

Up to this time permission for a hospital to become a training-school was entirely a matter for the Minister of Health and the Department, and it was this Department which laid down the conditions governing training. The difficulties surrounding the staffing of small country hospitals was such that constantly pressure was brought to bear to grant this permission because such ensured a stable staff, rather than that the teaching facilities existed. Endeavours had been made to bridge the gaps by affiliations, but the negotiations and personal prejudices existing between institutions made for many complications.

Obstetrical nursing practice had also fallen under criticism as it was felt that the period of training was insufficient (six months for a registered nurse and one year for an unregistered woman) and, further, that many registered nurses trained as midwives who had no intention of practising, and so there was a shortage of well-qualified women. A Royal Commission of Inquiry had been held in 1924 concerning New Zealand's high maternal mortality rate, particularly from puerperal septicæmia, and among its recommendations were far-reaching reforms in regard to the training and practice of obstetric nurses.

Further, the English Registration Act which was passed in 1919 had set up a General Nursing Council, on which registered nurses were in the majority, to control the approval of training-schools, the State examinations system, and the registers.

These factors, therefore, induced the Government to introduce and carry through the House of Representatives an entirely new Act, entitled the Nurses and Midwives Registration Act, 1925. This Act set up a Board, to be known as the Nurses and Midwives Registration Board, the membership of which consisted of the Director-General of Health as Chairman; the Director, Division of Nursing as Registrar; a member of the medical profession, nominated by the Minister of Health; and two nurses, one of whom must be a midwife, nominated by the New Zealand Registered Nurses' Association. Following an amendment to this Act in 1930 the membership of this Board was increased to three nurses and one lay member representing the Hospital Boards' Association.

The functions of the Board are:—

- (a) To determine courses of training to be undergone by candidates for examination as nurses, midwives, and maternity nurses under this Act.
- (b) To approve hospitals or other institutions at which approved courses of training may be received.
- (c) To conduct examinations under the Act, to appoint examiners, and make all other necessary arrangements for the purposes of such examinations; and to issue certificates of having passed such examinations to persons entitled thereto.
- (d) To receive applications for registration under this Act and to authorize registration in cases where the conditions of registration have been complied with.
- (e) Generally within the scope of its authority to do whatever may in its opinion be necessary for the effective administration of the Act.

The first action of the new Board was to redraft the entire system of training obstetrical nurses. A great deal of difficulty was found in devising a scheme satisfactory to the hospitals from the points of view of staffing and to the Board from the point of view of adequate teaching. Various amendments were made, until, finally, in 1930, the present training course was approved. These conditions now consist of two courses of training—(a) that of a maternity nurse and (b) that of a midwife. The period of training for the first is six months for the registered nurse and eighteen months for the unregistered woman. At the conclusion of this period of training it is necessary for the trainee to sit for the State Maternity Examination. Should she pass she is eligible to be registered as a State Maternity Nurse. The second course is only open to those nurses who are registered as maternity nurses, whether registered nurses or not, and lasts over a period of six months, at the termination of which it is again necessary for the trainees to pass the State Midwifery Examination before being registered as a midwife.

The Board from time to time has entered into reciprocal agreements regarding the registration of nurses with other countries, has standardized the record system of the training-schools, and through the visits of inspection paid by the Registrar to all training-schools has insisted on improved teaching conditions both in regard to the theoretical and clinical instruction, and has laid down certain qualifications for the teaching staffs.

Up to 1930 only public hospitals were recognized as training-schools for nurses, but in this year, following on considerable agitation, an amendment was made to the Act which gave the Board power to approve as a training-school for nurses any private hospital or private charitable institution where such hospital or institution provided not less than forty beds to be available at all times for patients receiving nursing and hospital service without charge or for a charge not exceeding the actual daily cost of rendering such service and does not exceed the daily charge for the time being for in-patients in the nearest public hospital.

In addition, the Board must be satisfied that a complete course of instruction in theoretical and practical nursing can be given therein and that the training therein will not be lower in any respect than that given in the public hospitals.

To date only one hospital has qualified under this clause of the Act.

For many years the New Zealand Nurses' Association had made representations for the necessity for a superannuation scheme which would safeguard the retirement of nurses. In 1926 a Superannuation Act passed which, under the National Provident Fund, established a separate superannuation fund for nurses in the employ of Hospital Boards and gave power to extend these provisions to various voluntary bodies who were employers of nurses. The basis of this scheme is that after the first year of training nurses the Hospital Boards would each contribute a proportion of the annual