

## THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

### THE RECRUITMENT OF NURSES.

The Hospitals and Medical Services Committee of the London County Council, of which the Chairman is a medical practitioner and on which there is no Registered Nurse, has put forward a Report which has been considered by the Council and agreed.

#### The Reduction of Hours of Duty Recommendations.

A reduction in the hours of duty of L.C.C. nurses from fifty-four hours a week to ninety-six a fortnight and the abolition of split duty are proposed.

The Committee emphasises the advantage to be gained by the simultaneous introduction of the ninety-six-hour fortnight and the straight shift system of duty in the general and special hospitals. It states that its proposals should improve the general standard of the hospitals' service and be a potent factor in stimulating recruitment.

About 1,000 additional staff, at an ultimate estimated cost of nearly £123,000 a year, will be necessary. During the present financial year it is estimated that the additional expenditure will be just over £89,000.

#### Additional Facilities for Freedom.

The Committee also recommends additional facilities for freedom for the resident nurses.

At present all the female nursing staff except probationers, when off duty, are allowed leave of absence until midnight without previous permission. Extension beyond midnight is granted at the discretion of the matron.

#### Normal Freedom.

The Committee has now decided that in future extensions beyond midnight shall be regarded as normal freedom for the trained staff, and that they shall not be required to obtain permission beforehand. Later leave of absence will also be granted to probationer nurses.

Other proposals for nurses include:—

Use in the evenings of gymnastic apparatus in massage departments.

"General purposes" rooms for games, theatricals, dressmaking, etc.

#### Breakfast and Supper in Bed.

Breakfast or supper in bed on their days or evenings off, light refreshments after 10 p.m., and picnic lunches on days off.

Mr. Herbert Morrison, M.P., leader of the L.C.C., hopes this great move forward will lead to a material addition to the recruitment for a high and dignified calling. He would welcome recruits from all parts of the country, and hopes that London girls especially will not be backward in applying for posts.

We wonder what the parents of young women of eighteen years of age will think of "normal freedom" which permits their girls leave of absence until and after midnight in a city of "night hawks" like London!

Surely such licence is neither desired nor approved by the type of woman who intends to adopt Nursing as a career. How can she preserve health and strength, fitting her to nurse sick people, without sufficient sleep? And then, where are the Matrons to come from who can contemplate responsibility for young girls under such conditions?

A panel of Matrons, Sisters, Nurses and mothers should be empowered to meet, and deal with nursing education, service, recreation and food. We have no doubt they would evolve conditions which would be acceptable to student nurses of the right type. We are of opinion that father is out of his element in this *galère*.

## HOSPITAL REFORMS URGED BY THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

The British Medical Association has submitted a Memorandum to the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services.

Extensive reforms in the conditions of service of the nursing profession are recommended.

### LESS DISCIPLINE FOR NURSES.

"There is an impression prevalent among the public," it is stated, "that the standard of discipline in the nursing profession is unnecessarily severe, and that discipline is often a cloak for oppression. While it is believed that, to a certain extent, the impression of the general public is ill-founded, oppression does appear to exist in some hospitals."

"Lack of leisure," it is further stated, "is often considered to be a disadvantage of the nurse's life. In some hospitals the restrictions to which both probationers and trained nurses are subject in regard to their off-duty time are certainly almost conventual in character. For example, they may not be allowed to leave the hospital without special permission; they may be required on their day off to return to hospital by 10 o'clock unless special late leave has been obtained; social events to which male friends can be invited may be rare, if they exist at all.

"Such restrictions may appear in themselves trivial, but it is to such interference with the scanty leisure of the nurse that much discontent is due."

The B.M.A. recommend the organisation under the auspices of educational and hospital authorities, of pre-professional training courses for girls between the ages of 16 and 18, with adequate grants for training, maintenance, travelling allowances and scholarships. They consider that substantial improvements are needed in the conditions of living, pay and superannuation arrangements. There should be a relaxation of unnecessary discipline and restrictions of personal liberty.

### A Second Grade of Nurse.

Modifications of the examination system, with a development of a group hospital system of training, and the creation of a second grade of nurse to act in an assistant capacity is recommended.

We are waiting to peruse a Memorandum which discovers the psychological germ of the disturbing shortage of Nurses.

### DANGER TO THE HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY.

A notice has been issued by Southwark Borough Council that in future hospital accommodation for infectious diseases will be restricted because of a shortage of nurses.

The county medical officer of health has addressed a communication to Dr. W. Stott, the local medical officer, referring to the difficulty of obtaining nurses, particularly for L.C.C. infectious diseases hospitals. Because of the shortage, admissions to L.C.C. hospitals for certain infectious cases would be limited to those which in the opinion of the local medical officer of health required hospital treatment because of the severity of the complaint or the home conditions of the patient. Persons suffering from scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough, and dysentery would therefore be received only on application by a local medical officer of health. Southwark Council has also been officially informed that cases of chicken-pox, German measles, and mumps will not be admitted to L.C.C. hospitals except in very exceptional circumstances.

Is it not time that the nursing system (under medical direction) of the London County Council was investigated? Its failure to protect the community from the danger of wholesale infection, and sufferers from infectious diseases from life-long disability needs drastic reorganisation.

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