

Education and Examination.

On the recommendation of the Education and Examination Committee,

Schemes of affiliation and pre-nursing courses were approved.

General Purposes.

It was agreed to purchase a desk standard lamp at a cost of £1 19s. 6d. for the Assistant Nurses' Department. It was also agreed to buy four wooden box-trolleys at the cost of approximately £32.

Assistant Nurses' Committee.

A draft reply to the Minister of Health in regard to a panel of salaried inspectors of training schools for assistant nurses was before the Council.

The suggested expenditure in salaries and expenses was £3,000 a year.

Miss Pearce thought it unwise to tie the hands of the Council to that sum, and suggested that the figure be £3,500; Mr. Buckley thought it wrong to spring another £500 into the estimate.

A letter was also considered from the Minister of Labour and National Service in regard to the Syllabus of Training for Assistant Nurses.

The Minister is anxious that the training of assistant nurses should start as soon as possible.

Permission from the Minister of Health would be required before the syllabus can be put into operation.

The Council then went *in camera* to consider the procedure in regard to the admission to the Register of candidates who have satisfied the examiners, but who, in view of information brought to the notice of the Registration Committee, should not, in the opinion of the Committee, be forthwith admitted to the Register.

The Council *in camera* also considered a letter, dated November 20th, 1943, from the Minister of Health, suggesting certain amendments to the draft rules for Assistant Nurses, approved by the Council on August 20th, 1943.

The Council considered *in camera* draft rules 9 and 13 in relation to village nurse midwives, and draft amendments to be submitted to the Minister of Health.

The Council also considered *in camera* the case of a Registered Nurse.

Next Meeting of the Council.

The next meeting of the Council was fixed for January 28th, 1944.

REMARKS.

The Financing of the Assistant Nurse.

At every meeting of the General Nursing Council the financing of the Assistant Nurses' Roll receives support, but no report that the whole cost hitherto has been met by pooling the contributions of State Registered Nurses. Thus upwards of £34 was agreed, as reported above, for further equipment—some £1,500 having already been expended.

The salaries of a large number of clerical staff are now being paid.

The Cost of Salaried Inspectors.

The suggested expenditure in salaries and expenses of four inspectors of training schools for assistant nurses was £3,000 a year, and we are pleased to note that another £500 a year to be added to this estimate—proposed by Miss Pearce—was objected to by Mr. Buckley, Chairman of the Finance Committee. It has been calculated that each inspector will cost £900 per annum!

The financing of the Assistant Nurses' Roll is going to be a very costly matter, and we regret the G.N.C. dived *in*

camera at its recent meeting, so that we are unable to report the result of communications with the new Minister of Health; but the Minister of Labour (Mr. Ernest Bevin, M.P.), who backed the Nurses' Bill, 1943, is all for hustling on his proposed legislation for Assistant Nurses—cost what it may. Why delay? The Registered Nurses (Rule 19) of the Act must foot the bill, and delay of this atrocious injustice will gather opposition with time—and we see "Holloway" looming in the distance when the time comes for us to pay up! As the new Minister of Health is a K.C., it is to be hoped he will realise that Rule 19, which received no debate in either "Lords" or "Commons" during the passing by Parliament of the Nurses Act, 1943, should "lay upon the table" for 40 days, and if necessary, be eliminated and just financial regulations be substituted, until such time as the Act is abrogated, as no doubt it will be at no distant date.

THE ELECTION OF CHAIRS.

January is the month in which the General Nursing Council annually elects the Chairs of the various Committees, including the Chairman of the Council.

Recently Dame Ellen Musson, D.B.E., R.R.C., LL.D., intimated to the Council that she did not wish for re-nomination as Chairman of the Council.

This information was received with sincere regret, and it has been agreed to present Dame Ellen Musson with a testimonial in recognition of her services for the past seventeen years—from 1926 to date.

The new Nurses Act, 1943, makes the conduct of the business of the General Nursing Council exceedingly difficult.

The commandeering of the Registered Nurses' Headquarters in Portland Place, W., by the late Minister of Health, to which the Council agreed *in camera*, the responsibility for financing any deficit in the organisation and expenditure of the Assistant Nurses Roll, from funds subscribed by the Registered Nurses under the Nurses' Registration Act, 1919, will inevitably, sooner or later, inspire self-respecting Registered Nurses with an indignant sense of the injustice of their position, and it is presumable that the new Chairman of the General Nursing Council will have to be what the late Sir James Crichton Brown termed, when dealing with recalcitrant members of the R.B.N.A., "vurry furrum."

During the past quarter of a century the General Nursing Council has been controlled in succession by three Chairmen.

The first, Mr. J. C. Priestley, K.C. (Chairman 1920 to 1921), was appointed by the Government in 1920, during whose reign the historic "strike" of the majority of the Council held up business for many weeks, which ultimately compelled the then Minister of Health, Sir Alfred Mond, to call back his supporters, when Mr. Priestley resigned—a very instructive page of Nursing History.

Sir Wilmot Herringham, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.D., F.R.C.P., well known for his ruthless methods of address, was then appointed Chairman (1922–1925) with the conviction that the spirit of independence upon the part of the minority was for the time being crushed.

But this was in the good old days before government *in camera* became the accepted policy by the election to Council by members of the Royal College of Nursing of women prepared to deprive their colleagues of electoral rights.

Thus it will be realised that unless a new spirit animates the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and business is conducted with a sense of responsible co-operation where the electorate is concerned, there can be little hope of just and dignified conduct of business.

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