

## THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON NURSING SERVICES AND RECRUITMENT.

### SUGGESTIONS BY THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS.

The following statement appeared recently in *The Times* from its Labour correspondent.

#### A NATIONAL COUNCIL.

Representatives of the Trades Union Congress who gave evidence to the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services and Recruitment suggested the setting up of Whitley Council machinery with a national council to fix minimum salaries and maximum hours of duty.

The case was presented by Miss D. M. Elliott (National Union of General and Municipal Workers), Mr. S. J. Barton and Mr. A. Moyle (National Union of Public Employees), Mr. T. O. Morgan (National Union of County Officers), Miss H. M. Gray and Miss D. M. Hayward (Women Public Health Officers' Association), Mrs. B. M. Drapper (Guild of Nurses), Mr. S. Peck (Transport and General Workers' Union), and Mr. E. P. Harries (secretary of the T.U.C. Nursing Advisory Committee).

The reason given for the establishment of a national council was that a measure of standardisation in the nursing profession was necessary. The council would be a supervising and co-ordinating body. Minimum rates of salary might be, if necessary, on a regional basis. Local joint consultative committees should be set up in each hospital with power to consider such questions as hospital rules, arrangements for annual holidays, disciplinary questions, methods and organisation of work, recreational facilities, and similar matters.

The falling off in the number of nurses was attributed in the main to unfavourable comparison between the nursing and other vocations open to girls. Conditions in the service should be modernised. A standard 96-hour fortnight should be established by legislation in all hospitals and institutions, and additional hours worked should be paid for as overtime. There should be at least one free day a week.

#### Personal Liberty.

Nurses should be treated as responsible professional workers, and unnecessary restriction on personal liberty should be swept away. Each nurse should have her own bedroom, and trained nurses should be allowed, if they wished, to "live out" of nursing homes. No duty period should last more than four hours without provision for a meal away from the wards.

No student nurse should be required to undertake duties during the night before or on a day of any examination, and the practice of withdrawing student nurses from the wards from time to time for periods of study during training should be extended. Interchangeability of pension schemes, provision for unregistered nurses, and employment of more ward maids—which would help to relieve nurses from relatively unskilled duties—were also recommended.

The deputation submitted that only a State medical and health service, which would co-ordinate the activities of municipal and voluntary hospitals, would meet the growing needs of the country. The proposals submitted were a halfway house to the establishment of such a service.

### THE PROBLEMS OF THE MENTAL NURSING SERVICE.

*The Mental Hospital and Institutional Workers' Journal* announces that:—

The Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services, appointed by the Minister of Health to investigate the recruitment, training, registration and conditions of service of nurses, has set up a sub-committee to consider the problems of the mental nursing service.

On this Sub-Committee it has been agreed to co-opt one representative each of the Mental Hospital's Association (Mr. L. T. Feldon), the Mental Hospital and Institutional Workers' Union (Mr. Geo. Gibson) and the Royal Medico-Psychological Association (Dr. Masefield).

These Associations have been requested to submit a memorandum of evidence for the consideration of the Committee.

As regards the Joint Committee of Inquiry into the Recruitment and Training of Mental Nurses (set up by the M.H.A., the M.H.I.W.U. and the R.M.P.A.) it is proposed to proceed with the investigation.

## VOLUNTARY HOSPITALS EMERGENCY BED SERVICE.

The Voluntary Hospitals Emergency Bed Service is intended to simplify and centralise the admission of the acutely sick to hospitals for the benefit of patients, doctors and hospitals alike.

The Service is the outcome of a scheme prepared by the Voluntary Hospitals Committee, County of London, and the necessary financial support is being provided by King Edward's Hospital Fund for London. The organisation is in the hands of a joint committee representative of both bodies, under the chairmanship of Sir Harold Wernher.

It will work on very simple lines. Dr. A., who wishes to get a patient into hospital quickly, will ring the Service and give the patient's name, age, sex and diagnosis. He will then say to what hospital he wants the patient sent and if there is no bed available he will be told so at once and be asked to suggest another hospital or, if he prefers, be given a choice of hospitals where beds are available. The Service will book a bed for the doctor at the hospital finally agreed upon, and will inform him so soon as all is ready for the patient to be sent in. Had Dr. A. not called up the Emergency Bed Service for assistance he would have had to ring each hospital in turn until he found the bed he wanted. Cases have frequently been reported where doctors have rung seven or eight hospitals before getting a bed, and have wasted hours of precious time in doing it.

In order to be able to give the 8,000 London doctors the information they require quickly, the Service will be in frequent touch with 100 hospitals, and will obtain from them reports of the beds vacant. These will be recorded on a large indicator board by means of coloured tickets. From the shape and colour of the tickets, the operators will know for what purpose each bed can be used, whether for man, woman or child, and for what particular type of treatment, whether it be medical, surgical, maternity, or any speciality. By these means it will be possible quickly to find any type of bed that is called for.

The Service will be open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. with a staff of 12 working in relays. As soon as sufficient experience has been obtained, a 24 hour service may be started. All the staff are going to spend a preliminary period working in hospitals to gain a close knowledge of the problem from the hospital point of view.

### THE DEAR ANIMALS.

#### Dogs' Right of Appeal.

Sir Robert Gower's Bill entitled Dogs Act (1871) Amendment Bill is now obtainable. The measure enables Courts of Summary Jurisdiction to take cognisance of a complaint that a dog is dangerous and *inter alia* to make an order in a summary way directing the dog to be destroyed. Although in the past appeals to Quarter Sessions against such orders have been made, such Courts recently have taken up the position that no such appeal can be made. The object of the present Bill is to establish that beyond doubt such right of appeal exists.

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