

## THE CONFERENCE.

Wednesday, July 27th.

### OPENING SESSION.

When the Interim Conference of the International Council of Nurses, convened to meet in Geneva, opened on the evening of July 27th, there was not a vacant seat in the Salle Centrale, and the scene was one of gaiety and charm. The Hall was decorated with the flags of the Nations affiliated to the International Council and suspended above the platform was the beautiful Swiss Flag—a white cross on a red ground.

The President of the Council, Miss Nina D. Gage, R.N., M.A., presided, a gracious and charming chairman; on her right Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Founder, and Hon. President. There were also on the platform the International Officers, the Members of the Board of Directors, the Foundation Members present (Miss M. Huxley and Miss M. Breay) and the speakers of the evening, including M. Gustave Ador, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Miss Gage, in declaring open the Interim Conference for 1927, reminded the audience that since the meeting of the Grand Council in Helsingfors, the Headquarters of the I.C.N. had been established at Geneva. It was a happy thing that the first Conference convened after this event should take place in this beautiful international city. She expressed the delight of the Council at the presence of its honoured Founder, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. (*Applause.*)

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, President of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, on its behalf, presented to the President a lovely bouquet of flowers of the National Colours, crimson roses, white carnations, and blue cornflowers, tied with a tricolour ribbon.

Miss Gage, in expressing her thanks, remarked that the colours were the same as those of the United States, and of the new China, where her work had lain for so long. British Nurses had founded the Council, and British Nurses, as usual, were bringing everything into the scheme of things.

The President then introduced to the Conference the two Foundation Members present, Miss M. Breay and Miss M. Huxley, who briefly responded.

### The Address of Welcome.

The Address of Welcome was given by M. Jean Uhler, President of the Administrative Council of the Town of Geneva, who with great cordiality welcomed the Conference to the City, referring in generous terms to the great services rendered to the profession of nursing by the Founder of the Council, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, and other great nursing pioneers and teachers, including Miss Isla Stewart and Mrs. Hampton Robb, who had taken part in previous meetings, and whose work had made such conferences possible.

### The Response.

Miss Gage, in her response, expressed gratitude to M. Uhler, and to the Town and Canton of Geneva for their welcome. Two years ago when she visited Headquarters she had felt that we needed the international atmosphere of Geneva, and since then she had felt its stimulation through her correspondence with the indefatigable International Secretary, Miss Reimann.

### MESSAGES AND TELEGRAMS.

Miss Gage then read messages and telegrams. From Sister Bergliot Larsson, President of the Norwegian Nurses' Association, whose absence from illness everyone regretted: "The Norwegian Nurses' Association sends best greetings to meeting."

From the Baroness Mannerheim, who, as President of the I.C.N. when it met in Finland in 1925, had been its

inspiring influence, and who was also absent from illness: "With you in spirit, wishing the Congress every success."

Also from the Danish Council of Nurses, the Hungarian Association of Nurses and Health Visitors, and from the Hungarian Red Cross Nurses.

### TRIBUTE OF RESPECT TO SISTER AGNES KARLL, R.N.

The President then said that every one was feeling very dreadfully the loss of Sister Agnes Karll, President of the German Nurses' Association, and an Hon. President of the Council, who had been with us in Helsingfors, and who had recently passed away. She asked the Conference to stand for a moment in silent respect to her memory, and this was done.

Referring to the position of the Trained Nurse in the body politic, Miss Gage remarked that Miss Wald, of the Nurses' Settlement, Henry Street, New York, had defined her as the translator of the language of science into one which could be understood by ordinary people. The nurse must therefore be proficient in the language which she had to translate. We were going to see how we could help her to acquire it. But she must not be entirely spoon fed.

Asking "What is a curriculum?" Miss Gage remarked, "Should not each student have her own?"

It should include not only the nursing of the sick but the prevention of disease, and especially practical nursing. She reminded her audience of Miss Nightingale's definition of the art of Nursing, that it was to "teach the patient how to live."

Geneva was a place of boundless horizons, of many contacts, and one could not help but be the better for contact with this beautiful city.

Miss Gage here drew the attention of the audience to a handsome bell which had been presented to the Conference by the Swiss Nurses, a most useful gift, which was in requisition throughout the Conference days.

### MUSICAL INTERLUDE.

Then followed a musical interlude, when Bach's Allegro du Concerto, arranged for the violin and organ, was beautifully played by Mlle. Maggy Briettmayer, Professor, and M. William Bastard, organist, Paris Conservatoire, and thoroughly appreciated.

### Addresses.

#### GREETINGS FROM THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

The next speaker was Dame Rachel Crowdy, who said she felt it a very great privilege to bring a message from the League of Nations to the Conference. The League hoped it would prosper and that its deliberations would lead to good results. One of the objects of the League was to help all organisations having as purposes the improvement of health, the prevention of disease, and the mitigation of suffering, throughout the world, and in studying the Constitution of the International Council of Nurses she was impressed by finding how closely allied its work was to that of the League of Nations, in its relation to Health, and to Child Welfare and Social Work.

Further the League of Nations was constituted for the Maintenance of Peace. Most of those present had seen something of the horrors of war, the men blinded with gas, the sufferings of little children, the refugees, and knew what it meant to be at war.

The Naval Conference now sitting in Geneva was discussing the cutting down of armaments, but unless we could improve social conditions, though we might obtain peace we could never maintain it. She asked for the support of the International Council of Nurses in working for the maintenance of peace for, as a woman, she felt it was the greatest feminine movement in the world. It was working for mankind as a whole—man, woman and child.

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