

examinations has later been sent by a co-operation to the hospital which first employed her at a much higher salary than she was formerly receiving in the hospital, though no better qualified than when she left, and we understand that such an event is frequently followed by a crop of resignations of probationers who prefer to follow her example and earn a good salary rather than make the effort necessary to complete their training and become State Registered Nurses.

It is therefore obvious to us that a proper control of these assistant nurses is urgently required and that their position in the Nursing Profession should be regularised. Some of our witnesses have represented to us that any action to give assistant nurses a recognised status would react adversely on the status of the State Registered Nurse and that, particularly in the sphere of domestic nursing, the State Registered Nurse would experience unfair competition from the assistant nurse. We are unable to accept this view. At the present moment State Registered Nurses do experience competition from assistant nurses, and the patient has no means, except by asking the nurse to state her qualifications, of distinguishing between the trained and the untrained nurse. However prudent it may be to make such an inquiry in all cases where the services of a nurse are required in the home, it is not a step which is usually taken and it appears to us that, far from imperilling the status or economic position of the State Registered Nurse, her position will be much more assured if the assistant nurse is recognised and her status defined, and if, at the same time, legislative measures are taken to protect nurses of both categories.

It follows that for the assistant nurse a measure of State control is essential, and we recommend that this should be done by placing these nurses on some form of register or roll. The most suitable body to keep such a Roll of Assistant Nurses would seem to be the General Nursing Council and if it should be found that the powers conferred upon the Council by the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, are too limited for this purpose, then these powers should be extended by suitable legislation.

It will, of course, be necessary to determine what qualifications should be required for admission to this Roll and what training in future the assistant nurse should receive.

We have received evidence of a scheme for the training of assistant nurses inaugurated by the Public Assistance Committee of the Essex County Council. The object of the scheme is to provide a training in the care of chronic and senile patients in Public Assistance Institutions and the training course lasts for two years. A simple test examination is given at the end of the first two months' preliminary training and there is a final examination at the end of the course. Trainees are recruited normally from persons of 18 years of age or over and the syllabus covers lectures and practical demonstrations on the theory of nursing, practical nursing, elementary anatomy and physiology, first aid, dietetics and hygiene. Many of our witnesses have spoken highly of this scheme and of the product, and it is clear that there is no insuperable difficulty in constructing a scheme of training suitable for girls with a practical bent for nursing but without the intellectual equipment necessary to pass all the examinations for State Registration.

We are not in a position to lay down the details of a general scheme for the training of assistant nurses but we would suggest the following as points for consideration when the conditions of admission to the Roll we have recommended are being framed.

Admission to the Roll should be open to women over the age of 21 years who have passed a medical examination, have produced satisfactory evidence of character and general suitability and have completed two years' training in an approved institution. We would stress that we attach much importance to the approval of an institution for training purposes, since careful inspection before approval, with subsequent inspections at reasonable intervals, will give a *prima facie* guarantee that the assistant nurse trained in that institution is a suitable person for admission to the Roll. Institutions approved for the training of assistant nurses will not normally be training schools approved by the General Nursing Council for the training of nurses for the State Examinations and the standard of approval must obviously be lower in the former case than in the latter. It is essential, however, that there should be adequate opportunities for obtaining the qualifications of an assistant nurse. It may, therefore, become necessary, in certain circumstances, to approve as an institution for the training of assistant nurses a hospital already recognised as a training school for State Registration, in spite of the objections which may be felt to the concurrent training of two types of nurse in the same institution.

As a considerable number of women who are suited for the type of work now carried out by assistant nurses might have great difficulty in passing a written examination of a uniform national standard, we are of the opinion that such an examination should not be a condition of admission to the Roll. The conditions for admission to the Roll should include a test in practical nursing, and we have in mind that assessors, who would be senior State Registered Nurses, should inspect the candidates at work on behalf of the enrolling body. The assistant nurse would then be seen at work in her normal environment and not in the atmosphere of an external examination. The more informal the assessor's visit could be made, the more satisfactory the results would be, and the assessor's opinion of the candidate's suitability should carry equal weight to that of the matron of the institution. In our view, therefore, admission to the Roll should be granted on the production of a certificate from the managing body of the hospital or institution, endorsed by the medical officer, the matron and the assessor, which would state that the candidate had received a continuous period of training in an approved institution, or associated group of institutions, for a period of two years, that she was competent in her work and that she was in all other respects a suitable person to be admitted to the Roll.

The expenses involved by the establishing of the Roll, inspection of institutions, and the payment of the assessors' fees would be met by the fee charged for admission to the Roll. This fee should, of course, be as reasonable as possible and we doubt whether it would be necessary for the enrolling body to incur the heavy cost of publishing the Roll in full each year. Publica-

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