

Final Examination for Fever Nurses :—C. Rundle, Esq., M.D., D.P.H. (Liverpool).

Dr. M. A. Archdale (Sunderland) was appointed to the Board of Examiners for the Final Examination for Mental Nurses, in place of Dr. J. Barton White, resigned.

Disciplinary and Penal Cases Committee.

The Committee reported that it had met once.

Mental Nursing.

The Mental Nursing Committee reported that it had considered the letter from the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, referred by Council; it was decided that a Sub-Committee of the Mental Nursing Committee, consisting of the following members—Miss Musson, Miss Cox-Davies, Dr. Worth, Mr. Blackman, Miss Brown and Dr. Fawcett—be formed to consider the points in the above letter and to report to the Mental Nursing Committee at the next meeting.

It had further considered the advisability of drawing the attention of the Mental Hospitals Committees of the County Councils to the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, and the State Examinations in relation to Mental Nurses. It recommended that letters giving this information be addressed to the Committees, and this was agreed.

Correspondence, Interviews, etc.

The General Purposes Committee reported that (a) the correspondence dealt with in the office between January 28th and February 28th, 1929, amounted to: Letters received, 3,425; Letters despatched, 5,291; (b) That the interviews numbered 123; (c) That 134 permits were issued for the State Uniform.

The recommendation to cover the back staircase with rubber carpeting at a cost of £67 15s. was approved. The Chairman, Miss Cox-Davies, said that a carpet on these stairs wore out quickly and rubber was supposed to last for 20 years.

Uniform.

The Uniform Committee recommended that duplicate permits to obtain the State Registered Uniform be granted to nine Registered Nurses who reported the loss of the permits six months ago.

DISCIPLINARY CASE.

The Council then considered the case of Miss Edna Lovekin, S.R.N. 13699, which was presented by Mr. Hewitt Pitt, of the firm of Pontifex, Pitt & Co., solicitors to the Council.

Miss Lovekin had been notified of the charge against her which had been brought to the notice of the Council, and that the Council proposed to investigate such charge at a meeting to be held at the offices of the Council, 20, Portland Place, London, W., and to determine whether she should be removed from the Register.

The charge made against Miss Lovekin, who was Matron of the Northwood, Pinner and District Hospital, was of being found drunk while on duty. It was preferred by Mr. C. Warburg, Hon. Secretary of the hospital, first in a visit to the Office of the General Nursing Council, when he was requested to make it in writing. He then made the charge in writing, which was that when taking over the duties of Matron from her predecessor, Miss Lovekin asked the Sister for brandy as she was unable to sleep. Later she was found lying on the floor of her bedroom by the Senior Medical Officer and two other Medical Officers, who stated definitely that she was the worse for drink. She recovered slightly later and insisted on going out. On returning to the institution brought in whiskey and port wine. A friend was communicated with who took her away from the hospital.

Dr. C. T. Milne wrote to the Council that Miss Lovekin was his patient, and had been sent to him by a colleague in Hull two years ago, because she was in a distressed

state at having had to resign the position of Matron of the Victoria Hospital, Hull, for a similar reason to that of the present charge. He gave her encouragement, and she resisted stimulants for two years, and he then advised her to apply for a less strenuous post than her last charge. He admitted that it might have been ill-judged to do so, and he was shocked to find that she had again given way to stimulants, but he considered that she had shown fortitude, and she had, he knew, been a total abstainer since her last lapse. He considered that the facts of Miss Lovekin's case did not show cause for disciplinary action. He had asked Miss Lovekin, when consulted by her, to allow him to state her case to the General Nursing Council.

A letter was sent to Miss Lovekin asking her if she wished Dr. Milne's letter to be taken as her reply to Mr. Warburg's charge and she replied in the affirmative, when the formal charge was sent to her. A letter was received from her on February 20th stating that the charge was not strictly true as she was not strictly on duty, but she fully understood that the Council was justified in considering the charge. She declined to appear before the Council, and left it to form its own conclusions on the documents sent. She added that, except for the two lapses related, she had been a lifelong teetotaler.

The Council then considered the case at length *in camera* and when the press was re-admitted the Chairman announced its decision as follows.

DECISION.

(1) "That the charge against Miss Edna Lovekin, S.R.N. 13699, is proved."

(2) "That judgment on the case of Miss Edna Lovekin be deferred to the meeting of this Council a year hence, subject to—

(1) Miss Lovekin giving an assurance that she will place herself under proper medical care in the meantime, and

(2) that a medical report with regard to Miss Lovekin's condition be submitted to the Council for their consideration at the end of this period."

The duty of the General Nursing Council is (1) to protect the public from dangerous attendants and (2) to protect the honour of the Nursing Profession, and, in the present instance, we are of opinion that it has done neither.

We are quite prepared to regard inebriety as a disease, but a person who is suffering from it is not in a condition to be in charge of the sick, and the fact that her name is on the State Register of Nurses is a guarantee to the medical profession, and the public, that in the opinion of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales she is fit to be entrusted with this responsible duty.

We cannot exonerate from blame the medical man who advised Miss Lovekin to apply for a post as Matron. Our sympathies are with Mr. C. Warburg, the Hon. Secretary of the Northwood, Pinner and District Hospital, and his Committee, who we consider did their public duty in reporting the circumstances of the case to the General Nursing Council.

It is well known that medical men, from a mistaken sense of kindness, show undue leniency where the failings of nurses are concerned, but, in this instance, we must blame the professional representatives of the nurses on the General Nursing Council for their lack of appreciation of their public duty, as they are in a majority.

We have reason to believe that a small majority of the Nurse Representatives on the Council are not to be blamed for this lack of moral courage.

We observe that Miss Lovekin joined the College of Nursing in 1918, and is presumably, therefore, a Life Member. What is the Council of the College going to do about it?

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)