

preventive medicine. This was an enormous claim which demanded better machinery of investigation, such as reliable morbidity statistics and accurate records of illnesses, close collaboration with medical practitioners, and detailed studies in workshops as well as in homes.

"Augustus found Rome of brick and left it marble. Much of public health is still of brick, but its foundations are well and truly laid. Give us the stones—in the findings of experimental research—and we will turn the structure to dazzling marble."

A vote of thanks to Sir William Savage was carried on the proposition of Prof. A. V. HILL, seconded by Major Gen. H. MARRIAN-PERRY.

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS OF DIETITIANS

MEMORANDUM FROM NUTRITION SOCIETY

In July, 1944, a Special Planning Committee was set up by the Nutrition Society (English Group) to consider and report on the training of persons in charge of the provision of food in institutions, industrial canteens, hospitals, etc. The committee has summarized its findings in the subjoined memorandum, but one of its members (Miss M. Grant) has dissented from paragraph 1 (concerning membership of the British Dietetic Association and registration as medical auxiliaries). The memorandum is published by the Planning Committee with the consent of the committee of the English Group of the Society, but it should not be regarded as necessarily expressing the view of the Nutrition Society. The Planning Committee is of opinion that the present is an appropriate time for the publication of the memorandum and intends that it should serve as a basis for discussion, from which it is hoped useful suggestions for the training of dietitians will emerge. The memorandum is signed by M: Andross, M. C. Broatch, S. J. Cowell, J. C. Drummond, D. Hollingsworth, D. Johnstone, F. Le Gros Clark, A. Lumby, H. E. Magee, J. R. Marrack, H. Masters, and E. R. Smythe.

1. We consider that the description "dietitian" should henceforth be confined to such persons as are suitably qualified for registration as medical auxiliaries. Persons desiring to qualify must hold a Diploma in Dietetics from a university or training college approved by the British Dietetic Association, or alternatively a degree in dietetics if a degree course in the subject approved by the same body is subsequently established in any of the universities.

DEFINITION

2. The term "dietetics" has been variously defined as "The part of medicine which relates to the regulation of diet" (*New English Dictionary*); as "Medical or Hygienic Art relating to diet or food in health and disease" (Webster); as "The study of food in its relation to human needs, health, etc." (*Universal Dictionary*); and as "The interpretation and application of the scientific principles of nutrition in health and disease" (British Dietetic Association). Of these the last appears to us to be the more precise, and we suggest its expansion to read that dietetics is "The interpretation and application of the scientific principles of nutrition to the human subject in health and disease."

3. The terms "dietetics" and "dietetic treatment" seem to have been well established with their modern connotation by the middle of the nineteenth century; but the word "dietitian," though it occurs about the same period, is commonly of more recent usage. There is some doubt as to the correct spelling of the word. We recommend that the customary spelling be retained; and we define a dietitian as one who is qualified as above.

TRAINING

4. While we consider that the diploma course in dietetics (for particulars see Appendix A) has met the needs of dietitians in the past, the profession has widened its field of activity, and we believe that a uniformly high standard of training should now be established. The most desirable way of reaching this standard would be the opening of a university degree course in dietetics. The course should combine the requisite basic

scientific training with all the essential practical work. This would bring the training into line with that of dietitians both in the U.S.A. (see Appendix B) and in the Dominions.

5. While we should always recommend such a degree course as generally to be preferred, we are of opinion that there should be another recognized mode of entry such as the diploma course to the profession intended more particularly for persons whose educational careers were interrupted by the war, or who have decided at a more advanced age than usual to take the dietitian's qualification. This arrangement should, however, be regarded as a temporary one, and it should be reviewed as soon as degree courses are in operation in a sufficient number of universities.

6. The diploma course should be open to all students who hold a university degree or professional qualification similar to those required for the present diploma course (see Appendix A).

7. The diversity of the types of preliminary training at present recognized means that the diploma course has to some extent to be adapted to the varied experience of the students entering the training, especially on the practical side of their work. It is desirable that the student should become familiar from the first with the chemical and physiological concepts implicit in the applied science of dietetics; a preliminary training in nursing and institutional management does not provide sufficient opportunity to acquire this basic knowledge. Nevertheless, we are of opinion that some opportunity should be allowed for qualification to those who, already trained in these subjects, show unusual aptitude for dietetic work.

8. The work of a dietitian responsible to a large hospital or a local authority demands high organizing skill and personal adaptability. Many of those who possess such attributes are still without the full dietetic qualification, but naturally we feel that the lack of such qualification stands in the way of their advancement. We trust that it may be possible for the appropriate authorities to offer some financial assistance to enable such of their catering managers and supervisors as seem capable of reaching the diploma standard to take a training. The profession of dietitian will be much enriched by the recruitment of persons who have successfully controlled large-scale kitchen establishments through the searching years of war.

9. We would emphasize that all courses in the subject, whether for a diploma or a degree, should include adequate practical experience in catering institutions and hospitals approved by the British Dietetic Association. The profession should not in our view be open to those who have attained a degree only in the theoretical and experimental aspects of the science. All courses in dietetics should closely relate practice to theory. The practical training of dietitians might well include some instruction in public health, and this instruction should embrace such visits to clinics and to the homes of the people as would enable the student to acquire some knowledge of the social background of the future work of a dietitian.

10. Many newly qualified dietitians will lack the experience that enables them to deal with the complex problems of catering and administration, and they will have no more than a theoretical understanding of educational or hospital etiquette. It is necessary, therefore, that they should, after qualifying, have ample opportunity of service under an experienced professional person. This can be effected only gradually as the posts of catering officers and meal organizers or dietetic advisers come to be filled by qualified persons capable of initiating their assistants in the complexities of their professional duties.

APPOINTMENTS

11. It is important that the status and function of dietitian should be clearly defined; the present position is vague and anomalous. At present there is a fairly widespread tendency to regard purely institutional work—e.g., in hospitals, orphanages, schools, etc.—as the only proper sphere for a dietitian. There is nothing in the definition of dietetics to justify this limitation of function. Food is by far the most important environmental factor which determines health, and the dietitian should in our view assume her due place as a public health

* It is clear to the Committee that the dietitian of the future may be a man or woman, but for the purpose of this memorandum the feminine has been used.

official. In this capacity she can exert the maximum influence on the community.

12. The medical officer of health as the person responsible for the health of the inhabitants within his area should have on his staff an experienced adviser in dietetics, just as he has special officers to advise him on sanitation, food inspection, and various branches of medicine. A post of this nature would be one for a senior dietitian, and would probably rank as among the highest in the profession. The functions of such an officer would be broadly to advise the M.O.H. on all dietetic matters falling within his sphere: diets in hospital, orphanages, and other institutions controlled by the local authority, school meals, advice on diet to mothers in clinics, and educational work. Such educational work might well include co-operation with those responsible for the teaching of nutrition in schools, welfare centres, and advice bureaux. In addition, the dietitian would be expected to play an appropriate part in the conduct of dietary surveys and other nutritional investigations. Depending on the size of the area the officer would have working under her one or more junior dietitians to whom she would delegate her detailed work. It might also be found convenient for the dietitians of the local authority or voluntary hospitals to collaborate in such a way to ensure expert advice on catering and dietetics to any institution requiring it within the area. In this way the needs for such advice of small hospitals and other institutions—e.g., orphanages and boarding schools—could be most conveniently met. Other desirable fields for collaboration are in educational work and nutritional surveys. Such diversity of function would prevent staleness and improve efficiency.

13. Every hospital of about 150 beds or more should have its qualified dietitian responsible only to the medical superintendent or his equivalent in a voluntary hospital. Large hospitals of about five hundred beds or more would require a number of junior dietitians as well as a senior one. (See Ministry of Health Circular 44/45 and *Memorandum on Hospital Diet* issued by King Edward's Hospital Fund for London.)

14. It is almost certain, too, that senior advisory posts will become available in the health and education departments of the Government, and some of the larger food and drug manufacturing firms will probably require dietitians for advice and research.

15. It is obvious that, if only a proportion of these posts were filled by qualified dietitians, many more dietitians will be required. The membership of the British Dietetic Association is at present over three hundred; many of these are registered as medical auxiliaries. About a quarter of the members are not in practice.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROFESSION

16. We are aware that the profession should be protected, as far as possible, from the competition of unqualified persons. In the case of other classes of medical auxiliaries, working for the most part under the direction of medical practitioners, this measure of protection is more or less assured. The dietitian may not, however, come into immediate contact with a patient, and for that and other reasons her position is by no means so clearly defined. We stated above the various types of employment we think might be suitably filled by qualified dietitians. It will be necessary to convince the employing bodies that it is in their own interest to seek the services of fully qualified persons.

17. It is desirable, finally, to assure the status of dietitians in local government or hospital employment. The dietitian should be given full responsibility for the work of her department. When employed by a local authority she should be responsible through the appropriate senior officer to the health and education committees. In hospital practice she should be responsible to the secretary or medical superintendent, and should be a member of a catering committee representing those concerned with hospital feeding. In many hospitals the position of the dietitian is not clearly defined in relation to the matron's sphere of control, while she may have little or no contact with the medical staff. If she and her assistant dietitians are to have opportunity of advising and directing in ward feeding, out-patient departments, schools, day nurseries, etc., they must have unquestioned right of access to the chief administrative officer concerned.

Appendix A

Diploma Course (recognized by the British Dietetic Association at present time, June, 1945)

The Diploma Course in Dietetics consists of two parts: a theoretical study of nutrition, followed by a practical course, which must be closely allied to the theoretical work and taken in a hospital recognized by the British Dietetic Association. There are at present four institutions recognized by the British Dietetic Association at which students may be awarded a diploma in dietetics. The length of the course varies from 12 months to 18 months; this time includes the theoretical training and the 6 months' practical work. Students are advised to take a further 3 months' training in large-scale catering in the general kitchen of a hospital or in a canteen.

The Diploma Course is open to students who have one of the following qualifications: (1) University Degree in one of the following: (a) household and social science; (b) domestic science; (c) pure science, including physiology and chemistry and followed by at least three months' concentrated cookery training in an institution approved by the British Dietetic Association. (2) State Registration in Nursing. (Extra training in physiology, chemistry, and cookery may be necessary.) (3) Teachers' Diploma in Domestic Science. (Extra training in physiology and chemistry may be necessary.) (4) Institutional Management Diploma after at least two years' training at a recognized college of domestic science. Such students must hold the School Leaving Certificate or equivalent qualification. (Extra training in physiology and chemistry may be necessary.)

Appendix B

Requirements for Membership of the American Dietetic Association

A. ACADEMIC

1. Either a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with the following distribution of courses and hours until Aug. 31, 1944 (academic requirements were raised after Sept. 1, 1944):

Subject	Approved Course Graduates	Experienced Applicants	
		Foods and Nutrition	Institution Management
	(Minimum Semester Hours)		
Chemistry (including inorganic, organic, and physiological. Food chemistry may replace physiological for institution management majors)	12	12	12
Biology (including human physiology and bacteriology)	6	6	6
Social sciences (selected from at least two of the following: psychology, sociology, economics)	9	6	6
Education	3	0	0
Food preparation	6	6	6
Nutrition (including an advanced course)	6	6	3
Institution economics	6	0	6

2. Or a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university followed by courses to complete the above outline. Five semester credits in nutrition or allied fields must have been secured within seven years of the date of application, except in cases where experience is of a type acceptable to the membership committee as a substitute.

B. EXPERIENCE

The following experience is required in addition to the above college work: Either satisfactory completion of a course for student dietitians approved by the association or two years of successful experience in a position involving responsibility which seems to the membership committee to be the equivalent of such a course. The committee will consider the following types of experience: (a) Hospital—this must have included main kitchen supervision, diet therapy, and teaching. (b) College teaching in the fields of foods and nutrition or institution management. (c) Management of school lunch-room, residence hall, etc. (d) Nutrition work with a social service or public health agency. (e) Commercial work of a type satisfactory to the membership committee.

At least one year of this experience shall have been within seven years of the date of application.