

## THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

### THE NURSES' CONGRESS, MONTREAL.

Thursday, July 11th.

#### GENERAL SESSION, 10.45 a.m.

The General Session on the morning of July 11th, presided over by Miss Jean I. Gunn, Second Vice-President I.C.N. and Chairman of the Committee on Programme, was devoted to receiving Reports from Affiliated National Associations, of Associated National Representatives and from other countries not at present affiliated. As they are obtainable in pamphlet form we refer our readers to these.

#### NURSING EDUCATION SESSION, 3 p.m.

Miss Lillian Wu, President of the Nurses Association of China, presided at the Meeting of the Nursing Education Section at the Congress Headquarters at 3 p.m., when the first paper was presented by Miss E. M. Musson, C.B.E., R.R.C., Treasurer of the International Council of Nurses, and Vice-President of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain.

#### LEGISLATION IN NURSING.

Miss Musson presented a very valuable paper containing statistics as to the legal enactments (Acts, Amending Acts, Ordinances or Decrees) upwards of 100 of which have now been passed in 95 countries or states. She notes that State Registration of Nurses was first proposed in Great Britain, and, though a Bill was introduced into the British Parliament in 1904, it was not until 1919 that an Act was passed. The long struggle was disappointing and disheartening, but it must be gratifying to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick to know how much progress has been made since the year 1887, when she was instrumental in founding the British Nurses' Association with the object of instituting a system of Registration for Nurses analogous to that enforced by law in the case of the medical profession.

The fact that some kind of law exists, by which a basic standard can be enforced, has already done much, in Miss Musson's opinion, to improve the education of the nurses, and no country where such law, however faulty, has been in force, even for a few years, would consent to return to the former state of things. Whatever form legislation takes it can only lay down a basic standard, but human nature is such that once a minimum has been established, efforts will inevitably be made to improve upon it, and so it is in our profession. By individual and corporate effort nurses are striving, and will strive, to build up something better; the general average of nursing education is gradually being raised; colleges and universities are

beginning to interest themselves in nursing education, to provide higher courses of study, and to offer diplomas and degrees; while the provision of scholarships may be anticipated for the assistance of the nurses, such as are available for the members of other professions. Perhaps the first effect of the passing of a law is to give to the pupil an incentive for study greater than existed before, but the most striking effect is the immediate improvement in teaching. It has been said that the real value of an examination is to test the teaching which a candidate has received. Whether that be true or not there is no doubt that the provision of a standard leads immediately to improvement, not only in numbers and ability of the teachers engaged, but in class rooms, equipment, and in the time devoted to lectures and study. The general public also begin to realise that a definite qualification has been established, and to differentiate between the trained and the untrained woman.

It is no longer wise for any National Association of Nurses to ignore the value of legislation. So important to the State has the work of nurses become, that one after another, Governments are awakening to the need for the regulation of nursing education and practice. It is better that the Nurses' Associations should concern themselves with this matter than that legislative measures should be passed which may hamper the full development of our profession. Especially is it necessary to watch the passage of Public Health and General Powers Acts, into which a variety of subjects may be introduced.

Miss Musson then gave a list of all the legal enactments passed to date, with much valuable information concerning them. Indeed, we heard one highly placed Canadian Medical Officer say that the special value of Miss Musson's paper was that it could be filed for reference, and consulted in years to come.



MRS. STRONG, THE DOYENNE OF NURSING IN GREAT BRITAIN, RECEIVING INTERNATIONAL HOMAGE IN MONTREAL.

#### STATE SUPERVISION IN SCHOOLS OF NURSING.

Miss Adda Eldredge (Director of Nursing Education, Secretary of the State Board of Nurse Examiners, State Board of Health, Madison, Wisconsin, U.S.A.), followed with a very able paper on State Supervision in Schools of Nursing, in which she discussed details and methods, and made a general statement of the aims of State supervision, and the goals to be reached through it.

State supervision, says Miss Eldredge, must set a minimum standard which must be maintained, and of course the person in charge must be responsible for the maintenance of these standards, so she must convince the different groups in the community of the soundness of her plans. Nothing that is unsound can last indefinitely. It will fail through its lack of foundation. This is as true

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