

14. With regard to research generally, the Obstetrical and Gynæcological Society has recently completed an investigation as to the value of maternity exercises. By the courtesy of Sir Bernard Dawson, Professor of Obstetrics at the Otago University, the conclusions were submitted to the Nursing Division, and same are to be transmitted to the Medical Officers of Health for distribution by the District Nurse Inspectors to Maternity Hospitals.

No. 6—TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE NURSING STANDARDS IN OBSTETRICAL CARE BEEN AFFECTED CONSEQUENT UPON STAFFING DIFFICULTIES

1. It is common knowledge that during the last two years nursing personnel of maternity hospitals have been definitely overworked.

2. Domestic staff has been difficult to obtain. However, the Government immigration scheme has helped in some instances, and it would appear that the over-all position has become slightly easier.

3. The great difficulty has been that very few hospitals have in the past provided living-in accommodation for domestic staff, and this has been accentuated by the existing housing shortage.

4. As the consequent result of the shortage in domestic staff, nurses have had to undertake duties which normally do not fall within their sphere.

5. The position with regard to nursing personnel, however, has materially improved due to the following factors :—

(a) The general recruitment programme.

(b) The personal appeals to, and interviews with, newly-qualified maternity nurses by the Department's Nurse Inspectors, with the object of endeavouring to persuade them to continue with obstetric nursing.

(c) The greatly improved salary scales, which now offer a better career and which should further assist the position. As an instance of the growing popularity of obstetrical nursing, the Nursing Division recently had to approach several hospitals before being able to place eight maternity trainees upon their arrival from Britain under the immigration scheme.

6. Certain small country hospitals are still finding extreme difficulty in recruiting staff, but this is no new matter. Personnel generally are still loath to accept positions in isolated areas, particularly where but few amenities exist.

7. In spite of difficulties, the record maternal and infant death rate and still-birth rate for the Dominion this year show that the Maternity Nursing Service has coped with the position in a most satisfactory way.

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