

visitors. All suggestions shall be laid before the Council for their approval before being put into force.

Annual General Meeting.—An annual general meeting of the Health Visitors' League shall be held at the time of the annual general meeting of the Trained Nurses' Association of India.

Officers:

The President.

The Hon. Organizing Secretary.

The Hon. Treasurer of the Trained Nurses' Association of India.

The Hon. Branch Secretaries of the Health Visitors' League.

The Gen. Secretary of the Trained Nurses' Association of India.

The Hon. Organizing Secretary shall be full member of the Trained Nurses' Association of India, as well as the Health Visitors' League. She shall be a member of the Council of the Trained Nurses' Association of India.

4. **A Shortened Period of General Training for Health Visitors.**—Miss Ghodke read a paper on behalf of the Delhi Branch of the Health Visitors' League urging that the period of training in General Nursing for Health Visitors should be shortened to two years, as the Health Visitors take Home Nursing, First Aid, Anatomy and Physiology and other subjects during their 1½ years training. (The syllabus of the Lady Reading Health School was read.) They are attached to a hospital for their 1½ years midwifery training when they learn something about hospital, etiquette, routine work, etc. and get a certain amount of practice in bedside nursing, so it is felt that it is unnecessary for them to start again as first year probationers; who have had no previous training and are just from school. Given a chance, health visitors would be able to do a good deal of practical work in the wards unaided.

The President thanked Miss Ghodke for her paper and pointed out that the Trained Nurses' Association of India has no power to legislate for a health visitor to receive concessions in regard to the shortening of the period required for qualifying as a nurse. The Nurses' Registration Councils lay down the rules for training and therefore the health visitors must approach the Councils in regard to this matter.

5. **The Election of the Hon. Organizing Secretary.**—The Meeting recorded its great gratitude to Mrs. Haining, for all the work she had done for the League during her term of office as Hon. Organizing Secretary. Although she had registered her willingness to stand for re-election, there were two other nominations, namely:—Miss Korah (Delhi) and Mrs. David (Calcutta) and Miss Korah was elected.

The Position of Male Nurses.

A PAPER READ BY MR. DEVI LAL BISSA, R. N.

WORTHY PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to have the opportunity of meeting you all today. It is after a long time that I have been able to partake in the deliberations of the Conference in person. I, therefore, take this opportunity of expressing my best wishes for the success of the Conference which promises to be a panacea of all grievances of the Nurses in this Country, and especially of the male ones whose sex I have also the proud privilege to represent from a place, though in the heart of Rajputana is in no way backward, so far as the knowledge of medical science and its exercises are concerned.

Firstly, may I thank the T.N.A.I., for the lively interest it has shown in the cause of the male nurses, and secondly may I express my appreciation to Miss Diana Hartley, the General Secretary of the T.N.A.I. for her personal initiative and

indefatigable labour which she has undertaken for the amelioration of the conditions of the male nurses in India.

Though male nursing is a new venture and I feel that a great deal will have to be done by the men before they expect something good for them, but it seems very unfair that men passing the same examinations, training, etc., as their female colleagues are not given the same status and rank, especially in the services.

Altogether a complete change in the salary and conditions of male nurses is badly needed. In the old days when a less educated class of man entered a nursing hospital for training, it was a different matter. But now when men of a better class altogether enter for full training and take an intensive course of training, including mental, and fever nursing and also T. B. nursing and other kindred subjects, the remuneration should certainly be worthy of their work. No men did more for their fellow men than the male nurses in the past, and no men have been more badly compensated. Male nursing should be regarded as one of the highest callings for men and they should be paid a salary commensurate with their work. Instead of which, here in India, the male nurse who is out day and night is not paid even a living wage.

I know that the conditions have improved in the last few years, but after ten years nursing, it is obvious to me that most of the benefits the male nurse now enjoys (and the last five years have brought many improvements) are the direct result of the efforts of a number of men who have worked hard in the past. It is not for us, young, middle aged, or old, to rest on our laurels, however, but to go on working to prove our worth, being loyal to those who have helped us in the past and *leaving the talking to diplomatists rather than agitators.*

It is surprising that some of the hospitals are taking on their staff "Conscientious Objectors". The employing of such men tends, I consider, to lower further the status of the "Mere male" nurse. I suggest that all male wards should have qualified and State Registered male nurses in charge, particularly the Genito-Urinary and V. D. and out patients' departments. The employing of male tutors could be considerably extended and also the trained men *should have a say in the administrative aspect of the various hospitals.* More hospitals should be recognised as male training schools, and every encouragement given to the young male probationers.

Another trouble of male nurses in India is that they are still being confused with compounders and orderlies, and the behaviour with them is far from being satisfactory. Scores of probationers give up their training after a few weeks or months, not because of the long hours or the menial tasks, but for the manner in which they are spoken to. Certainly no male nurse would tolerate being treated as if he were an idiotic child, further the duties are managed in such a manner that they cannot find any time for out door games or recreation.

Now regarding the poor response from the male nurses for the Army services, it is advisable to look at the possible causes of this poor response through a nurse's eyes. While it is undoubtedly a mistake to imagine the cure of all ills is afforded by an increase in salary, very considerable increases will have to take place if an adequate supply of experienced male nurses is to be maintained. Even more important, however, is the accompaniment of improved conditions, which accord the male nurse his proper status and responsibility. I have had the privilege of hearing and discussing with male nurses who had already joined the Army is the conditions of the work in military hospitals and from these, it is evident that there is real dissatisfaction among the members of the profession with many of these conditions and resulting wastage which the profession can ill afford.

These difficulties naturally do not apply to all such nurses but they occur in a greater or lesser degree in far too many cases and they have an unfortunate effect, resulting in a steady loss of some of the most promising recruits and preventing many entering these services at all. The ventilation of the problems and free discussion, with the possibilities of a round table conference, would do much to clear the main difficulties and the benefits that would at once accrue would be a sufficient reward.

Now regarding the utility of the male nurses, there are many services which a male patient will gladly ask a male nurse to perform, which he will shrink from asking a woman to do for him. It needs little strain on the imaginations to visualise numerous situations to which this fact applies, and this, apart from the reassuring advice received on little doubts not big enough to ask the doctor about, and embarrassing to ask the Sister. In the matter of preparation for operation too, most people will agree that it is more agreeable to all concerned, if this is carried out by one of the same sex as the patient. All this may sound rather prudish, but blinking at facts does not alter them and the position is, that we are all somewhat self conscious when we ourselves are the subjects. I feel very strongly that there is a great deal of scope for male nurses and I am sure that if given equal rights and status with women, they will prove themselves as worthy of the '*Nightingale tradition*.' I agree that much remains to be accomplished before male nurses are accepted as absolute equals and there is every reason to believe, that there is an increasing tendency so to accept them, but they should prove their worth before they expect this. I should welcome the T.N.A.I. being responsible for every nurse in this country and the Secretaries to give help and advice to the nurses in question and the Central Government and Local Authorities.

I should like to see this Association so strong and so invested with powers that their advice to the Local Authorities, would be adopted on every occasion and not shelved quietly into a file and forgotten, as are so many suggestions concerning the nursing profession.

I wish that a post could be created for an administrative male nurse in each of the big hospitals which employed large male nursing staff, not merely a staff representation, but co-operating with the Matrons-in-Chief and having authority. A new title should be initiated for male nurses possessing Sister-Tutors qualifications, but it will remain a problem unless future posts are created, because the Sister-Tutor (Female) will always predominate as long as she alone is responsible for teaching the curriculum for the nursing care of both male and female.

In the end I may once again thank the T.N.A.I. and its officers for their splendid work they are doing for the cause of male nurses and wish this Conference every success.

Book Review

Aids to Human Physiology by Dr. S. N. CHAKRABARTI, Late Senior
Demonstrator of Physiology, Campbell Medical School and
Hospital, Calcutta.

Pioneer Book Company,

18, Sharma Charan De Street, Calcutta.

PRICE Rs. 4-0-0.

This book on physiology is written as an aid for medical students, who are studying for their examinations. The writer states that it is not a text-book on Human Physiology, but is just a help-book. Its great value lies in the fact, that it is written in the form of questions and answers and it is so well tabulated, that there are no unnecessary words. In spite of the fact that the subject matter is so condensed, it is written in an interesting manner and should prove a most useful aid to memory and the accurate study of, this most important subject.

As the book is intended for medical students, it goes into its subject in rather more detail, than is necessary for nursing students studying for the state examinations, but we feel that all nurses' libraries should contain a copy and we can heartily recommend it for the use of Sister Tutors and post-graduate students. The fact that it only costs Rs. 4-0-0 places it within the reach of most graduate nurses.