

"We are now able," he said, "to cater for others than mental hospital employees, and I want to say that the view of our organisation in that respect is full of hope for success. Under the Local Government Act distinct possibilities have been opened up. We are now able to cater for the employees of public assistance institutions and for the nurses in general hospitals.

Arising out of the Report, Mr. George Gibson, General Secretary, said that a meeting of Nurses arranged by Mr. Fenner Brockway in the House of Commons was solely for the purpose of trying to impress upon general nurses the desirability of the trade union organisation.

A resolution was passed asking the General Council of the Trades Union Congress to convene a meeting of unions who are interested in the organisation of nurses, with a view to arriving at some agreement as regards the method of organising them.

LEGAL MATTERS.

Alleged to have signed an unpaid restaurant bill as "Lady Curry," Mary Street, stated to be a nurse, but whose name does not appear on the State Register of Nurses for England and Wales, and who refused her address, was sentenced by Mr. Fry, at Bow Street Police Court, to six months' imprisonment for fraudulently obtaining several meals on credit.

GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

The General Nursing Council for England and Wales is now sending to all Nurses on the State Register the forms to be filled in, in connection with the Annual Retention Fee which is 2s. 6d. for each part of the Register in which a nurse's name is registered. The form must be returned to the Registrar, with the appropriate fee, on or before September 30th, and nurses should make a point of sending these without delay, otherwise if not received by the Registrar before September 30th their names may be excluded from the 1932 Register.

The present appears an opportune moment to draw attention to the following statement authorized by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

THE YEARLY RETENTION FEE.

The General Nursing Council for England and Wales has authorized the publication of a statement with reference to the yearly payment of 2s. 6d. by nurses whose names are entered on the State Register of Nurses.

It appears to be not generally understood that the payment of this fee is required by Law, as laid down in Section 5 (1) of the Nurses Registration Act, 1919, in the following words:—

"There shall be paid to the Council in respect of every application to be examined or to be registered under this Act, and in respect of the retention in any year of the name of any person on the register, such fees respectively as the Council may, with the approval of the Minister of Health, from time to time determine."

The reason for the payment of a yearly fee is that the Register may be a "live" Register. Many applications are made, both by letter and by telephone, enquiring if the names of certain nurses are on the Register, and it is essential that a prompt and accurate answer should be given.

Changes of Address.

Nurses as a class are, by reason of their work, "migratory," and they frequently fail to notify their constant changes of address. (Many appear to have no permanent

address.) These changes in a Register containing over 63,000 names number many thousands, from 14,000 to 16,000 a year in the past.

Marriage.

Many nurses marry. Last year (1930) changes of name as well as address, and consequent change in alphabetical order in the Register, numbered 726. Most of these changes of name were notified when the retention fee form was returned with the yearly fee. It would be impossible to get in touch with such nurses, many of whom still continue to practise their profession, if the changes of name and address were not notified. For the protection of Registered Nurses, and in order to prevent fraud and impersonation, the Marriage Certificate must be produced before any change in name is registered, and this certificate is returned by registered post.

Deaths.

Although there is an arrangement for all Registrars of Deaths to notify the Council of the deaths of any nurses occurring in their districts, this is frequently not carried out, owing, no doubt, to the fact that the profession is not always mentioned in the notification to the Registrar of Deaths. On receipt of the retention fee form, the relatives or friends of a nurse who has died during the year return the form and report the death.

Payment of Fee.

The Council has endeavoured to minimize the trouble to the nurses involved in forwarding the retention fee each year by issuing a printed form and enclosing an addressed envelope in which to forward the form with any change of name or address—and also the fee. This communication is sent out on the 31st of August each year, except in the case of nurses resident abroad, to whom the notification is sent out early in August.

If the fee is not paid by the end of October, a second reminder is sent to the effect that, if the fee is not received by November 30th, the name will be removed from the Register and will not appear in the printed Register for the following year. There were 5,000 such letters issued last year. A very large number of these communications are returned to the office marked "Address not known," or "Gone away, left no address."

A list of names of nurses who have not paid the fee is submitted to the Council at the beginning of each year, and such names are (by Law) removed from the Register. No reply having been received to either letter, it is presumed either that the nurse has died or that she does not wish her name to remain on the Register.

Withdrawal of Name.

A nurse who does not wish to continue the yearly payment for any reason, such as retirement from practice due to old age, ill-health, or marriage, should send a notice to that effect in order that her name may be put forward to Council as a "Withdrawal" (resignation) and not entered on the list of "non-payments." Many nurses fail to do this until the final notices are sent informing them that their names have been removed for non-payment.

It is often stated that the same penalty is incurred for non-payment of fee as in the case of removal from the Register for theft or any other misdemeanour. This is not so, as public enquiry and disgrace do not accompany non-payment of the retention fee as does Removal by Order of the Council under Section 17 of the Nurses Registration Act, 1919, i.e., in the case of a misdemeanour. Nor does the reinclusion in the first case entail more than an additional fee, and a fresh certificate of character where the nurse's name has been off the Register for two years, whereas restoration to the Register after removal for misdemeanour is hedged about by a number of safeguards.

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