

## The General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

A MEETING of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales was held at the offices of the Council, 23, Portland Place, London, W., on September 23rd, 1949. Miss D. M. Smith, O.B.E., Chairman, presided.

### Correction.

The Chairman notified the following corrections in numbers given for June, 1949, examinations:—

Final Examination, 47 successful candidates instead of 46.  
Preliminary Examination, 1,702, Part II only, instead of 1,701.

The Chairman notified the Council that as the Bill now before Parliament has not been passed, it will be impossible to hold the Council Election at the end of December.

The continued deficit in the cost of holding the Assistant Nurses' Test is causing the Council some anxiety.

### Finance.

Bills and claims submitted for payment were approved, and the sum of £3,250 for five weeks' weekly salaries and inspectors' expenses, and £500 for postage were allowed.

It was agreed that £753 be spent on Kardex cabinets.

### Education and Examination.

It was agreed that the provisional approval accorded to the course of training for the Sister Tutor's Diploma of the University of London provided at University College, Hull, in the session 1948/49 be confirmed; that the course be approved for a further period of five years—viz., 1949/54—and that registered nurses who obtain the Sister Tutor's Diploma of the University of London on completion of such a course be entitled to receive from the Council a Certificate of Registration as a Sister Tutor.

A number of applications were considered for the inclusion in schemes of training of three years' duration of hospitals at present approved as affiliated training schools. The approval of these schemes necessitated the withdrawal of approval of the existing schemes of affiliation.

Pre-nursing courses were approved for the purposes of Part I of the Preliminary Examination.

### Mental Nursing.

It was reported that the Mental Nursing Committee had considered a Report and Recommendations on the Mental Nursing Problems submitted by the Royal Medico-Psychological Association, to which the following reply was agreed:—

Your letter of August 17th, 1949, enclosing for the consideration of the General Nursing Council a copy of your Association's Report and Recommendations on the Mental Nursing Problem was considered by my Council at its meeting to-day, and I am asked to send you the following comments:—

My Council agrees that the shortage of trained staff in mental hospitals and mental deficiency institutions constitutes a grave problem. The lack of suitable recruits for training is already resulting in a very serious deficiency in the supply of suitably qualified candidates for the senior posts in mental nurse training schools, whose holders are responsible for the practical and theoretical training of the student nurses, and this is a matter which has caused my Council much concern during the past few years.

It is realised that one of the effects of this shortage of recruits is that it is not possible for hospital authorities to accept only those candidates who appear capable of completing the requisite training and examinations to become registered mental nurses, and my Council is aware that

the question arises as to the desirability of providing some other form of training for those entrants to the mental nursing service who are unable to reach the standard required for the final examination in mental nursing or to profit by the course of study leading up to this examination. As you are aware, however, when the roll of assistant nurses was set up under the Nurses Act, 1943, the majority of members of the mental nursing profession were strongly opposed to the establishment of an assistant nurse grade in mental hospitals, on the grounds that it would be most undesirable to introduce a further grade between that of the qualified mental nurse and the nursing assistant or ward orderly; that the institution of such a grade would in fact discourage students from endeavouring to qualify as registered mental nurses, and that any alternative training would impose on the trained nursing staff additional demands which they could not possibly fulfil. It will be realised that should this view have altered in any way since that time it would not be for my Council to take the initial step regarding any possible change in this connection.

With regard to your Association's suggestion that the training of a lower grade of nurse should take the form of attendance at the ordinary training course but without the necessity of taking examinations, this is not considered to be feasible, since the type of recruit concerned is either unwilling to attend lectures and classes or is unable to profit by them. My Council desires me to point out that the title "sub-nurse" would not be suitable for any grade of unqualified staff, since there are statutory restrictions on the use of the title "nurse" and on designations containing the word "nurse."

Every effort is being made by the Council to encourage the authorities of mental nurse training schools to improve their training facilities, and emphasis is laid on the necessity for well-planned systematic ward teaching as well as classroom instruction; in many cases vigorous efforts are being made by the authorities concerned to overcome the many difficulties and to improve the standard of training, in order to attract and maintain the interest of the student nurses.

My Council agrees that it is essential that teaching of the student nurse should commence from the first day of entry to training, and the requirement of my Council regarding the provision of a preliminary training school course of at least eight weeks before entry to the wards (which has been in operation in respect of all training schools except those for mental and mental deficiency nursing since 1947, and is to come into operation in respect of those hospitals also on January 1st, 1950), should help to overcome the difficulties in this connection.

The question of the salaries and training allowances payable to the staff of mental hospitals is, of course, a matter for the appropriate Whitley Council. It is understood that this matter is already under consideration.

The recommendations that classroom instruction should be given in duty time, that ward orderlies should not undertake nursing duties and that senior administrative positions in mental nurse training schools should be held by nurses doubly qualified in general and mental or mental deficiency nursing are all in accord with the policy of the Council. The supply of doubly trained nurses is not at present sufficient for the Council to make it a requirement for recognition as a training school that the senior staff should be so qualified, but training school authorities are encouraged to appoint such persons whenever possible, and to second their nurses for general training in order to increase the future supply of doubly trained nurses.

The question of seconding general trained nurses for training in mental nursing is a matter for the authorities of general hospitals, but the Council allows a reduction of one year's training in such cases, just as in the case of mental nurses seconded for general training.

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