

THE NURSES' CONGRESS, MONTREAL.

Monday, July 8th. Afternoon Session.

It was a thrilling moment when in the Great Forum in Montreal, supported on the platform by the Board of Directors of the International Council of Nurses, Miss Nina D. Gage, President of the Council, rose to deliver her Presidential Address on the afternoon of July 8th to the greatest gathering of nurses ever assembled.

Tier upon tier they rose in a building so vast that it was only possible to be heard by speaking into a microphone. Happily Miss Gage's voice carried clearly, and whenever she spoke throughout the week, she was listened to with close attention.

We print below, abridged, her Address at this Opening Session.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

(ABRIDGED.)

This is the 30th anniversary of the founding of the International Council of Nurses. In 1899 in London, Mrs. Fenwick sounded the call, and individual nurses from six different countries joined with her and the Matrons' Council and founded our International Council.

It is fitting that at this, our 30th anniversary, we remember first some of those who helped build us, but have now gone ahead and left to us the responsibility not to let the lamp grow dim, but to keep it ever brilliant to light our profession on its path of work for and with others toward the help of our fellow men.

We miss from our ranks many who have given us valiant help in the past years and whose absence means much loss, personal and professional.

Baroness Mannerheim, who guided us so graciously and skilfully through the last Congress in her beautiful and cordial country of Finland, whose splendidly organised nursing we should have found it difficult to see without the open sesame of the International Council, has gone before.

Schwester Agnes Karll, another former president, and also a perpetual Honorary President of our Council, whose work helped so very greatly not only the International Council of Nurses but also the German nurses, in her early years, is no longer with us.

Flora Madeline Shaw, whose help at the last Interim Conference at Geneva meant so much to us, and whom we had hoped would welcome us here in Montreal, greets us in spirit, and has set us an example of constant, cheerful friendly co-operation with others which meant much in her own work and will mean much translated into ours.

Anna C. Maxwell, one of our foundation members, always ready with advice when wanted still strengthens us as we study her life's work.

Grace Neill of New Zealand, and Mina Mollett of Great Britain, founder members, leave us a great deal to be learned, from their example of hard work and clear thinking.

In 1901, in Buffalo, was held the first meeting of our Council, still with no organised nursing associations affiliated, since there were not enough of such associations in existence. We are glad to have some of our foundation members with us at our 30th Anniversary, to watch the work of their hands and see the changes and progress which have come in thirty years. The first President, Mrs. Fenwick, in her address at Buffalo put the emphasis on work, and the necessity for organisation. Among other things discussed at that Conference were many for which we are still striving:

1. What shall constitute the trained nurse?
2. State registration.

3. Local and National organisations of nurses were being urged thirty years ago, and in more and more countries are coming into being nowadays.

4. Professional magazines have been started in most countries where there is the slightest organisation, and grow as the profession becomes articulate. They are an excellent means of promoting free discussion, and expression by the members of the profession.

5. Army nursing was well demonstrated in the last war and has proved its value for serious work over many of the attempts of the Voluntary Aid Detachment. The question was very acute thirty years ago, following the Spanish-American and the Boer Wars.

Other subjects of discussion at that first Conference show less progress than these just mentioned. Codes of ethics have been discussed and discussed, but very little has been organised into formal statement. Some pronouncement of principles would be very useful and helpful not only to ourselves, but to the public who need to know the principles upon which our actions are based.

Uniform requirements for schools of nursing and uniform curricula are among the things being studied by our International Education Committee. They will probably prove difficult to promulgate, in our present stage of development. So much must depend on local needs, thought, opportunity, equipment, not only physical but mental, that only minimum necessities can ever be uniform. The study of the Education Committee as to how much such a minimum can cover will be most illuminating.

Progress in the Last Quadrennium.

Since our last Congress at Helsingfors we have made history along certain lines. First might be put the establishment of International Headquarters, already beginning to serve as a clearing house for information on nursing matters throughout the world. Our wide-awake and capable Secretary has made us known in Geneva and many other places, made our professional capabilities respected, and informed others of our activities.

Our Library should grow much larger, but beginnings have been made. With the efforts of each one of us, references will be added, and the library become a centre of nursing literature and for study and research in nursing questions such as should be valuable for the future improvement of our profession.

Our Magazine many of you know, and many more can become acquainted with it from the sample copies shown at this Congress. How our Secretary finds the time to edit it, among her manifold other duties, is a puzzle, the answer to which is known only to herself. None of us can afford to be without at least one copy, if we are to keep abreast of the latest issues and most important problems in our profession as they arise. And we should also subscribe as an assistance to our International Council. The proceeds from increased subscriptions would go toward the salary of someone to help our Secretary, who so greatly needs aid in the office. The Editorship of the magazine alone, such a magazine as she has made it, would be a full-time task for most of us, with all the translation necessary. But this is only one of the things which she accomplishes.

The new Constitution, adopted at Helsingfors, has proved a splendid basis on which to work, and only minor changes proved desirable at this time. We are certainly grateful to the committee which worked on it so untiringly to present it at Helsingfors.

Two years ago, in Geneva, was held the Interim Conference, which aroused interest, since we had delegates from thirty-four countries, one more than at Helsingfors. It gave us much inspiration, and introduced many of us concretely to the League of Nations since they received us, and talked over with us some mutual problems. We

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