

During her year as a State Registered Nurse under supervision she may decide to specialise in another chosen field. She may do this by reverting to "student status" for a further six months, after her year under supervision is completed.

This period of two years' training would be based on a five-day training week of 40 hours, and would allow for six weeks annual holiday. The explicit aim of this new system would be the development of a nursing service in closer accord with modern ideas of social and preventive medicine. Health nursing and sick nursing must be considered side by side. The three-shift system should be brought into effect as soon as possible.

Although the Working Party was not asked to examine the problems of midwifery it is highly probable that courses to include training for this special branch in the "common field," will be arranged allowing the last six months of intensive study for the chosen field to be midwifery. Thus midwives would also be State Registered Nurses, and after registration their year under supervision would be spent doing midwifery before they were allowed to practise alone.

The success of a new system of training, such as this, will naturally depend on the quality and quantity of teaching staff provided. According to a recent estimate 900 fully qualified teaching Sisters would be needed by 1947, for ordinary purposes. More would be needed in order to make successful the newly proposed system of training. Also, the training of Nurse teachers would have to be reviewed, to bring it into line with their new functions.

Nurse Training Units.

The Working Party state that the scope of this new system of training is beyond the capacity of any one of the complete schools now approved for general training. Many of the large hospitals, irrespective of type, may serve as the key institution in the new scheme. Associated with the key institution will be many other types of hospitals and a variety of health agencies, so as to cover the whole field of nursing experience and training. Thus "composite training units" will be built up.

The organisation of the training in each composite training unit, will be under the charge of a Director or Principal, assisted by an adequate staff, some of whom may be employed full-time on training, having their headquarters at the key institution, whilst others would be members of the staffs of hospitals and public health agencies within the unit, and who would assist with training only part time. A very close liaison must be maintained between the Director or Principal of the training unit and the Matrons of the hospitals.

Ward Sisters and Sisters of departments will be chosen for their aptitude to teach, so that the teaching of the tutors attached to the units will be continuous.

As, under existing circumstances it will not be possible to secure widespread development of training units on the lines suggested, every region ought to make the effort to set up at least one training unit of the type proposed.

Finance.

The finance of the Nurse training units should be entirely independent of hospital finance. The Student Nurse will receive free tuition, board residence, uniform and laundry, and a small training grant to cover personal expenses. If the Exchequer is to find the money for raising the status of Student Nurses to that of an entirely student status, and find the money for the new training schools, income tax is bound to be affected for some years to come!

The Assistant Nurse.

The statutory title "Assistant Nurse" came into being in 1943, when a Nurses' Act provided for a Roll of State

Enrolled Assistant Nurses. By the end of 1946, 27,300 Assistant Nurses were enrolled without necessarily having any formal training, but by virtue of some lengthy period of experience of bedside nursing.

Such Nurses are mostly employed in Municipal General, Tuberculosis and Fever Hospitals. They are not usually engaged by large Voluntary or Mental hospitals. For various reasons, the Working Party do not favour perpetuating this grade of Assistant Nurse with legal status and protection, but suggest that at a given date, the Roll should be closed (without prejudice to existing S.E.A. Nurses).

In their place, employment should be given to Nursing Orderlies, who would be given a simple course of instruction and experience over a period of from three to six months, without any statutory recognition and without being allowed to use the title of "Nurse." The status and salary of Nursing Orderlies should be already defined in relation to the status and salary of the nursing staff. Costs should be graded in seniority with ample scope for promotion, and Nursing Orderlies who have, or who develop, the necessary ability should be given the opportunity, subject to selection procedure, to become Student Nurses.

Requirements of Nursing Staff.

To give effect to student status, and the three-shift system, a considerable increase of nursing staff in hospitals will be required. The Working Party have assessed the possible increase as from 22,000 to 24,000 trained Nurses and about 14,000 Nursing Orderlies. This would raise the trained nursing force in hospitals from 88,000 to 112,000, and the requirements of trained Nurses in all fields would not be less than 120,000 to 125,000. Such an increase seems to be nothing short of impossible of attainment, and our efforts to cure sickness must be equally counter-balanced by our efforts to prevent illness, whilst attracting the best types of girls into the ranks of the Profession.

REASONS GIVEN FOR THE SHORTAGE OF NURSES BY EX-STUDENT NURSES

A special analysis by the Working Party on the Recruitment and Training of Nurses, of statements by ex-student nurses explaining why they gave up training, indicated that there is at present a general factor underlying all causes of wastage. First in significance in this composite factor is hospital discipline; second, the attitude of the senior staff, third and fourth, food and hours and pressure of work. Following on these are poor accommodation, insufficient pay, poor social and recreational facilities, and domestic work.

The Working Party of the Ministry of Health on the Recruitment and Training of Nurses was composed of the following five members:

Sir Robert Wood, K.B.E. (*Chairman*), Principal, University College, Southampton.

Miss D. C. Bridges, R.R.C., S.R.N., S.C.M., President, National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Miss E. Cockayne, S.R.N., S.C.M., Matron, Royal Free Hospital, London.

J. Cohen, M.A., Ph.D., F.B.P.S., Cabinet Office.

T. D. Inch, C.B.E., M.C., M.D., F.R.C.P. (Edin.), D.P.H., Department of Health for Scotland.

Dr. John Cohen did not sign the Majority Report and is preparing a Minority Report, which we hope to publish later.

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