

Matron Violet Baker

Matron of N.D.H.

BOARD MAKES AN APPOINTMENT

The Board of Nepean District Hospital decided on Tuesday evening to appoint Miss Violet Baker matron of the Hospital in succession to Matron Beattie, who has resigned.

Miss Baker was selected, at a previous meeting of the Board, from nine applicants, and has since notified her acceptance of the position. She was formally appointed on Tuesday evening.

Miss Baker was trained at Newcastle, and has been at Temora Hospital for five years as deputy matron. She will be met at the Hospital next Saturday afternoon by members of the Board, and will formally take up duties on Monday.

On Tuesday evening 14 August 1945, the Board of Nepean District Hospital appointed Miss Violet Baker as Matron of the Hospital in succession to Matron Beattie. Matron Baker was trained at Newcastle, and had been at Temora Hospital for five years as Deputy Matron.¹ Matron Baker assumed her formal duties on Monday 17th August 1945, and was officially welcomed by the Chairman at the NDH Annual General Meeting held in early September.

Matron Baker proved to be a keen supporter of fundraisers and attended many functions in an official role declaring such events open, or as an honoured guest. These included N.D.H Comforts Club, Garden Party at Ravenspur, St Stephen's Church Flower Show, Presbyterian Fete, C.W.A, school address on behalf of the Rotarians, a judge at a Baby Show in Glenbrook, numerous Auxiliary meetings, written acknowledgments of fundraising of Ex-Legion men and women for the Nurses Memorial Fund, and adjudicating at Mad Hatters Ball in an effort to aid fundraising to provide an iron lung for NDH.²

Matron worked tirelessly for improving both nurse and patient care. Meeting with the House Committee and Chairman (Mr Longhurst), she managed to abate nursing trainees resigning on masse over the hospital restricting the number of patients.³ However, this was to be an ongoing problem with a daily average of 52.05 patients and a cap of 25 beds, she returned from annual leave to find four out of eight nursing staff had resigned. Matron reported to the N.D Hospital Board that unless more nursing staff were available, the Maternity Unit was under threat of closure. Her actions induced the Board to offer either free accommodation for the Nursing staff, or increase their salaries. In an effort to stop overcrowding, Matron Baker also recommended to the Board to convert the little used Isolation Block to general hospital purposes.⁵

Matron was vocal in her frustrations, describing hospital work "Like a Battle Station. Arriving two years prior with the promise of a new hospital supposedly "just around the corner", plans drawn but still with no action. She even asked the Prime Minister to

“A Stone is Laid”⁶ and the State Governor, Sir John Northcott, congratulated Matron Baker on the work and her staff were doing and hoped to return for the opening of a hospital”. In August 1955, after ten years of “fine service” Matron Baker resigned her position at Nepean District Hospital due to ill health. Matron W.V. Case was appointed as her successor in December 1955.