

down as a statutory requirement of the minimum age of 18 for entry to training as a student nurse, a requirement which is already in existence in respect of pupil assistant nurses. The most recent discussions with the Ministry make it seem that steps will be taken before very long to introduce this requirement, albeit by gradual stages.

In June, 1947, the establishment of a Preliminary Training School, or a minimum period of eight weeks' preliminary instruction for every student nurse before entry to the wards, became a statutory requirement for all Training Schools except those for mental nurses. The greatest leniency was exercised by the Committee to meet the initial difficulties of Training Schools in this matter, but it can now be said that this requirement is being carried out in all Training Schools with resulting benefit to the student nurse and to the patients.

A task which was already in hand when the present Council took office was the revision of the Syllabuses of Subjects for Examination, last revised in 1932. It was in 1942 that the Council first agreed that the syllabuses were in need of revision and still they await the approval of the Minister, indeed the texts as finally agreed upon by the Council were forwarded to him in February, 1947, and within the last year the Committee felt obliged to review and revise these drafts in the light of changes occurring during the intervening period. The Minister has now expressed his unwillingness to take any action before the new Council comes into office, and it is earnestly hoped that this will be one of the first matters to receive their consideration, for once the syllabuses are approved there will be much work to be done on matters arising from them, such as alterations in examinations and the guidance of teaching staff in the use of the new syllabuses.

It should be mentioned that one alteration to the Preliminary Syllabus was accepted by the Minister in October, 1949, the addition of a section on an Introduction to Psychology, which was agreed with the Royal Medico-Psychological Association when they handed over their examinations to the Council.

A major change was made in the conduct of the examinations in June, 1950, by discontinuing the oral examinations and increasing the length of the practical examinations. From the comments which have been received from examiners and candidates since June, the change would appear to have led to a definite enhancement in the value of the examination. The Council will no doubt wish to place on records its appreciation of the assistance given by doctor examiners over a period of years, and the hope that they will continue to maintain their keen interest in nurse training.

It is interesting to note that the number of examination candidates appears to be on the increase. The total entries for the three examinations held during 1949 amount to 21,217 for the Preliminary Examination and 10,200 for all Final Examinations, as compared with 15,085 and 9,221 in 1944.

The Council allowed persons returning to this country after evacuation to the United States during the war, and more recently persons who were obliged to leave India, to count training already undertaken in those countries towards training in this country.

Since the October, 1949, Examinations it has been a requirement that a candidate who fails the Final Examination on three occasions shall undergo a six months' refresher course before entering for the Examinations again.

The shape of nurse training has undergone a series of changes during the last 5½ years. The war-time recognition of training in hospitals not specifically recognised as Training Schools, but which came within the jurisdiction of a parent hospital under the Emergency Medical Services scheme, was brought to an end only in October, 1947. In June, 1947, the Council fixed a minimum number in regard to the daily average occupation of beds which must be reached by a

hospital approved as a Training School; in March, 1949, the Council asked that Affiliated Training Schools, i.e., small general or special hospitals where a nurse spent the first two years of her training before going on to a further two years training in a Complete Training School, should cease at the earliest opportunity and every effort be made to produce a more comprehensive training within a period of three years. Also in March, 1949, the Council made it known that fever training should be incorporated within general training as soon as possible and should not continue as a special training. Group schemes of training providing wide clinical experience are encouraged and have in many ways been assisted by the grouping of hospitals under the National Health Service.

Consideration was given during 1946 and 1947 to the possibility of the Council becoming responsible for post-registration training and examination in tuberculosis and orthopaedic nursing but at the present time it would appear advisable for such experience to be included within the comprehensive training, as is already the case in many schemes of training.

The very heavy responsibilities of the Committee in considering applications for approval as Training Schools has been assisted beyond measure by the appointment to the staff of the Council of an Education Officer and five full-time Inspectors of Training Schools who are able to present to the Committee detailed reports of their visits to Hospitals and are able to explain in person to the Training School authorities the requirements of the Council. At the present time 875 hospitals are taking part in the training of student nurses.

Under the 1949 Act the Council is required to follow a certain procedure before finally deciding to withdraw or withhold approval as a Training School from a hospital. The Council had in fact already agreed a procedure as a result of experience gained in the hearing of an appeal brought against the Council under the 1919 Act in November, 1947, by a hospital from which approval as a Training School had been withdrawn, the first such appeal since 1927. It was interesting to find that the Council's agreed procedure met the new requirements of the 1949 Act completely.

Sister Tutor Courses continue to be conducted under the aegis of a University, though it was with regret that the Council learnt of the discontinuation of the Course at Birmingham University in 1948 and at Manchester University in 1949. The present number of such courses is four, all coming within the aegis of the University of London, who have announced their intention of extending the course to cover a period of two years as from October, 1951; this action is to be welcomed, but the shortage of qualified Sister Tutors is still a very acute problem, and the Council has been glad to nominate recently three representatives to serve on a Committee to be set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Health to consider this whole problem.

The appointment to the staff of the Council in 1947 of an Inspector of Training Schools with mental nursing qualifications has proved of great assistance to the Committee in dealing with this branch of their work. At the present time 133 hospitals are approved as Training Schools for Mental Nurses and 52 for Nurses for Mental Defectives.

Also as a result of the negotiations with the Royal Medico-Psychological Association the Council agreed that the representation of mental nurses on this Committee should be increased; this was not possible under the legislation in force at that time, and so the Minister of Health appointed five persons as "assessors" to serve on this Committee with the right to take part in the discussions but not to vote. This point has been provided for in the 1949 Act and the present Standing Committee will give place to the Statutory Mental Nurses Committee which will be set up after the new Council takes up office.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)