

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

On June 14th the following question was addressed to the Minister of Pensions. We regret that great pressure on our space has prevented our publishing it sooner.

NURSING SERVICE.

MR. MURNIN asked what are the numbers and grades of the Ministry Nursing Service employed at headquarters; what are their duties; and whether he will consider transferring these duties to the regional commissioners of medical services and the medical superintendents of Ministry institutions?

MAJOR TRYON: The only members of the Ministry Nursing Service employed at headquarters are the Matron-in-Chief and the Principal Matron, who are engaged in the general supervision and co-ordination of the work of the whole Nursing Service. I am not prepared to accept the suggestion in the last part of the question which I do not consider would be in the interests of either economy or efficiency.

REMARKS.

We are thankful to observe that Major Tryon realises that the Nursing Service under his Department requires expert professional supervision. Nothing could be more disastrous to departmental nursing efficiency than that it should be personally controlled by medical men. It is this unwarrantable claim which has ruined the ethical standards of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and which was advanced by Dr. Chapple and his supporters in the House of Commons on June 13th, when they took power to degrade the standard of the General Part of the Nurses' Register upon written medical testimonials—usually mere worthless scraps of paper.

THE NIGHTINGALE FUND.

The Report for the year ending December 25th, 1922, of the Nightingale Fund is concise and informative, excepting the Abstract of Income and Expenditure, which should be more in detail if to act as a useful guide to hospitals contemplating an affiliated Nursing School—which may in some measure become the system in the future, owing to the necessary increase in the cost of Nursing Education. The Nightingale School expended £1,837 4s. 4d. last year under the following headings and ends with a surplus of £160 14s. 4d. Under Expenditure we find Expenses of Training School at St. Thomas's Hospital, £1,294 5s. 9d. (no details). Sundry Expenses, viz.: Advertisements, printing, books, clerical assistance, petty cash, auditor's fee, and Secretary's salary, £197 8s. 7d.—a curious combination; King's College for Women, tuition fees, and fees for residence of scholars, £290 10s.; grants to scholars, £75.

The Council, Trustees, and Secretary are all men.

We quote the following extracts from the Report:—

A Statement of the Probationer-Nurses in the Nightingale Fund School at St. Thomas's Hospital for the twelve months which ended December 25th, 1922, is given below:—

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| Remaining December 25th, 1921 (of whom 18 were paying Probationers and 4 Free Specials) | 68 |
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| Brought forward .. | 68 |
| Admitted up to December 25th, 1922, from the Preliminary Training School (of whom 14 were paying Probationers and 7 Free Specials) | 75 |
| | — 143 |
| Resigned or discharged as unsuitable .. | 26 |
| Completed Probationary year, and taken on as Extra Nurses to complete their training | 49 |
| | — 75 |
| Remaining in the Home on December 25th, 1922 (of whom 12 were paying Probationers and 7 Free Specials) | 68 |
| Completed term of Service and awarded Certificates | 49 |

It is satisfactory to note that the number of nurses who completed their term of service and were awarded Certificates increased from 37 in 1921 to 49 in 1922.

In the current year, the very important question arises as to the regulations under which the candidates will in future enter the Training School and obtain the Hospital Certificate, in view of the fact that at the end of 1925 every Probationer who has received three years' training and passed the State Examination will be qualified for the State Register. How far this State recognition of Nursing may modify our procedure; whether, for example, the granting of our usual Certificate shall or shall not be made conditional on the attainment of the State Certificate, are questions the decision of which must be postponed, awaiting the fuller development of the State system, which has hardly yet reached its final form.

Only a limited number of candidates offered themselves for the Scholarships at King's College for Women, Household and Social Science Department in 1922, and the Committee, therefore, nominated two Scholars only instead of the customary three. The names of the Scholars appear in the Matron's Report. The Committee are again offering three Scholarships in the current year.

Extracts from the Report of the Matron follow:—

"There is no change in the work of the Preliminary Training School.

"Sister Tutor reports that fifty-two Probationers have completed the course on General Nursing. An average ability has been shown by the majority, though, on the whole, steady work has been done by all, and good progress made. Of the three classes included in this number, two reached a higher level than might have been expected, as, owing to the influence of one or two of their members, a spirit of enthusiasm in the one case, and a sense of responsibility and *esprit de corps* in the other, served to stimulate the rest to greater interest and encourage to more useful effort. With several Nurses, subsequent Lectures will need close attention for examination results to be satisfactory.

"An Honours Certificate has been inaugurated, the marks having been readjusted. These Honours

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