

Until the machinery had been started, oiled, and was going properly it appeared to the Council that one examination, taken at the end of the training, was the only possible course to adopt, but, in the minds of every member of the Council or, at any rate, of every nurse member, there must be a preliminary examination in the future.

MISS STEELE INNES (Matron of the Leeds General Hospital) having spoken, a question was asked as to how many centres it was proposed to have. The speaker said that about 2,000 nurses were annually certificated under the Poor Law.

THE CHAIRMAN said that fourteen centres had been decided upon at present, a few more than those of the Central Midwives Board.

MISS HARE (Matron, North Brierley) thought that following the lines of the Syllabus it would be very beneficial to take the Anatomy and Physiology first. She also inquired whether, if a candidate failed in the final examination and had her hospital certificate, it would be essential for her to go up again for the State Examination?

After full discussion, the conference voted in favour of the amendment to the second part of the Preface, to provide that the examination should be divided into two parts.

THE CHAIRMAN then said that the second amendment sent to him dealt with the acute difference of standards in the various training schools, but it did not deal with the Syllabus of the subjects for examination, and could not, therefore, be now discussed.

STANDARD TO BE INDICATED IN PREFACE.

It was pointed out by DR. CANDLER that the question of any Syllabus must depend on the standard expected. It would be easier if in the preface some general standard were defined for guidance in detail. He moved "that the standard to be reached be indicated in the Preface," and that the General Nursing Council outline, as far as possible, what standard is to be expected. This was seconded by DR. BRANDER, who remarked that the Syllabus might mean anything.

MR. TOM PERCIVAL (Clerk to the Tynemouth Guardians) said that, with respect, the opinion of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales as to the standard attainable by nurses was based on that which was possible in the best London and Provincial hospitals which have admirable material for training, but in many institutions the standard of general knowledge of probationers was that of the sixth standard.

DR. LANCASTER (Swansea) said that he had examined nurses for twenty-five years, and he would engage to set an examination on the Syllabus that not a matron could pass. The Council seemed to have forgotten the motto, "Ars longa, vita brevis." (Laughter.) The requirement of a knowledge of the "disposal of sewage on a large scale" came in for some criticism in connection with the opinion that the general standard of education of probationers was lower than it was thirty years ago, and that in the provinces this was represented by the level attained in the higher elementary schools.

THE CHAIRMAN remarked, in regard to the expediency of including a knowledge of the disposal of sewage, that he had had a nurse in his own house who had stopped up his drains. (Laughter.)

MISS LLOYD STILL emphasised the fact that the examination Syllabus was not put in the hands of the nurse but of the teacher. The pupils would not have lectures given till they were in the advanced stage, and had behind them the knowledge gained in the first year, which would be imparted by the Sister-Tutor in kindergarten language. Recently sixty Sister-Tutors from various institutions had met in conference, and every one of them knew that the Syllabus could be carried out. We in England ought not to be contented with a lower standard than that of any other country.

MR. ROSS (Bedford County Hospital) said that the educational standard of probationers had very much degenerated of recent years. Before the war they had as applicants nurses trained at the Bedford High School. Now these girls went to Government offices to smoke cigarettes and drink tea, and the Hospital got probationers with less education.

REV. P. S. G. PROPERT, M.A., President of the Poor Law Unions Association, said that of the 17,800 beds for the sick in this country the Poor Law Unions administered more than half. The Guardians did not represent the official side only, but were the equivalent of the Governors of the voluntary hospitals. They had no objection to the Syllabus of Examination, but were alarmed at the Syllabus of Training.

At the Conference which representatives of the Poor Law Unions Association had with the General Nursing Council on July 14th, 1921, they asked that the Metric System might be omitted from the Syllabus of Training, and that the first compulsory examination might be deferred until July 1925.

The Council had now issued a Syllabus of Examination. What was the use of issuing also a Syllabus of Training?

THE CHAIRMAN said that the Amendment was "That the standard to be reached be indicated in the Preface."

This was approved.

DATE OF FIRST COMPULSORY EXAMINATION.

THE CHAIRMAN said that it would be impossible to have the first examination before 1925.

MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK said that the date 1924 was incorporated in the Rules which had been agreed to by the Minister of Health and Parliament. They must take into consideration the fact that the Syllabus of Training was issued by the Council without the previous approval of the Minister, in 1921, and that a large number of institutions had accepted it. Those institutions had engaged probationers on the understanding that they would be prepared for the State Examination in 1924. What was the position of those nurses, what was going to happen to them? Were they to be required to give a fourth year's labour? The solution was to hold an optional Examination

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