

CHOICE OF CAREERS.

NURSING AND KINDRED SUBJECTS.

The Ministry of Labour is issuing a series of pamphlets on the "Choice of Careers," and No. 17 is concerned with Nursing and Kindred Services and is compiled by arrangement between the Incorporated Association of Head Mistresses and the Ministry, its purpose being to afford useful and authoritative information to girls from public secondary schools, their parents, teachers, and all who are concerned in advising them on the choice of a suitable career.

SCOPE.

The pamphlet deals with the profession of Nursing as a career for women, but there is also included information on the kindred services of Massage, Medical Gymnastics, Electricity, Radiography, Midwifery, and the work of the Health Visitor and the Sanitary Inspector.

The pamphlet states that the Nursing Profession as it exists to-day in this country owes its origin to the work of Florence Nightingale, and advises all candidates thinking of taking up Nursing as a career to read something of her life and experience.

REGISTRATION.

The pamphlet goes on to point out that "although it is not compulsory for a nurse to be qualified or to have her name on the Register of Nurses in order to practise her profession, the unqualified and unregistered nurse has no professional status and can never rise to the higher posts. She may also have difficulty in obtaining posts.

"Marked developments have taken place during the last 20 years in Nursing as a career, the most important being the passing in 1919 of the Nurses' Registration Acts, which standardised the professional training of nurses, and gave the qualified nurse a definite status. The Acts set up the General Nursing Councils for England and Wales, for Scotland and for Ireland, and the Joint Nursing and Midwives Council for Northern Ireland. Each Council maintains the Register of Nurses, approves hospitals which satisfy the required conditions as training schools, and conducts the various examinations which nurses must pass in order to have their names entered on the Register. The Councils are also concerned with the uniform or badge which may be worn by registered nurses and with regulations which have been made in respect of their uniform."

The pamphlet then goes on to give in detail the parts of which the Register consists and the conditions of admission to the General and Supplementary Parts.

QUALIFICATIONS.

The requisite qualifications are discussed under the headings "personal" and "educational."

Concerning the personal qualifications the pamphlet states that "the sense of vocation which has inspired generations of nurses was formerly considered to be in itself an equipment for nursing. Under modern conditions, while a sense of responsibility, a real interest in the problems of sick people, and a desire for direct personal service are still needed, the humanitarian qualities of a nurse must be reinforced by training based on scientific study. Nursing has become a highly skilled profession especially in view of recent advances in the arts of medicine and surgery, and in the development of hospital equipment. The qualities which have made a girl a good prefect at school are as much needed in the nursing profession, particularly for the higher administrative posts, as in other professions. There is scope for every type of talent within the ranks of the profession."

From the educational standpoint the pamphlet points out that "a good general education is necessary, not only because examinations must be passed, but also because

sick people need nurses with well-informed and well-balanced minds. Under the rules of the General Nursing Council, no candidate entering a training school after 1st January, 1938, may enter for the preliminary examination of the Council unless she either (i) possesses one of the educational qualifications set out in the Rules, such as school certificate or matriculation, or (ii) has passed a test examination set by the General Nursing Council for all hospitals, comprising simple questions on general knowledge, English and arithmetic, either before or within three months after her entry into the training school. The General Nursing Council has power to extend the period within which the test examination may be taken. (The General Nursing Council for Scotland has not laid down any definite educational standard and has not instituted a test examination. This examination is only in force in England and Wales)."

GENERAL HOSPITAL TRAINING.

The pamphlet emphasises the importance of obtaining training which will lead to registration and points out that "probationers should be careful, before beginning their training, to ascertain that the hospital selected is approved by the General Nursing Council. Lists of approved hospitals may be obtained free on application to the Council.

"A variety of types of training is open to girls who wish to become State Registered Nurses, but for registration in the main or general part of the register the Nurse must obtain her training in a General Hospital.

"General Hospital training is generally required for senior posts in all types of hospitals, and the possession of the dual qualification of general and special training is of particular value in obtaining an administrative appointment in a Special Hospital."

The question of Professional Examinations is discussed, both for the General and for the Special Registers of Sick Children's Nursing, Fever Nursing, Mental and Institutional Nursing.

Concerning Mental Nursing it is pointed out "that the work of the nurse in a Mental Hospital is constantly extending in scope, and affords opportunities for those who are interested in psychology, handicrafts, and teaching as well as actual bedside nursing.

"The full training for a nurse who wishes to be registered for Mental Hospital work covers a period of three years in a complete approved Training School, or four years in an affiliated school, and must include training in bedside nursing for at least six months.

"If a candidate has already had her name included in any part of the Register, she is entitled to qualify for admission to the part for Mental Nursing on completing not less than a further two years in a complete approved Training School for such courses."

SPECIALISED TRAINING AFTER QUALIFICATION.

Under this heading information is given concerning the international courses offered by the Florence Nightingale Foundation, the diplomas in Nursing offered by the University of London and the University of Leeds, the courses open to those who desire to qualify as Sister Tutors, training in industrial nursing, for the Queen's Institute of District Nursing, and Kindred Services.

It will be realised that the Labour Party has been at pains to collect and record a large amount of useful information for those who are contemplating choosing Nursing as a career. It would have added greatly both to the authority and to the prestige of this pamphlet had that Party secured the help of members of the Nursing Profession in drafting and presenting it.

The "authority" of the profession of Teaching, which has only quite recently shown any interest in the profession of Nursing, or in inducing girls to consider Nursing as a career, is quite negligible.

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