

GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

The forty-ninth meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales was held at the Ministry of Health, on Friday, July 25th, Sir Wilmot P. Herringham, K.C.M.G., C.B., Chairman of the Council, presiding.

The 1924 Register.

The copy of the 1924 Register was on the table, including the names of Nurses registered up to December 31st, 1923, and stated by the Chairman to be nearly 33,000.

Correspondence.

The Minutes of the last meeting having been read and signed, the following letters were reported.

LETTERS FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH.

1. Letter from the Ministry of Health, dated June 25th, 1924, enclosing a copy of the Rules framed by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales with respect to the Uniform and Badge which may be worn by Registered Nurses, endorsed with the approval of the Minister of Health, dated June 24th, 1924.

2. Letter from the Minister of Health, dated July 11th, 1924, to the Chairman of Council:—

DEAR SIR WILMOT,—

The revision of the draft rules relating to future admissions has now been completed, and I hope shortly to be able to ask you to come here to discuss certain drafting amendments which our legal advisers think necessary. But these rules involve an important point of policy which threatens to give rise to unexpected difficulties. The rules, as they stand, provide for a three years' course in a complete school and a four years' minimum in combined schools. It has been strongly represented to the Minister that the four years required in combined schools is going to make the working of the affiliation scheme very difficult. It is said that affiliated schools are already finding it difficult to recruit a satisfactory type of probationer, because suitable candidates withdraw on finding that they will require four years' training before they can become registered. I cannot, of course, say how many cases have actually occurred, but there is evidence of a widespread apprehension among the smaller hospitals that four years' minimum will make the recruitment of a decent type of probationer difficult, if not impossible, and that affiliation may break down in consequence.

It is recognised that transfer from one institution to another inevitably entails some interruption of studies, but the addition of a whole year on this account is open to criticism on the ground that the compensations for the interruption is excessive. It is understood that the case which the affiliation scheme was primarily intended to meet is the case of those hospitals which have such an unequal distribution of beds between medical and surgical cases that they could not by themselves afford the probationer a sufficient range of experience. If the Council's object is to combine a hospital having a preponderance of medical beds with another having a preponderance of surgical beds, it is not clear that there is a logical case for a four years' combined training. It would be different if the intention was to compensate for inefficiency in the constituent units, but it is understood that the Council do not intend to recognise as units of a combined school hospitals in which the training is below the normal standard of efficiency.

Before coming to a definite decision on this question the Minister would be glad to be furnished with a further expression of the Council's views in the light of the considerations above indicated. While he is in sympathy with the desire of the Council to raise the general standard of education in nursing, he is of opinion that this must necessarily be a gradual process, and he trusts the Council will bear in mind the importance of proceeding by stages, and will not press him to sanction changes which might add appreciably to the difficulties with which the smaller nurses' training schools are already faced.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) L. G. BROCK.

Sir Wilmot Herringham, K.C.M.G., C.B.

LETTER FROM MISS J. W. DAVIES, PRESIDENT, BRADFORD ROYAL INFIRMARY NURSES' LEAGUE.

3. Letter from the Matron of the Royal Infirmary, Bradford, and President of its Nurses' League, stating that, at a recent meeting of the Council of the League, which includes 250 members, the opinion was expressed that the election for the 11 seats for Registered Nurses on the General Part of the Register should be absolutely open.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.

Report of Finance Committee.

MR. R. DONALDSON, Chairman of the Finance Committee, moved that the Report be received.

On its recommendation, Bills and Claims submitted for payment were approved, and the following sums allowed:— Stamps £200, Insurance Stamps £40, Stamps for Examinations Department £50, Stamps for special notices, £350 (= £640), also £40 for Petty Cash, and £2,100 for Examiners' claims.

In regard to Recommendation 12 of the Education and Examination Committee,

"That the minimum fee for Examiners in the Oral and Practical Examination be £5 5s. if the Examiner is occupied for the whole day, and £2 12s. 6d. if he be occupied for half a day," the Finance Committee recommended the addition of the following words:—

"and that in the case of the written scripts, where the numbers of the scripts are less than 50, the charge should be half of that for the 100."

The Committee raised no objection to Recommendations 19 and 20 of the General Purposes Committee. These (a) instructed the Registrar to get such help in connection with the issuing of the Retention Fee Notices, and the Uniform Booklet, as was required to make it certain that the work would be done in time; and (b) sanctioning a gratuity of £5 to Fairhall (the caretaker) and £2 10s. to Mrs. Fairhall for work done in connection with despatching Examination boxes and carpentering work.

MISS WEISE did not like the word "gratuity." If these sums were payment for work done, she thought that it should be so described.

The Committee also raised no objection to Recommendations 25, 27 and 28 of the Uniform Committee. These dealt (a) with the Permits to be issued to Registered Nurses with the Uniform Rules; (b) the price of the hatband, which was fixed at 2s.; and (c) with the charge for the woven badge, which is now to be issued to tailors at 48s. per gross.

The Finance Committee further recommended, in accordance with the desire of the Government Auditor, that a Collective Fidelity Guarantee Policy be taken out with the Poor Law and Local Government Officers' Mutual Guarantee Association, Ltd., insuring the four Chief Officials of the Council for £500 each, and the remainder of the staff, not less than 30 in number, for £50 each, at a premium at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum, less a discount of 15 per cent.

The Committee reported that tenders for the building and other work at 20, Portland Place, had been received from six firms. They recommended that the tender of Messrs. Colley & Sons, Ltd., 135, Portland Road, Holland Park, W.11, amounting to £5,250, be accepted.

MISS WEISE said that she thought that the first suggestion was that this work would cost £2,000.

The CHAIRMAN said he was always of opinion that the cost would be about £5,000, bringing the rent practically up to £1,000 a year. The work to be done included reconstruction, decorations, wiring the electric light, and heating.

The Report was approved.

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