

In order to increase the number of candidates of a good standard of education and to avoid overburdening probationers during their first year at hospital, it is essential that the Preliminary State Examination should be divided into two parts and that the first part, consisting of elementary anatomy, physiology, hygiene and first aid as set out in the examination syllabus issued by the General Nursing Council, should as a general rule be taken before the candidate enters hospital, for example, at institutions (including secondary schools) where adequate arrangements are made to provide appropriate tuition. (This proposal is not to be interpreted as involving any decrease in the period of actual hospital training at present prescribed by the General Nursing Council.)

#### Opportunities for Prospective Candidates.

As candidates for the nursing profession will usually complete their school training and pass the theoretical part of the Preliminary State Examination by the age of eighteen, it is desirable that the local education and public health authorities should co-operate in the preparation of local schemes with a view to opportunities being given to prospective probationer nurses to enter such institutions as nursery schools, open-air schools, infant welfare centres, school clinics, children's wards, fever hospitals, nurses' homes and hospital kitchens, and thus to obtain useful experience.

As a corollary to the foregoing proposals and in the event of the General Nursing Council adopting the suggestion to divide the Preliminary State Examination into two parts, of which the first may be prepared for in secondary schools by girls who have passed the First School Certificate and propose to enter the nursing profession, the Secondary Schools Examination Council should confer with the General Nursing Council with a view to modification of the requirements for the Higher School Certificate either by the provision of optional syllabuses or otherwise to meet the needs of intending nurses.

Although the provision for free or assisted secondary education made by the local education authorities is generally available for girls who intend to enter the nursing profession, it is not considered that pupils can as a general rule be expected to take advantage of such provision after they have passed the First School Certificate unless their subsequent study obtains the official recognition of the General Nursing Council.

Greater facilities for fully trained mental nurses to take a two years' course in general hospitals are urgently required, and local authorities should be urged to co-operate with the mental hospital authorities by making the necessary arrangements therefor. Further, the General Nursing Council should be requested to confer with the Royal Medico-Psychological Association for the purpose of agreeing upon a common syllabus.

It is desired to emphasise the value of co-operation between head-mistresses and matrons as a means of stimulating recruitment and eliminating at the outset candidates who are unsuitable on other than educational grounds.

#### Care of the Chronic Sick.

The care of the chronic sick must be recognised as a special service, for the improvement of which there should be a special form of training and diploma supervised and arranged in consultation with the General Nursing Council.

Local authorities should be recommended to pay the fees and travelling expenses incurred by candidates on the first occasion of their entering for the preliminary and final State examinations.

It should be compulsory for all local authorities to make provision for the superannuation of their nursing staffs either by the adoption of the Local Government and Other Officers' Superannuation Act, 1922, or a special scheme, appropriate steps being taken to secure interchangeability

of pension rights, and provision should be made on the lines of section 8 of the 1922 Act for the establishment of a system of transfer values as between the local authorities and voluntary hospitals, the latter of whom should be urged to participate in the Federated Superannuation Scheme for Nurses and Hospital Officers.

As regards hours of duty, it is not considered, on the information before the Joint Committee, that there is any sufficient reason for differentiating between day and night duty. It is therefore recommended that the net working time (including lecture periods) for each type should be the same and should not exceed fifty-five hours per week.

#### Conditions of Admission and Service.

On the question of conditions of admission and service, the Joint Committee are in sympathy with the general spirit of recommendations xxix to xxxix and l to liii made by the Lancet Commission, on the understanding that the suggested additional privileges in respect of free time shall not entitle nurses to disregard, without permission, such general rule as may be prescribed for their return to the hospital at night.

The extract from the report of the Lancet Commission on Nursing referred to above is as follows:—

xxix. A clause requiring long notice of withdrawal should be substituted for the threat of fines or other penalties for breach of contract.

xxx. The matron should have power to suspend, but not to dismiss, a probationer pending investigation by a committee of the board of management.

xxxi. A separate bedroom should be provided for each nurse; the number of bathrooms should be adequate; and the common rooms and dining-room should be airy and well appointed.

xxxii. A varied and well-cooked diet should be provided. In large institutions an expert in domestic science should be appointed to undertake the housekeeping and supervise the cooking.

xxxiii. The supervision exercised over a probationer in the nurses' home should be relaxed; for example, she should not have to retire to bed before 10.30 p.m., or put out lights half an hour after retirement. The privacy of her bedroom should be respected. Permission to smoke should not be unduly restricted.

xxxiv. The nurses' home should be run on informal lines as a hostel under a warden.

#### Off-Duty Time.

xxxv. Off-duty time should be arranged in advance, so that the probationer knows at least a week beforehand between what hours she will be free on a given day.

xxxvi. A probationer on day duty should be free to go out between the time she comes off duty and bedtime without special permission.

xxxvii. Some measure of telephone facilities should be provided, and where possible reception rooms for guests should be available in the nurses' homes.

xxxviii. Attendance at meals adjacent to off-duty time should not be compulsory.

xxxix. Not less than three weeks' annual holiday should be allowed.

l. Sisters and staff nurses should be given improved conditions of service, on lines suggested in paragraphs 268 and 269.

li. Where the provision of fresh accommodation for nurses is under consideration, the possibility of giving some of the nurses the alternative of living out by the offer of non-resident allowances should be explored.

lii. Efforts should be made to attract girls with administrative ability into the profession.

liii. Posts as staff nurse should be reserved for fully trained nurses.

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