

GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

The Forty-first Meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales was held at the Ministry of Health, S.W., on November 16th, at 2.30 p.m., Sir Wilmot P. Herringham, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.D., F.R.C.P. (Chairman of the Council), presiding.

I.—Minutes of the Last Meeting.

The minutes of the last meeting were confirmed with three amendments, the principal being that leave be given to withdraw Paragraph 6, including Recommendation 13 of the Agenda.

II.—Correspondence.

LETTER FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH.

(1) The following letter was received from the Ministry of Health:

MINISTRY OF HEALTH,
Whitehall, S.W.1.,
November 5th, 1923.

DEAR MADAM,—I am directed by the Minister of Health to refer to your letter of July 30th, forwarding for approval a Syllabus of Subjects for Examination of Mental Nurses and those nursing Mental Defectives. The Minister has been in communication with the Board of Control, and has been informed that they concur in the proposed Syllabus. The Board point out, however, that the proposed examination is similar to that already conducted by the Medico-Psychological Association. The Minister shares the view of the Board that it is undesirable that there should be two bodies holding examinations for mental nurses, and he would welcome any steps to avoid such duplication. The effect of these duplicate examinations is to perpetuate two classes of mental nurses, registered and unregistered, since, if mental nurses were for any reason reluctant to register, it would obviously be extremely difficult to question the qualifications of an unregistered nurse, who, in fact, held the Certificate of the Association. The Minister looks forward to the time when all institutional nurses will be registered, but in the case of mental nurses so long as the duplicate examinations continue there is a danger that nurses may prefer to seek the Certificate, the value of which has long been recognised, and to take the examination, the fee for which is understood to be less than the fees contemplated by the Council.

While, therefore, the Minister is prepared to give his sanction to the Syllabus now submitted, before coming to a final decision, he would urge upon the Council the desirability of considering very carefully whether some means could not be found of avoiding the threatened duplication of examinations covering practically identical ground. I am accordingly to enquire whether the Council would be prepared to appoint representatives to meet the Board of Control and representatives of the Medico-Psychological Association, in order to explore the possibility of co-operation so as to obviate the continuance of a dual examination system. If the Council would accept an invitation to such a Conference the Minister proposes to ask the Board of Control to make the necessary arrangements.

I am, Madam, your obedient servant,

L. G. BROCK.

It was agreed to accept the invitation and that the Chairman of the Council and the three Mental Representatives (Dr. Bedford Pierce, Miss M. Wiese, and Mr. R. Donaldson), with two members of the Council to be selected by the Education and Examination Committee, should attend the Conference and take the Registrar with them.

(We hope the delegates of the G.N.C. will make it clear to the Conference that the only certificate in Mental Nursing which is now of value to Mental Nurses, is that which is given under the authority of the State, after examination by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, as provided in the Nurses Registration Act, 1919, and which confers legal status upon them and the right to use the letters, R.M.N., after their names. Just as the London Obstetrical Society, which did valuable work in examining midwives, ceased to do so when the examination of the Central Midwives Board was established under an Act of Parliament, so the Medico-Psychological Association should now cease from examining Mental Nurses, setting its examiners free, moreover, to examine for the State Certificate.

We emphasise this point because, as recently as the 2nd inst., an advertisement appeared in a contemporary under the heading "Mental Nursing as a Career for Women," in which applicants are invited to apply for training at the Retreat, York, "a Registered Hospital for the treatment of mental diseases." The advertisement states that "the period of training is, for Medico-Psychological Certificate, 3 years; for Retreat Certificate, 4 years. . . . Fully qualified nurses can always command good salaries." No mention is made of the State Examination to be held in the future or of the legal qualification of "Registered Mental Nurse," but it is certain that unless Mental Nurses can show that their names are on the State Register they will within a few years find that the good salaries will be commanded primarily by the Registered Mental Nurses.)

FURTHER LETTER FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH.

(2) THE CHAIRMAN also reported that a letter had been received from the Minister relating to the Syllabus of Examination in Fever Nursing, which had not arrived in time to be placed on the Agenda.

LETTER FROM THE JOINT NURSING AND MIDWIVES' COUNCIL, NORTHERN IRELAND.

(3) A letter was considered from the Registrar, Joint Nursing and Midwives' Council, Northern Ireland, dated October 26th, 1923, asking the Council to permit them to adopt the Nurses' Chart that is included in the Syllabus of subjects for Examination.

The Council unanimously agreed to accede to the request.

LETTER FROM THE NATIONAL ASYLUM WORKERS' UNION.

(4) THE CHAIRMAN further read a letter from the National Asylum Workers' Union, stating that it considered the fee of £2 2s. for the Preliminary Examination absurd and unreasonable, that pro-

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