

FIRST REPORT OF THE NURSES' SALARIES COMMITTEE.

CHAIRMAN: LORD RUSHCLIFFE.

The Minister of Health, Mr. Ernest Brown, presented the first Report of the Nurses' Salaries Committee (Salaries and Emoluments of Female Nurses in Hospitals) in Parliament, on February 11th, 1943, and announced in the House of Commons the Government's acceptance of the Report. The Government has now asked all hospitals to accept the recommendations and has agreed to meet half the additional cost of the new scales estimated to cost between £1,500,000 and £2,000,000. The increases, which begin on April 1, affect 70,000 nurses in nearly 3,000 voluntary and municipal hospitals.

The report recommends for the first time in the history of the profession, national salary scales covering every grade of nursing staff in every type of hospital. It says that their adoption will bring to an end "undesirable competition for staff between different hospitals."

Reasonable cash valuations of nurses' emoluments, such as board, residence, laundry, etc., are also fixed.

Those hospitals agreeing to the scheme must agree to it in its entirety.

EXAMPLES OF THE NEW SCALES ARE:

Scales of Annual Salary.

	Total value of salary and emoluments.
Student Nurse:	
First year, £40; second, £45; third, £50; fourth (before State registration), £60; fourth after State registration (if on four years' contract), £70	£115-£145
Staff Nurse (on general part of State Register): £100 rising by £5 a year to £140	£190-£230
Ward Sister: £130 rising by £10 a year to £180, with one additional increment of £20 after 10 years' service as ward sister	£230-£300
Qualified Senior Sister Tutor (in charge of one or more others): £260 rising by £15 a year to £350	£380-£470

For nursing staff up to and including sisters in sanatoria and tuberculosis hospitals, higher rates of pay are proposed. For example, student nurse, £45 first year; £50 second year; ward sisters, staff nurses and assistant nurses, £10 a year more than the rates for general hospitals.

Matrons and Assistant Matrons.

For Matrons and Assistant Matrons, detailed scales are proposed according to the type and size of the hospital. In a hospital with 500 or more beds approved for complete training, the matron's salary should range from £450 to £700 (total value of salary and emoluments £650 to £900).

Other Recommendations are:

Holidays: At least one complete day off duty a week, and 28 days' holiday with pay each leave year for all grades.

Hours: A 96-hour fortnight as soon as conditions permit.

Night Duty should not be done continuously for more than six months by sisters and staff nurses, or three months by student nurses.

Sick Pay rising from one month's full pay and two months' half pay in the first year of service, to three months' full pay and three months' half pay in the third year.

Free Travel for nurses in sanatoria to the nearest town twice a week.

Training: Payment of fees by student nurses on entry to a hospital or preliminary training schools should cease.

Assistant Nurses.

Assistant Nurses, partially trained women, are included in the list of beneficiaries, although we can find no allusion to them in the terms of reference.

£75, rising by annual increments of £5 to £95; emoluments £90; total value of salary and emoluments £165-£185—which in comparison with the salaries of highly-qualified women is, in our opinion, excessive and unjustifiable.

The scales of salaries for Registered Nurses, with the exception of those of Ward Sisters, appear fair. Those proposed for Ward Sisters are totally inadequate.

The highly qualified Registered Ward Sister is the most important officer, so far as the patients are concerned, in the hospital. Her personality, knowledge, skill, power of instruction and supervision; her personal association with the medical staff, nurses, students, domestic workers, and with the patients and their friends—renders her sphere of influence and skill of so personal a nature that the reputation of a hospital is largely in her power. That this key-official should receive less than Sisters engaged in house-keeping and other branches of hospital work is unfair and fails to recognise the personal responsibility of a Ward Sister for the safety, skilled care, and comfort of the patients. After all, hospitals are designed for the care of the sick, and their successful treatment and recovery largely depends on the personality, and skill of the Sister of the Ward. We hope the scale of Ward Sisters' salaries will be reconsidered and advanced.

RANK AND FILE EXCLUDED.

At a recent meeting of the Middlesex County Medical Society the Rushcliffe Committee's recommendations on Nurses' salaries were discussed, and a unanimous feeling of dissatisfaction with the recommendations of the report in respect of the remuneration of Ward Sisters and its effect on their status was expressed, as they consider an efficient Ward Sister to be a most important person in the satisfactory treatment of the patients, and the training of student nurses, and as an effective aid to the scientific advancement of medicine. The salary of a Ward Sister should not be less than that of an Administrative Sister. The Middlesex County Medical Society, of which Mr. H. Joules is Chairman, expressed the opinion that it was deplorable that no Ward Sister was a member of the Rushcliffe Committee, and that the deliberations of the Committee were felt to be influenced by the undue representation of the administrative hospital staff. It was suggested that the minimum salary scale of a Ward Sister should be £150 per annum, rising to £250, exclusive of emoluments.

THE HOSPITAL WORLD.

THE LONDON ASSOCIATION OF HOSPITAL SERVICES, LTD.

With the new year, a scheme has come into operation by which Londoners will be able to insure against medical expenses by joining the new London Association of Hospital Services, Ltd. Its chairman is Sir Bernard Docker, who, as chairman of Westminster Hospital and of the British Hospitals Association, as well as a member of King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, knows that middle-class people can well make fuller use of the hospitals than they do.

For a yearly payment of £2 12s. 6d. a man can obtain full benefit up to £105 for that year, and for £5 5s. may insure as well his wife and dependent children. A member may choose his own doctor, specialist, hospital, or nursing home, who need know nothing about his connection with the scheme, since he pays for his treatment and collects the amount afterwards from the association.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)