

OUR NURSES AND THEIR OPPORTUNITY

By

Mr. William B. Given

It is a pleasure to again address a conference of Brake Shoe nurses. In '48 at Niagara Falls, I talked with our nurses about their endless opportunities to be useful. In reviewing that talk, I was struck again by one fact. The fundamentals of like -- of human relations -- never change. The basic truths of industrial nursing in '48 are exactly the same in '53. What I have to say to you tonight is essentially what I said to the nurses of '48 of whom, I understand, only five are with us tonight.

In their fundamentals, your job and mine are alike. First, we both must try to be available when needed. Second, we must concentrate on trying to make the company a better place for its people and give this cause all the extras we have in the way of imagination and effort. We need to keep constantly in mind what Francis Bacon said many years ago: "Good thoughts are little better than dreams except they be put into action Your occupation, like mine, gives opportunities to make real for others, dreams we have had for ourselves.

In an effort to be available, I keep my time as free as possible for Company people. Away from the office, traveling or on a vacation, our people can always reach me. I try to give each whatever part of my time he may need. My part in their problem mostly is to relate their consideration to overall plans and policies. My experience has been sufficiently a mixed one so there is always the chance something out of the past can supply them with a different angle of approach. It seems to me that, like you, my part is to be available when needed.

In comparision with my job, as a nurse your being on hand is more important. You can in times of emergency affect the man's or woman's life to a much more important extent than I. Your prompt aid may, in some instances, prevent serious developments. Your mistakes in taking care of physical ills can do greater damage than my mistakes.

How prompt and human the nurse is in attending the physical ills is also often influential in avoiding mental ills -- worry, fear, and demoralization. Your interest in the day-to-day problem of the man and his family, if it is sincere, will much more readily than mine open the door to a feeling of friendship and unlock the frankness which makes possible a contribution to the lives of many families. Here your individual opportunities are more important, more vital to our people than mine.

Thirdly, except in emergency situations, your day as mine is spent on minor problems. When the day is done, seldom do any of us have big moments to describe to our families or friends. There has been a series of events and questions, few varying much from those of the days before. The important part has been the effect on the lives of others. Only when things go badly for an individual are we fully conscious that in this is the importance of the details of our days. In our seeming routine we are effecting, one way or another, the happiness of people, their happiness today and tommorrow. You can help many with your friendship.

SPNY 000213