

LEGAL MATTERS.

Two cases which have recently been reported in the press must surely have caused heart searching on the part of all connected with them, as to whether more might not have been done for the unfortunate patients concerned.

On November 21st, an inquest was held by Mr. T. Ottaway, the Barnet Coroner, into the circumstance of the death of a servant girl, who, suffering from severe burns was taken to the Finchley Memorial Hospital, and as no bed was available the patient was sent on to the Wellhouse Hospital, Barnet. An ambulance driver and fireman, who took the girl to both hospitals, stated that to his knowledge nothing was done for the girl at the former Hospital. He added that she cried out repeatedly for water, and a nurse, after inquiry, said she could not have it.

Dr. Segar, Medical Superintendent of the Wellhouse Hospital said that when the patient arrived there she was in great pain and suffering from intense thirst. She was profoundly "shocked" and extensively burned. He endeavoured to learn if she had received morphia, and was told that she had not. After describing the treatment administered continuously at the Wellhouse Hospital, the doctor said that morphia was given to her there. She died at 1.30 a.m. on the morning of November 14th, the cause of death being extensive burns and shock. Deceased on arrival was as bad as he had ever seen anyone to be alive. She was pulseless.

In reply to questions by the Coroner, and members of the jury, Dr. Segar stated that the sooner treatment is started in such a case the better the chance for the patient. Under no circumstances did he think he would have transferred this case.

Asked by the Coroner whether there was any reason why morphia or water should not have been given to the deceased woman, Dr. Segar said he could not understand it. If she had been in "No-Man's Land" in the War she would have had morphia. He agreed that, in view of the burned lips, cold water might have brought on more shock, but, he added, "why not give warm water"?

A member of the Honorary Staff who was in the Finchley Hospital at the time said he saw the patient, who asked for a drink of water and said her mouth felt dry and rough, he did not give it her because he believed her mouth might be burned, he debated in his mind whether to give her morphia but thought it wiser not to delay even for that necessary treatment.

The verdict of the jury was "Death from misadventure." They added that they were strongly of the opinion that the Finchley Memorial Hospital should have made some provision for this unfortunate girl.

The second case was that of a woman who died at the Crumpsall Hospital, Manchester, after childbirth. The circumstances alleged at the public inquiry eventually held early in October by Inspectors of the Ministry of Health, were that her husband had booked and paid £2 for a bed at St. Mary's Maternity Hospital, Manchester, for his wife's confinement. On May 11th she was received temporarily into the Out-patient's Department of that hospital, and eventually seen by a doctor, who considered there was no immediate hurry. The doctor and nurse left the room and shortly afterwards the baby was born, the patient's mother alone being in attendance. The doctor on his return directed the removal of the patient to the Crumpsall Hospital, some four miles away, as no bed was available in spite of the booking arrangement. She asked for a drink of water but it was not given her. When seen by a doctor at Crumpsall, considerable hæmorrhage had taken place, and there was uterine inertia.

The Ministry of Health Inspectors in their report to the Minister stated, "We are of opinion from the evidence submitted that Mrs. Taylor's death was due to the condition known medically as delayed obstetric shock. . . ."

Whatever may have been the cause of the death of this young woman, the facts which transpired at the inquiry concerning the way the case was handled, until the patient was put to bed in Crumpsall Hospital, have profoundly shocked the public, and horrified the obstetric consciences of State Registered Nurses and Certified Midwives.

THE GENERAL NURSING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND AND WALES.

The one hundred and sixty-second meeting of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales was held at the offices of the Council, 20, Portland Place, London, W., on November 23rd. The Chairman, Miss E. M. Musson, C.B.E., R.R.C., LL.D., presided.

The Chairman reported that the resignation had been received of Miss Phillips, the Registration Officer.

Finance.

On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, bills and claims submitted for payment were approved, and the sum of £200 for postage stamps, £25 for Insurance Stamps, and £5 for petty cash, were allowed.

It was agreed that the estimate of Messrs. Butler and Tanner, Ltd., for 250 copies of the Register of Nurses for 1935 of £2,005, be accepted.

Registration.

Applications for approval for Registration on November 23rd, 1934, were:—General Register, by reciprocity, 5; Supplementary Part of the Register for Sick Children's Nurses, by reciprocity, 1; for Fever Nurses, by examination, 3, by reciprocity, 3. Total, 12.

It was agreed that 30 nurses who had hitherto failed to pay their Retention Fee, and now wished their names re-included in the Register, should be re-included.

Education and Examination.

On the recommendation of the Education and Examination Committee, it was agreed that Pontypool and District Hospital be provisionally approved for one year, as a complete training school for nurses.

It was agreed that Exeter City Isolation Hospital, in affiliation with Southmead Hospital, Bristol, be provisionally approved for one year as a training school, which gives training under Section I (1) (d) of the Council's Scheme of Training; and that Kettering General Hospital be now approved as a complete training school.

It was agreed that the provisional approval of the following hospitals be continued for a further year:—Llandough Hospital, Penarth, from November 23rd; County Sanatorium, Milford, and Farnham Institution Infirmary, in affiliation with Kingston and District Hospital, from July 28th; Southlands Hospital, Shoreham-by-Sea, from July 1st.

It was agreed that the provisional approval of Warren Road Hospital, Guildford, in affiliation with Kingston and District Hospital, be continued for a period of two years from July 28th.

It was agreed that the Worthing Hospital be provisionally approved as a complete training school for a period of one year, and that the scheme of affiliation between Worthing Hospital and the Royal Northern Hospital, London, be cancelled.

General Purposes.

It was reported that Miss Mary M. Walmsley has been appointed to the post of Principal Clerk in the Examinations Department, in place of Mrs. G. M. Heys, resigned.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)