

these sections manage their own affairs through Committees consisting entirely of members of the nursing profession. A very large majority of the members of these sections are nurses trained or in training in the Poor-Law hospitals and infirmaries recognised by the Ministry of Health as training schools.

These nurses will form the nucleus of the new Guild which we propose to establish on the following lines:—

(1) Only trained nurses and probationers being trained in recognised training schools will be eligible for membership.

(2) *It will be a separate organisation with its own executive, consisting entirely of members of the nursing and medical professions.*

(3) It will be affiliated to the National Poor-Law Officers' Association Incorporated, so that it will have, in addition to all the advantages of a separate organisation, the weight and experience of our Parliamentary Committee.

The assistance of that Committee is absolutely necessary because of:—

(a) The many difficult questions that will arise when a new superannuation system is introduced on the lines of the report of the Departmental Committee on Superannuation for Officers of Local Authorities.

With regard to these questions I have to point out that my Association, in anticipation of the threatened abolition of the present Poor-Law system, has for many years past been building up precedents relating to conditions of transfer of officers and compensation for loss of office in a large number of Acts of Parliament. Our model clauses have recently been re-settled to meet all possible contingences, and before the introduction of any Bill to abolish the present Poor-Law system the Ministry of Health have promised to discuss these clauses with representatives of our Association.

The difficulties in connection with the superannuation question will require very careful handling, especially in the case of those nurses who now come within the provisions of the Poor-Law Officers' Superannuation Acts and who may desire to transfer to the new system. We have already dealt with this question to a certain extent in the evidence submitted by the Departmental Committee of our Association.

In support of our contention that a State Nurses' Guild should be established on the following lines referred to above, I desire to submit the following additional reasons for the consideration of your Association:—

(1) That the National Poor Law Officers' Association Incorporated is the only organisation in a position to carry out the project with any hope of success, and that if the economic interests of nurses are to be handed over to Trade Unions the prestige of the nursing profession will be lowered.

(2) That our membership subscription is on a sliding scale. Where the salary and emoluments

do not exceed £100 a year the annual subscription is only 5s. and only 7s. 6d. where the salary and emoluments do not exceed £200, so that very few nurses are required to pay subscriptions above these rates. Most Trade Unions have a weekly subscription of 6d.

(3) Our Association is the only body recognised by the Association of Poor Law Unions as the representative organisation for the Poor Law Service. The Conciliation Council for the Poor Law Service consists of 16 members, 8 appointed by the Unions' Association, and 8 by our Association, and that Conciliation Council is working most satisfactorily.

(4) Our Association can claim to have the confidence of the Ministry of Health, and the relations between that Department and our Association have always been most cordial.

(5) Our Association can honestly claim that it has been almost entirely responsible for the recent improvement in the conditions of service of Poor Law Nurses. It was solely through the efforts of the Association that the Ministry of Health sanctioned the Civil Service scales of War Bonus for Poor Law Officers, and practically the whole of the Poor Law Nurses who are now in receipt of these bonuses have obtained them through the work of the Association.

During the past 18 months the Association has been concerned in no less than 20 arbitrations on this subject. No trades union or any other organisation can show such an excellent record.

At the instigation of the Association the Conciliation Council for the Poor Law Service also, recommended a 56-hour week as a maximum, and this recommendation has been adopted in the case of a considerable number of Poor Law Hospitals and Infirmaries.

The question of the finances of the new Guild has not been settled by our Executive, but I think it will be possible to arrange that the Guild should pay a per capita affiliation fee to our Association, the balance of the subscriptions being absolutely under the control of the new organisation. In this connection I may say that our Association does not anticipate any material pecuniary advantage from the Guild. We are only anxious that the economic interests of the Poor Law Nursing profession shall be properly looked after.

We do not desire to perpetuate or accentuate in any way the line of demarcation between the two branches of the profession, and we know that the difference will disappear during the next few years.

But we claim that the Poor Law Nursing profession during the period of transition has peculiar needs which require special care and consideration.

Another suggestion I submit for the consideration of your Council is the possibility of setting up a Conciliation Board for the whole Nursing Service, on similar lines to the Conciliation Council for the Poor Law Service, on which the employees' side will be represented by organisations other than trade unions.

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