

THE HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES, 1899-1925.

The following letter has been received by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick from Miss M. E. Sparshott, President of the College of Nursing, relating to "The History of the International Council of Nurses, 1899-1925."

Miss Sparshott to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick.

The College of Nursing,
Henrietta Street, Cavendish Square, London, W.1.
29th February, 1932.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, The National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, 39, Portland Place, W.1.

DEAR MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK,

HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES, 1899-1925.

The Council of the College of Nursing has received a copy of the above History, compiled by Miss Margaret Breay and yourself, which purports to present the history of the International Council of Nurses from 1899-1925.

It is noted that this history actually terminates in the year 1923. A detailed account is given of the discussion which took place in Copenhagen relating to the position of the College of Nursing and its possible eligibility for affiliation with the International Council of Nurses. No further mention is made of the event in the year 1925 when the College of Nursing was affiliated to the International Council of Nurses through the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain; no changes in its Constitution having taken place. This omission is the more remarkable in that there is a concluding note in which such an important event could well have been included.

Having in view the fact that this history will be circulated in many countries throughout the world, the Council desires to draw the attention of the Compilers to this matter, and to request that a note of correction be circulated with all copies issued from the Headquarters of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and of the International Council of Nurses. Such a note will be circulated in all copies sent from the College of Nursing. Attached is the suggested note.

I remain, yours sincerely,

M. E. SPARSHOTT,
President, College of Nursing.

Nota Bene.

HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES, 1899-1925.

It should be noted that, though not recorded in the above History, the College of Nursing is now affiliated through the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain with the International Council of Nurses. This affiliation took place in the year 1925. No change was made in its Constitution as presented to the International Council of Nurses at Copenhagen in 1923 (pages 143-146 and 161-165).

18th February, 1932.

(Signed) M. E. SPARSHOTT,
President, College of Nursing.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick to Miss Sparshott.

The National Council of Nurses of Great Britain,
39, Portland Place, London, W.1.

7th March, 1932.

DEAR MISS SPARSHOTT,

HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES, 1899-1925.

I have received your letter dated February 29th, 1932, on behalf of the Council of the College of Nursing *re* "The History of the International Council of Nurses, 1899-1925," and compiled from authentic documents written by Miss Margaret Breay in conjunction with myself, complaining that although the College of Nursing was affiliated to the International Council of Nurses in 1925, through the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, no mention is

made of this fact in the History, and requesting that a note of correction be circulated with all copies issued from the Headquarters of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and of the International Council of Nurses.

Such a request can only have been made in entire misapprehension of the facts.

The question of the affiliation of the College of Nursing came under the consideration of the meeting of the Executive Committee of the International Council of Nurses at Copenhagen in July, 1923, because the College of Nursing had adopted the unconstitutional course of ignoring the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and communicating directly with the International Council.

The Executive Committee of the International Council of Nurses subsequently communicated with the College of Nursing, by Resolution, in the following terms:

"The International Council of Nurses has no jurisdiction in the matter, as membership of the International Council of Nurses is confined to National Associations of Nurses, formed of representative Societies of Nurses, and that the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland is the accredited channel through which relations can be established with the International Council of Nurses."

At a meeting of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, in June, 1925, a letter was read from the Secretary of the College of Nursing, applying on its behalf, for the first time, for affiliation with the National Council. After full discussion it was agreed, by Resolution, to invite a Conference between three members of the National Council and three members of the College of Nursing to discuss certain points in the Constitution of the College with a view to affiliation with the National Council.

This Conference took place on July 6th, 1925, at 431, Oxford Street, London, W., when it was reported by the College Delegates (Miss Lloyd Still, Miss Musson, Miss Peterkin and Miss Rundle) that after a definite date nurses to be eligible for membership of the College must be State Registered Nurses, a provision not in force at that date.

The President informed the College Delegates that at its last meeting the National Council had inserted Clauses in its Constitution making it compulsory that all members of the Grand Council and of the Executive Committee must be State Registered Nurses. On this basis the application of the College of Nursing for affiliation was accepted.

The affiliation of the College of Nursing to the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain is a national and domestic matter and has no place in the records of the International Council; therefore had the College of Nursing not taken the unconstitutional course which it did in 1923 we should have had no reason to refer to it in "The History of the International Council of Nurses, 1899-1925."

In reply to the request that the authors of "The History of the International Council of Nurses, 1899-1925" (Miss Margaret Breay and myself) shall insert a statement reflecting upon the accuracy and honourable conduct of our work in issues sold in future, we emphatically decline to adopt such a course and we must request that no further statements impugning the accuracy and veracity of our "History of the International Council of Nurses" are issued from this date by the College of Nursing.

The authors must further point out that they have not empowered the College of Nursing to sell their Book. The Executive Committee of the National Council of Nurses, with the consent of the authors, authorised the Hon. Secretary to procure one hundred copies of the History for sale in Great Britain from Headquarters, 39, Portland Place, London, W.1, and, as a constituent part of the National Council, the College of Nursing should have obtained their supplies from this source.

I am, yours sincerely,

ETHEL G. FENWICK,

Founder and Hon. President International Council of Nurses.

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