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# THE LANCET COMMISSION ON NURSING

*Appointed in December, 1930, to inquire into the reasons for the shortage of candidates, trained and untrained, for nursing the sick in general and special hospitals throughout the country, and to offer suggestions for making the service more attractive to women suitable for this necessary work.*

## FINAL REPORT



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74. The attractions of private nursing, of the public health services, of special branches of nursing, and of nurses coöperations, all, it is said, giving better pay, are cited as contributing causes to the lack of trained staff in the hospitals. On the other hand, some of the special hospitals find that nurses are disinclined to take up their specialised forms of nursing without such extra pay. The nursing of mental patients is by some labelled "monotonous and unpleasant," while parents are said to object to their daughters undertaking work amongst the tuberculous. Individual hospitals endeavour to overcome these difficulties in various ways. For instance, one sanatorium reports that they employ ex-patients, "at first on half-time and half-pay, gradually working up to full time under medical supervision." A Fever hospital states that it is "experimenting with girls of 16 as 'ward orderlies' who do domestic work and assist with convalescent patients," until they are of an age to begin training.

75. Finally, in the opinion of an appreciable number of hospital authorities, the shortage of candidates is due only to the fact that the profession is judged by the conditions of the past and not by those of the present. They believe that an "erroneous idea of overwork, underfeeding, and underpay" exists, and that "exaggerated reports of treatment by seniors" remain in the minds of possible candidates and their parents. It is believed that these opinions could be corrected by suitable propaganda in schools and in the Press.

#### Conclusion of Dr. Bradford Hill's Report.

76. This summary of opinions shows that there is hardly a factor analysed in the preceding tables relating to conditions of service, which has not been referred to, in one way or another, as bearing either upon the shortage of applicants for training or upon the shortage of qualified nurses. As pointed out in the Introduction (Appendix XVIII., para. 5), it has not been the aim of this report either to prove or to refute these beliefs, but rather to show exactly what *are* these conditions which, in varying ways, the hospital authorities themselves regard as contributing to an undoubtedly serious shortage both of trained and untrained staff.

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