

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

The following is the Report presented by Miss Christiane Reimann, Secretary of the International Council of Nurses to the Board of Directors and the Grand Council, for the last Quadrennial Period at Montreal:—

REPORT OF SECRETARY.

Extension of Work.

The affiliated organisations of the International Council of Nurses include nineteen National Associations, which, on January 1st, 1929, had a membership of over 140,000.

The number of Associate National Representatives to the Council is eleven, from the following countries: Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Greece, Iceland, Japan, Jugoslavia, Korea, Latvia, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey. In some of these countries the National Association of Nurses is at present applying for membership.

Besides the above-mentioned nineteen countries with national organisations affiliated to the Council and the eleven with Associate National Representatives, the Headquarters of the International Council of Nurses is in correspondence with nursing organisations and individual nurses in twenty-eight other countries. The number of countries with which the Council is thus in constant touch is fifty-eight. It should, however, be observed that only fifty-five of these are politically independent—the Philippines and Korea, for instance, having been included in the grand total.

Committees.

The number of Committees of the Council is thirteen. Three of these have been instituted only after the meeting of the Board of Directors in July, 1927, at Geneva.

The Council Headquarters is carrying out the secretarial work of the majority of these Committees, for which reports will be given by their respective chairmen. One of the Committees supervises the publications of the International Council of Nurses, which will, therefore, not be dealt with in this report.

Library.

The Library at Headquarters, which was inaugurated in the autumn of 1925, is growing slowly. The total number of national nursing magazines now in existence is fifty-five, and copies of all of them are received. We have in our possession, complete from the beginning, more than three-fourths of these magazines, the old volumes being gifts of private persons or of national organisations.

A few months ago we had a great disappointment. The missing volumes of the *Canadian Nurse* were being shipped to us as a gift of a nurse in Newfoundland, when the steamer went down and the package containing the copies to make our collection complete was lost.

In addition to the national nursing magazines, the Library receives—mostly through exchange with the *I.C.N.*—about fifty other current publications of special interest to nurses, such as publications for social workers, midwives, child welfare workers, and others, dealing with general education, Red Cross activities, hospital administration, the woman's movement, etc.

Our collection of nursing text and reference books now numbers about five hundred, with an additional hundred books on general information and a small number of publications of historical professional interest.

The number of languages represented in the material of our Library is sixteen. The bookshelves occupy the greater amount of wall space in two rooms at Headquarters.

The Library, besides being of great use to the Staff at Headquarters, is used from time to time by Swiss nurses, by nurses of other nationalities passing through Geneva, as well as, in a few cases, by members of other professions interested in nursing to whom volumes have been loaned.

Headquarters.

On October 1st, 1925, the Headquarters of the Council—according to a decision to that effect taken at the Fifth Regular Meeting of the Council in Helsingfors, Finland—was opened in Geneva at 1, Place du Lac, the Staff consisting of the Secretary and an Assistant.

An interim conference (1) was held in Geneva from July 27th to 30th, 1927, which was attended by 700 nurses from 34 countries, and a meeting of the Board of Directors took place immediately before and after the Conference.

Shortly after this Interim Conference, the Headquarters of the Council was moved to new premises at 14, Quai des Eaux Vives. Conveniently situated, and with a beautiful view over the lake, the premises afford the necessary space for the increased activities of the Council. In the spring of this year, during the rush of work for the Congress, it was found possible to turn the kitchen attached to the premises into an office, and thus for a short time to have a staff of seven persons working simultaneously under satisfactory conditions.

In addition to the Secretary of the Council, the present Staff consists of two Assistant Secretaries, each member of the Staff being of a different nationality.

Most of the work at Headquarters consists of giving information to official and private organisations, individual inquirers, etc. The number of letters sent out each month averages 400, the same number being received. Correspondence is conducted in twelve languages. The requests for information vary greatly, some requiring a great deal of work, which may even amount to research. An ever-increasing number of State Departments ask our assistance, seeking advice or information on various matters dealing with nursing legislation or nursing education. The League of Nations, the International Labour Office, the International Red Cross Committee, the League of Red Cross Societies and other international organisations refer different matters to us from time to time. Were we able to do more work, we could exercise a much wider influence than we now have. The organisations are anxious to have the information, but know that we are only able to give a limited amount of attention to their requests.

Assistance to nurses requiring post-graduate experience abroad has been given in an increasing degree. During 1928, for instance, about 100 requests from eight countries were dealt with. It has not yet been possible for Headquarters Staff, on account of lack of time, to work out any scheme of real educational value for such experience abroad, and the assistance given to nurses has mostly been in providing opportunities for seeing foreign ways and methods without any expense being incurred.

It should also be admitted with great regret that it has not been possible for Headquarters to find the time necessary to provide the information required by the League of Nations as a preliminary to a collective interchange visit for nurses under the auspices of the League. This matter, which was referred to in detail in the Report submitted to the Board of Directors in Geneva, in 1927, has been temporarily postponed.

The International Council has been represented at a great number of meetings, national and international, by members of its Board of Directors. In some cases the Secretary of the Council has been able to fit in such representation with trips taken for various purposes and at different times to twenty-one countries in Europe. The Council has also been represented on a few Exhibitions of a national or an international character.

Although research work on international lines would, at the present moment, offer almost unlimited possibilities for

(1) For further details see "Proceedings of the Interim Conference, Geneva, 1927."

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