which he read was typical of others:—

The Hospital,  
Stratford-upon-Avon,  
August 6th, 1920.

To the General Nursing Council,—

The Committee of the Stratford-upon-Avon Hospital desires to call the attention of the General Nursing Council to the acute shortage of probationers available for staffing the small hospitals.

One reason for the present condition of things is the fact that, while the training schools can offer to their probationers a certificate of value at the end of three or four years, the small hospitals have practically no inducement to offer possible candidates; nor does the time spent in them count towards a reduction of the period of training. The passing of the Nurses' Registration Bill has tended to still further diminish the supply of applicants, as their outlook for the future is so very uncertain. Consequently, the work is being carried on under great and ever-increasing difficulties.

Trained nurses hesitate to accept posts in a hospital where there are few probationers. Hospital Managers are therefore faced with the alternative of closing down some of their wards or seriously overworking their present staffs. The former procedure would be a calamity for the community, while the latter is very unfair to their nurses, and also greatly increases the difficulties by deterring candidates from applying under existing conditions.

The experience of this Committee is that when candidates who apply are told that that hospital is not a recognised training school, they almost invariably withdraw their applications, and if too young to enter a large hospital, frequently take up other work, and are thus lost to the profession.

The proportion of large to small hospitals must be a high one, and the number of probationers normally employed considerable. With the present shortage of trained nurses, and the increased demand for their services, it seems a short-sighted policy not to make use of the small hospitals for training purposes. We suggest that this can best be done by adoption of some scheme of affiliation between them and the training schools, and the recognition of a combined certificate as qualifying for admission to the Register.

At present, many of the probationers passing through the small hospitals are unable to stand the physical strain of another three or four years in a training school, while others, for financial reasons, cannot afford to undertake so long a training. These nurses help to swell the ranks of the semi-trained, who do so much to lower the standard of nursing.

The present position of the small hospitals with regard to staff is critical, and unless help is speedily forthcoming, the work will be greatly hampered, if not seriously curtailed, during the coming winter.

The Committee of the Stratford-upon-Avon Hospital urges the General Nursing Council to reduce the period of training in the large hospitals for those probationers who have passed a specified period in the small hospitals, and to recognise a combined certificate as qualifying for admission to the Register. They feel sure that the granting of this concession, and the adoption of some scheme of affiliation with training schools, at the earliest possible moment, would do much to relieve the present uncertainty, and to improve the unsatisfactory position of probationers working in the small hospitals.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,  
(REV.) FRANCIS H. HODGSON,  
Chairman of the House Committee.

The Chairman then suggested that the above letter and others on the same subject be referred to the Education and Examination Committee. He hoped the Committee would soon be at work and take them into serious consideration.

This was agreed.

### 4.—LETTER FROM THE CENTRAL JOINT V.A.D. COMMITTEE, RULING INVITED re THE STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSING MEMBERS V.A.D.s.

The Chairman then read the following letter:—

THE CENTRAL JOINT V.A.D. COMMITTEE,  
20, Berkeley Street,  
London, W. I.

August 26th, 1920.

DEAR MADAM,—I am requested by the Chairman of the Joint Women's V.A.D. Committee to ask you whether you would kindly send me a ruling as to whether V.A.D. members who have served for three years in Military Hospitals during the war will be eligible for enrolment on the Nursing Register of England and if so, what the conditions would be?

Yours faithfully,

S. WILSON,  
Secretary.

The Secretary,  
Joint Nursing Council,  
Ministry of Health.

Mrs. Fenwick said that when she received the Agenda of the Meeting she wrote to the Secretary of the Central Joint V.A.D. Committee and asked for a copy of its last Report and the names of the Committee. She had received no reply. Mrs. Fenwick asked the Chairman if the Council might be informed who was addressing it.

The Chairman said on the letter paper the name of Sir Arthur Stanley appeared as Chairman, and that of Viscount Chilston as Vice-Chairman.

Mrs. Fenwick: "Might we ask who signs the letter?"

The Chairman: "It looks like S. Wilson, Secretary." He continued: "One or two young

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