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EDITORIAL.

THE TRAINING OF HEALTH VISITORS.

The Minister of Health has recently issued a Memorandum (Memo. 101 M.C.W.) embodying very important principles, and specifying the conditions on which grants will be made from the Exchequer for the Training of Health Visitors; together with a letter addressed to the Local Authorities carrying out Maternity and Child Welfare Schemes.

The Memorandum states that as from the 1st April, 1925, these grants will be made by the Minister, instead of by the Board of Education. In the Memorandum of July, 1922, with reference to the training of Health Visitors, certain qualifications were mentioned as being desirable for a woman Health Visitor. This question has again been under consideration in the light of the experience gained, and in connection with the transfer to the Ministry of Health of the responsibility for the administration of the Exchequer grants in aid of training.

HEALTH VISITORS SHOULD BE TRAINED NURSES.

It is very satisfactory to note that the Ministry adopts the view that "there appears to be general agreement that as a rule the duties of a Health Visitor can best be carried out by a woman who has been trained as a hospital nurse, is a certificated midwife, and has passed through a special course of training designed to equip her with a knowledge of the preventive and public health aspects of her work." The Minister has, therefore, decided that on and after the 1st April, 1928, he will not approve the appointment of a woman *for the first time* as a whole time officer of a Local Authority with Health Visiting duties, unless she has obtained a Health Visitor's Certificate, given after an examination conducted by a Central Examining Body approved by the Minister for this purpose.

WHO MAY SIT FOR THIS CERTIFICATE.

This certificate will be obtainable by a woman desiring employment as a Health Visitor, who passes the examination above referred to, and

(1) Is a trained nurse who has completed a three years' course of training in a hospital which was during her training, or has subsequently become a training school approved by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, or the General Nursing Council for Scotland, or the General Nursing Council for Northern Ireland for the purpose of admission to the General Part of the Council's Register, or to the Part for nurses trained in the Nursing of Sick Children, or who has obtained admission

to one of such Parts of the Register of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales under the provisions of the Nurses' Registration Act.

(ii) Has undergone a course of training of two years' duration already recognised under the Board of Education (Health Visitors' Training) Regulations, 1919, together with six months' training in Hospital, and has obtained the Certificate of the Central Midwives' Board.

CONDITIONS UPON WHICH GRANTS WILL BE MADE.

The conditions upon which the Minister may make grants to recognised bodies in respect of approved courses of training provided by them for persons who desire employment as Health Visitors are as follows:—

TRAINING COURSES.

The Minister may approve for students who are trained nurses and who have obtained or have declared in writing their intention of obtaining the Certificate of the Central Midwives Board, a whole-time course lasting for a minimum period of six months.

For students who are not "trained nurses" the Minister will, *for the time being*, be prepared to approve for the payment of grant those courses of training of two years' duration which have already been recognised by the Board of Education under Articles 5 and 6 of the Regulations of 1919, but as indicated in paragraphs 4 and 9 of the conditions of grant, grants will be payable only in respect of students admitted to these courses who have obtained, or have declared in writing their intention to obtain, not less than six months' training in a Hospital, and also the Certificate of the Central Midwives' Board. It will rest with the body organising a two years' course to satisfy the Minister that the necessary Hospital training is available for these students, but no grant will be payable in aid of this training.

The Minister intends to review the position in regard to these courses in three years' time.

REFRESHER COURSES.

The Minister is anxious that facilities should be provided for those who are already engaged in Health Visiting to obtain occasional "Refresher" courses, and he is prepared to approve the payment by Local Authorities of the reasonable expenses of their Health Visitors (including fees, maintenance and travelling expenses) in attending whole-time courses lasting from two to four weeks and designed with a view to extending both their practical and theoretical knowledge. It is hoped that such courses will be organised in London and other large centres by bodies familiar with the kind of instruction required and having special facilities for obtaining suitable lecturers.

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