

2. Travel of Executive Staff.

The visiting of countries whose National Nurses' Associations are in membership or desirous of membership in order to make personal contact with their members, to attend a national conference, or to assist in building up and strengthening professional organisation—these are activities of undoubted value to our staff at Headquarters and, it is hoped, of value also to the countries in question. Since 1949 I have been privileged, as Executive Secretary, to visit 12 countries—Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Portugal, Ireland, Brazil, India, Ceylon, Pakistan. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunities afforded me in those countries to view their nursing activities, to meet their members and, by so doing, to strengthen the ties of friendship existing between their National Nurses' Association and the I.C.N. Other invitations have been received and are on file; acceptance has not been possible in every case. But there is no doubt that more can be gained by personal contact than can ever be achieved by correspondence, not only in the clarification and solution of problems, but in a deepening of understanding and a sharing of interests. This activity is one that I.C.N. Headquarters is anxious to develop, according to the extent that time permits and funds are available.

3. Committee Activities

Of these activities little need be said in this Report, for we shall be hearing from each Committee Chairman in the course of this Congress of some aspects of the work of her Committee, and the responsibilities which she has undertaken in assuming, by election, the office of Chairman. Suffice it for me to say, that these Committees, international as they are in character with members' representative of many different countries have been consistently active during the past four years. They have assembled information of intimate concern to the nursing profession—information related to nursing education, nursing service, ethics, economics, finance, exchange. By summarising and making available the information they have obtained, these Committees have provided our Headquarters and through the Headquarters to all our Member Associations as well as to other interested organisations, material which should develop and enrich all our work.

4. Displaced Persons (Nurses) Professional Register.

It was reported to our Board of Directors which met in Brussels in August, 1951, that by an Agreement signed between the I.C.N. and the International Refugee Organisation, on the cessation of activities of the I.R.O., the I.C.N. took over in 1950, the Professional Register of Displaced Nurses; the I.C.N. has continued to maintain it and to deal with all associated correspondence. We now have on file at I.C.N. Headquarters the names and personal record of over 4,000 nurses, all of whom have, of necessity, had to leave their own countries, carrying with them little or no evidence of their professional status. By various means, and much research their professional qualifications have been established and their names placed on the Professional Register which we at I.C.N. Headquarters now hold on their behalf. In assisting these nurses, many of whom have been deprived of home, family or friends, to re-establish themselves professionally, and by helping many of them with their personal problems, the I.C.N. has assumed a responsibility which we feel is humane in the extreme. Indeed, it has been said by a high authority in the I.R.O., that in undertaking this work on behalf of displaced nurses, the nurses of the world have achieved an object as yet reached by few other professions. It may be possible for some of you here to offer a helping hand to some of these nurses who, being refugees from their own country, and with little hope of return, need most especially the sense of comfort and security which friendship and understanding can bring to them.

5. International Relationships.

The making and cementing of international relationships with other international organisations is perhaps the most important of all I.C.N. activities and one which has absorbed a considerable proportion of our time, thought and effort at I.C.N. Headquarters during the four years under review. It is certainly essential that the work which nurses do should be known and respected by other international organisations in related professions. Sometimes we can be of assistance to them; often, they can help us; and I.C.N. Headquarters must be vigilant in the international field, accepting or pressing for recognition or representation where such seems indicated; ready to make contributions to the studies and activities of other professional groups from our own store of knowledge and experience. To give you some idea of our present relationships: We are listed on the Consultative Register of the Economic and Social Council; we serve on a Committee of Non-Governmental Organisations which surveys the activities of UNICEF; we are in official relationship with the World Health Organisation and are regularly invited to send representatives to the annual World Health Assembly, to meetings of the W.H.O. Executive Board and to all W.H.O. Regional Committees. The I.C.N. is a full Member Association of the International Hospital Federation and of the World Federation for Mental Health. Of the latter organisation, a nurse nominated by the I.C.N. now serves on their consultative panel of experts. The I.C.N. Executive Secretary is a Substitute Member of their Executive Board. We have been regularly invited to send a representative to the Annual Conference of the World Medical Association. We have attended, by invitation, the Biennial Meetings of the Nursing Advisory Committee of the League of Red Cross Societies. We participated in the 18th International Red Cross Conference; and were also invited to be represented at recent conferences of the International Dental Federation, the International Council of Women, and the Central Council for Health Education. Through the collaboration of the Trained Nurses' Association of India, nursing was represented at the Sixth International Conference of Social Service, and at a Conference organised by the International Union for Child Welfare, both of which took place in India in 1952. We believe, at I.C.N. Headquarters, that participation in meetings and conferences of other organisations at the international level, and a sense of responsibility for such participation, will rightly assume increasing significance. It has been said with truth by a learned professor in the field of education, that nurses, by virtue of the work that they do and the position that they hold in the social structure, are citizens not of one country only, but of the world; and in relating the work of our own profession to that of other professions in the international field, we hope that we are playing our part in contributing to this ideal of world citizenship.

In conclusion, I would remind you of the Preamble to our Constitution—a Constitution which in its essentials has remained unchanged throughout the 53 years of our history—

“We, Nurses, representing various nations of the world, sincerely believing that the profession of nursing will be advanced by greater unity of thought, sympathy, and purpose, do hereby unite in a federation of national associations of nurses. Such national associations... shall work together for the purpose of promoting the health of nations, improving the nursing care of the sick, advancing the professional and economic welfare of nursing and enhancing the honour of the nursing profession.”

As we move forward together into the second half of this century, and if we do so in a spirit of courage and of determination, nursing will continue to be not only a world-wide accepted social activity, but also a vitalising force, essential to the fulfilment of all health services.

DAISY C. BRIDGES,
Executive Secretary.

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