
Rex Hospital Nursing students go on strike 1919

STRIKING NURSES

LEAVE FOR HOME

Issue Apology To Doctors, Patients, and Others for "The Hasty Leave"

TRUSTEES GET NURSES FROM OTHER CITIES

Statement Issued Giving Incidents Which Led Up To Withdrawal of Nurses

The pupil nurses of Rex Hospital who Wednesday night left the hospital because they were dissatisfied with their working conditions yesterday left for their homes. They say they will not ask reinstatement and that the report that five of them asked reinstatement was erroneous.

Before leaving they issued an apology to the "doctors, patients, trustees and officials for the hasty leave." The apology was signed as follows:

Miss Johnson, Miss Gatewood, Miss Fuller, Miss Smith, Miss Robertson and Mrs. King (seniors); Miss Ballard, Miss Link, Miss Redford, Miss Skipper, Miss Matthews, Miss Vestal, Miss Jones, Miss Bishop, Miss Curlee, Miss Kermon, Miss Taylor, Miss Seoggins, Miss Speel, Miss Dixon, Miss McNab (juniors).

The board of trustees last night issued a statement giving a review of the incidents which preceded the walk-out of the nurses, the menu which is served in the dining room of the hospital and other information calculated to enlighten the friends of the hospital on the various questions which the departure of the pupil nurses and their complaints have brought to the front. Among other things it is set forth in the statement that there recently was employed a trained dietician who had been prescribing the menus for the nurses. The trustees are emphatic in their position that they cannot ask to be reinstated, the trustees declare that there is no action for them to take.

The medical staff of the hospital held a meeting and unanimously endorsed the course of the trustees in dealing with the pupil nurses who left the hospital.

Eleven nurses reached the city yesterday, having been hastily summoned from other cities by telephone and telegraph. Women of the city also volunteered their services and they were accepted. "The patients are being just as well cared for as before the pupil nurses left," said one of the trustees last night, "and they will continue to be cared for, let the cost be what it may."

Trustees' Statement.

The statement of the trustees with attached explanatory records is as follows:

"In all fairness to the public and to the institution which we have the honor of representing and to the great profession for which the young ladies of the training school for nurses at Rex Hospital were fitting themselves we feel it our duty to make the following statement of facts:

"The attached request signed by twenty-two of the pupils of the nurses training school was received by Mr. W. A. Cooper, president of the board of trustees, Friday evening, March the twenty-eighth. Mr. Cooper at once wrote to eleven hospitals to ascertain what they were doing for their pupils in their training schools as to allotments, uniforms, etc. On Saturday afternoon Mr. Cooper showed the petition signed by the twenty-two pupils to Mr. Crow, secretary of the board, and they agreed that a call meeting of the board (regular monthly meeting being held the second Monday of each month) should be called at the earliest practical time. The secretary being out of the city most of the day, Sunday, and the president being out of the city Monday and Tuesday returning at one p.m. Wednesday meeting was called for eight-thirty Wednesday evening at the hospital and the standing committee from the medical board consisting of Drs. H.A. Boyster, A.W. Knox, and J.W. McGee were requested to meet with the board.

"Tuesday afternoon four of the signers of the petition came to Mr. Crow's office and asked if the board had acted upon their request. They were informed that no meeting had been held but were assured that the board would gladly consider the same as soon as Mr. Cooper, president of the board, returned to the city. During the morning of Wednesday the secretary of the board was called up over the phone to know if the board had taken action and were notified that they had not, that the president was expected back that day and a meeting would be called as soon as he returned. At five o'clock of the same day Mr. Gavin Dortch came to Mr. Crow's office and notified him that the nurses of the training school were planning to walk out at seven p.m. Mr. Dortch while in Mr. Crow's office phoned one of the young ladies assuring them that a meeting would be held that afternoon or evening and urged that the young ladies do not take the hasty action contemplated.

"Mr. Crow then got with Mr. Cooper and went to the hospital about six o'clock to ascertain if the superintendent or staff of the hospital knew anything of the action contemplated by the pupils of the school. The superintendent informed them that she had not heard of any thought of such action and Dr. H.A. Royster at that time completing his sixth operation for the afternoon afein and he was asked the same question and received from him the same answer as given by the superintendent.

"The board with the committee from the staff met at eight-thirty and were discussing the situation and the petition of the young ladies when twenty-two of them without notice to their patients, superintendent or any member of the staff left the hospital severing their connection with the institution knowing that the board were then in session in the room below.

SITUATION AT REX FAVORABLE FRIDAY

A corps of graduate nurses from nearby cities arriving in the city Thursday and Friday night with the assistance of volunteer nurses from the city, have met the

emergency at Rex Hospital, caused by the strike of the student nurses there Wednesday night. Friday the situation at Rex was reported by the favorable with good chances of recovery.

Half a dozen or so RALEIGH women volunteered to help at the Hospital Thursday and three or four were assisting there again Friday. The situation having been relieved however by the arrival of additional nurses from Charlotte Thursday night.

The board of trustees, having received the written apology of the nurses, who left the city Thursday, asking no re-instatement met Thursday night and issued a statement reviewing the incidents leading up to the walk-out of the nurses the menu which has been serve, in the nurses dining room and either facts concerning the complaints made by the nurses. The medical board of the hospital at a meeting Thursday night endorsed the course of the trustees in dealing with the nurses who left the hospital.

REX HOSPITAL NURSES, DISSATISFIED, QUIT

Trustees and Medical Staff Make Speedy Arrangements to Care For Patients

Charging that the food served them was not what it ought to be, that they ought to have more pay and free uniforms and caps, 22 nurses of Rex Hospital early last night quit their work. The trustees immediately began arrangements to take care of the patients. The medical staff placed itself at the command of the superintendent, a number of spectral graduate nurses were summoned from different parts of the city, the head nurse, bookkeeper, and other employees, although most of them had worked all day, took a hand in the work and the trustees offered to do what they could though their services were not needed. Nurses in other places have been communicated with and asked to come to Raleigh. Five probation nurses are also on duty, not having joined in the agreement to quit work.

Secretary Crow, of the board of trustees, said last night that relatives of patients in the hospital could be assured that the patients were being well cared for and that they would not be allowed to suffer.

Mr. Crow said the request for more pay, free uniforms and better food had been made several days ago, but as there was no hint in it that the nurses would quit work if their petition was not granted, the trustees had been wholly unprepared for their action. He added that both he and Mr. W.A. Cooper, chairman of the board, had been out of town and for that reason and not knowing that a walk-in was planned they had felt that a few days' delay thus necessitated would not cause dissatisfaction. Until the request came he had not heard that the food was not what the nurses thought they ought to have.

Last night a short while after the nurses left five of them came back for a conference with the trustees and medical staff. They said they could not speak for the others but they personally felt that they had made a mistake and that they would be glad to be reinstated. The trustees having made prevision for the night reserved section the matter.

Mr. Crow said that he and his fellow trustees felt deeply interested in the welfare of the hospital and also of the young women. He felt that when the nurse had reflected over what might have been the consequences of their course they would regret it, for he was supervised that they had followed mistaken services.