

GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

The one hundred and twenty-sixth meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales was held on Friday, July 24th, at 20, Portland Place, London, W., at 2.30 p.m. The Chairman, Miss E. M. Musson, C.B.E., R.R.C., presided.

The Chairman reminded the Council that in February last the Minister of Health had approved certain Amendments to the Rules. These had been sent to Scotland and to Northern Ireland. Both these parts of the Kingdom had now notified that they had adopted the amended Rules and the Schedules thereto.

Finance.

The Finance Committee submitted the Revenue Account and Balance Sheet, and it was agreed that observations upon it should be considered later *in camera*.

The Committee raised no objection to the recommendation of the General Purposes Committee that a cabinet with steel drawers to hold stencil plates for the Addressograph be purchased at a cost of £46.

Registration.

The Committee reported that the numbers of successful candidates at the May Examinations who were approved for registration on June 26th were as follows:—General Part of the Register, 1,363. Supplementary Parts of the Register: Male Nurses, 7; Mental Nurses, 48; Sick Children's Nurses, 72; Fever Nurses, 144. Total, 1,634.

Applications for approval for Registration on July 24th were:—General Part of the Register, by Reciprocity, 6. Supplementary Part of the Register for Fever Nurses: by Examination, 12; by Reciprocity, 3. Total, 21.

Education and Examination.

A further list of Applications for Examinership were considered and the applicants appointed.

Correspondence, Interviews and Permits.

The General Purposes Committee reported that the Chairman of Council had referred to the Committee a letter from the Registrar pointing out that under the terms of her agreement she would be due to retire as from 24th January, 1932. This letter was carefully considered and the following recommendation made:

"That Miss Riddell's term of office be extended for a further period of two years. The Committee desire to place on record a most cordial expression of appreciation of the services rendered by Miss Riddell to the work of the Council."

Miss Riddell then retired while the question was discussed, The Chairman remarked that at the end of next year the election of direct representatives of the nursing profession on to the General Nursing Council took place, entailing a great amount of business with which Miss Riddell was entirely conversant. She was conscientious, exact and particular.

The recommendation was carried unanimously, and on Miss Riddell's return to the Council Chamber the Chairman so informed her.

The General Purposes Committee reported that the correspondence dealt with between June 1st and 30th, was letters received, 2,639; letters despatched, 7,951. The interviews numbered 136. Eighty-nine permits were issued for the State Uniform.

The State Uniform.

Duplicate permits were issued to eight nurses, to obtain the State Registered Nurses' Uniform, who had reported the loss of their permits six months ago.

Date of Next Meeting.

The date of the next meeting was fixed for September 25th, and the meeting then terminated.

PREVENTIVE MEDICINE IN ITS BEST FORM.

The annual meeting of the British Medical Association, held this year at Eastbourne, was notable as being the first occasion on which a full-time Medical Officer of Health has held the position of President of the Association, a fact pointed out by the President, Dr. W. G. Willoughby, Medical Officer of Health for Eastbourne, when he delivered his address on "Public Health To-day and To-morrow."

Dr. Willoughby said in part:—"I will only briefly remind you of such evidence of progress as the increase in the expectation of duration of life, the decrease in the general death-rate, and in the infant mortality rate, the disappearance or lessened occurrence of some diseases, the mitigation of the severity of many others, the wholesale advance in the skill, technique, and safety of surgery, and the improved provision for the care and prevention of sickness. The increase in the average duration of life has been very considerable in the present century, averaging more than twelve years. Although this is owing mainly to the decrease in infant mortality, it is also partly due to the general lowering of death-rates at other ages. . . ." The stated causes of death in early childhood were chiefly respiratory diseases, enteritis, infectious diseases, violence, and tuberculosis. In many cases there had to be added to these causes "lack of resistance to disease due to want of medical attention and to improper environmental circumstances at an early age. . . ." The results of systematic research are most encouraging. As an instance, I may allude to such results as those experimentally obtained by Professor Edward Mellanby, Mrs. Mellanby, and others on vitamins, diet, and disease, especially as regards rickets and dental development. It has been shown that by attention to the diet of infants and children rickets and dental caries can be arrested, and even entirely prevented. I mention this one item among many to emphasise the necessity of the application of such discoveries by those whose duty it should be to look after the health of the persons concerned. A thorough application to the population of this one discovery would result in a very large reduction in the suffering of children and in the subsequent defects of adults. It would be preventive medicine in its best form, incomparably better than treating these ailments in clinics. The want of general application of existing knowledge is one of the many reasons for consideration of the scheme for extending the present limited opportunities of the medical practitioner to get into the homes for early advice and treatment."

THE STERILIZATION OF MENTAL DEFECTIVES.

In the House of Commons on July 21st, Major Church (Wandsworth Central, Lab.) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to enable mental defectives to undergo sterilizing operations or treatment upon their own application or that of their spouses or parents or guardians. He said that he and those associated with him realized that they were asking the House to do something which might be regarded as being in advance of public opinion. He frankly admitted that, in his opinion, although not in the opinion of all those associated with him, the Bill was merely a first step to enable the community to make an experiment on a small scale so that later they would have the benefit of the results of experience before compulsory sterilization of the unfit was proposed. He asked members to allow the Bill to be printed and read a first time, so that non-members could read it. They would then see that far from violating the laws of morality, the promoters of the Bill were proposing to do something which every body of social workers, fifty-eight borough councils, and a whole mass of medical and scientific opinion agreed with.

On a division being taken, the motion for leave to introduce the Bill was rejected by 167 votes to 89.

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