

nursing-work of their respective hospitals while preparing for examination, and it would be a very serious disorganization of hospital duties were a number of senior pupils absent together for several days. On this account it has been arranged, when possible, to make a centre for examination at a district hospital wherever there are five or more candidates from that hospital. The chief difficulty in so arranging has been to find examiners who are not too intimately associated with the hospital and its staff to be quite unbiased in awarding marks at oral and practical examinations.

It has been suggested by an examiner that the marks awarded for practical work during the whole term of training, together with the personal report of the Matron responsible for the training of the candidates, should be taken into consideration in the registration of nurses. While this could be well done in awarding hospital certificates, I do not consider it would be just to the young women sitting for the State examination to subject them to possible rejection on these reports, in which there would inevitably be lack of uniformity owing to the varying personality and standards of so many different Matrons. One with a very high standard might refuse to give a good report to a girl who was perhaps mediocre, but still above the one who would be recommended by a Matron with a lower standard or more lenient temperament.

It is during the term of training that those who are unsuitable for the high profession of nursing should be weeded out, but when allowed to go through the full term, nothing but the final tests should be taken into consideration. The manner in which to obtain some guarantee that the nurses registered by the state will be the right stamp of women, is for the Hospital Boards to realize the great power which is in their hands, and to make careful and judicious selection of the women they put in charge of their training-schools. Having done this they should invest the Matron with sufficient responsibility, and allow her to select to the best of her judgment the material she is to train, and allow her also to reject the material which on trial she finds unsuitable.

There appears to be a sufficient number of young women coming forward in the larger schools to train as nurses, but some hospital authorities have found it advisable to reduce the age for entrance from twenty-three to twenty-one or twenty years of age. This is a wise step. It is not so much the age as the personality, development, and circumstances which count. Many suitable applicants are lost because the time between completing education and entering a hospital is so long that the girl, perhaps obliged to achieve independence, drifts into some other occupation.

Some remarks on the point made by a Matron at a conference of the New Zealand Trained Nurses Association are worthy of record:—

“First, I should like to ask, when should a girl begin her nursing training? To answer this one naturally asks, when does a girl usually begin to train for her life's work? We will be surprised to find that for every other profession she begins her training at school, while in her early teens. Does she intend to follow medicine, she selects her subjects for that career when studying for her matriculation, probably at the age of fourteen years. Should law be the object of her ambition, or an arts degree be her goal, the same early period of her youth makes the selection of her subjects, always bearing in mind that the subjects for each examination are all preliminaries to the highest position she can attain to in that special profession. Why should the girl who early decides that nursing is to be her chosen vocation not be educated on these lines, and in the subjects which can and will be of most use to her in that profession? We now know that physiology, anatomy, hygiene, and cooking are to form big factors in modern teaching for the successful home life of the wives and mothers of the future, so also is the domestic-science course; therefore I claim that we should be prepared to select for the girls who intend to be nurses those subjects most necessary for the successful fulfilment of their ambition. Girls may marry and become mothers at eighteen years old, and yet we debar them from entering at that age upon a profession which, next to motherhood, is recognized as the highest ideal for women. A girl may enter for a medical course, go through the hospitals, and be a fully qualified medical practitioner at the age of twenty-one years. She is then permitted by law to prescribe for any ailment and treat any case, however critical, but she is debarred by an unwritten law from learning to nurse such a case until after she is twenty-one years old.”

There has not during this year been the former shortage of trained nurses for the staffs of the various hospitals. The output of the training-schools has been largely increased, and, as many of the registered nurses have agreed to remain after registration for a fourth year in their training-schools, there has not been the urgent call for outside nurses. The hospitals which exact this agreement from their probationers are now offering some special advantages for the nurses in this fourth year. The Auckland Hospital has an excellent scheme to give post-graduate courses in hospital management, dispensing, midwifery, massage, and electrical treatment. The Dunedin Hospital has a similar scheme, and others are considering the same.

The question of a uniform rate of salaries for hospital staffs has been much debated. The Department was requested to draw up such a scale and to circularize all Hospital Boards. The matter presents great difficulties owing to the varying conditions of the hospitals, and it is indeed quite impossible to attain any great degree of uniformity. Nurses frequently take into account the desirability of hospital positions from quite other than monetary conditions. Eventually a scale was drawn up and sent to the Boards for consideration. For responsible positions it is the view of the Department that the payment should be on a higher basis than now prevails, in order to induce well-qualified women to remain in the Public Service.

The nurses admitted during the year to the register from outside numbered 35, from the Australian States 7, and from Great Britain and Ireland 28. Very few foreign nurses find their way to New Zealand, and the few who do are usually not eligible for registration owing to a short term of training.