

INFECTIOUS HOSPITALS MATRONS' ASSOCIATION

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Infectious Hospitals Matrons' Association was held on September 13th, 1948, at the Neasden Isolation Hospital, Brentfield Road, N.W.10. The President, Miss A. A. Ward, S.R.N., was in the chair.

In the course of the business conducted, nominations to the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland were agreed unanimously.

Arrangements for a Social Meeting were discussed, and it was agreed that one be held this year, on Saturday October 16th; the entertainment to be a *Matinée*, preceded by light refreshment. Cost of tickets, including refreshments, 10s. 6d. each. All members who wish to take part are requested to communicate as soon as possible with the Secretary, Miss L. Clark, S.R.N., Matron, Isolation Hospital, Goldsmith Avenue, London, N.W.9.

Annual General Meeting.

An invitation was received from Miss B. West, Matron, Barnet Isolation Hospital, to hold the Annual Meeting there, on Saturday, November 27th, 1948; subject to unforeseen changes. Miss West was warmly thanked.

The Matron, Miss Ward, introduced Dr. Twining McMath, M.D., the Physician Superintendent, who joined the party over the tea cups, which ended a very pleasant meeting.

ASSOCIATION OF SICK CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL NURSES.

The quarterly meeting will be held at The Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh, on Saturday, October 16, at 2.30 p.m.

CONTROLLER COMMANDANT Q.A.I.M.N.S.

The appointment of Dame Louisa J. Wilkinson, D.B.E., R.R.C., as Controller Commandant, Q.A.I.M.N.S., has been approved by H.M. The King.

This is the first such appointment for Q.A.I.M.N.S., although it is the general custom for Regiments and Corps throughout the Army to appoint as Colonels Commandant distinguished retired officers.

Such an appointment would include social and welfare duties connected with the Service, liaison with Army and civilian organisations, control of and advice regarding charities, memorials, service customs, etc.

DEARTH OF FULLY TRAINED NURSES IN SINGAPORE.**From a Correspondent.**

Considerable anxiety has been expressed of late in Singapore over the dearth of fully trained nurses. The nursing staffs of that great Eastern city were recently nearly one-third below establishment. Head mistresses of girls' schools have been asked to urge pupils to envisage a nursing career.

Native leper nurses and dressers have been trained as additional staff at the Singapore Leper Settlement, where some 340 lepers of several Asiatic races are segregated.

The Medical Superintendent, Dr. Grove White, deploras the dispersal of the lepers when the Japanese began to occupy the region; it put back the progress of segregation by many years. He considers that the concealment of lepers in Malaya is so prevalent that the compilation of statistics of the incidence of leprosy is almost impossible. The only means of inducing lepers to reveal themselves, in his view, would be the discovery of some drug giving a very good chance of a cure; they would then soon begin to come along to the Settlement for treatment.

"WHERE THE WANDERER FALLS DEJECTED"—(Gordon).

Is it possible for pen to adequately describe a day in the life of a Mental Hospital? We fear not, but we will do our best.

One early September morning found us on our way to the Bexley Mental Hospital, just celebrating its Golden Jubilee, following the invitation of Miss M. Wakefield, S.R.N., F.B.C.N., the Matron of the institution.

Two hundred acres sounds a vast estate, but it is not too great for the activities which therein lie, when one realises that upwards of two thousand patients are housed there, with many hundreds of staff.

Matron met us on the threshold, and welcomed us into her small kingdom, where we later tried to assimilate the extent of her labours.

We had been invited to speak with Dr. L. C. Cook, M.D., D.P.M., the Physician Superintendent, but a suffering patient had to be given priority, and we feel we are the poorer for not meeting the man who ranks so high in the appreciation of the staff.

Our first impression was of entering most picturesque parkland, with buildings dotted around, so that the views of all were not impaired.

A visit to the Nurses' Home proved, beyond all doubt, that the comfort and well-being of the staff was of paramount importance to the general administration of the hospital.

Single bedrooms, mostly with running hot and cold water and large built-in cupboards, and overlooking spacious lawns, were most pleasing to the visitor, as were the luxurious off duty apartments set well away from contact with the institution. There is also a beautiful ball-room, with parquet flooring and ample stage, where the patients and staff hold their dances, concerts, etc., and where a cinema show is provided once a week for the patients well enough to attend, accompanied by a doctor and nurses. We learned that only up-to-date pictures are shown, a newsreel and a cartoon.

The culinary departments, where cleanliness was most apparent, occupied an enormous amount of space, presided over by Miss M. Vidall, assisted by some paid staff, and where some patients are happily employed.

The vegetable room was also very extensive, where a row of chairs, with knife attached to each by chain, had been in use by patients preparing potatoes for the meal.

We were invited to see the lunch served that day for the inhabitants of this small world—many delicious looking roast legs of pork, vegetables, apple dumplings, custard and milk puddings.

The laundry, in all its completeness, was duly inspected, and we marvelled at this hive of industry, where workers and patients were busily employed—we were told that some 25,000 articles pass through these expert hands every week!

The mending and needlework rooms presented a like picture; shirts for the men and dresses for the women grew to completion under nimble fingers and sick minds. We still marvel at the perfection of those buttonholes!

A great feature of this institution is that, where possible, patients are not confined behind locked doors, but are able to roam the spacious grounds through which we passed, and where patients mostly seemed to be living in a gay or morbid world of their own. Some welcomed us with smiles, some were oblivious of our presence, and one touched us to make sure we were real.

We passed through wards where patients were in bed suffering from common maladies in addition to their great affliction, where staff ministered to their needs, and where

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