

THE CONGRESS IN BRUSSELS, JULY 13TH TO 15TH.

PUBLIC MEETING IN THE PALAIS DES BEAUX-ARTS.

On Thursday, July 13th, the hundreds of Congress members said good-bye with sincere regrets to Paris and all the kind friends who had welcomed them in that fascinating city, special trains took them to Brussels where Mlle. Hellemans, President of the Federation of Belgian Nurses, and her most enthusiastic colleagues, Mlle. Mechelynck and Mlle. Parmentier, and the Congress Committee had made wonderful arrangements for continuing the Congress in the beautiful and commodious Palais des Beaux-Arts.

Here on the 13th the opening of the Belgian Assembly was held in the Grande Salle at 8.30 p.m. with Mlle. Hellemans in the Chair. The radiance of invisible illumination from the ceiling softened the crimson and soft French grey decorations, the spacious stage being richly decorated with palms and flags of many nations. The proceedings opened with a brilliant organ recital. The splendid hall was crowded, at least 1,500 foreign delegates being present, and Mlle. Hellemans welcomed all in a charming address and hailed the presence of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick the Founder of the International Federation of Nurses.

She was supported on the platform by M. Carton de Wiart, Minister of Social Service and Hygiene, Dr. Pechère, President of the National Federation of Belgian Schools of Nursing, Professor Sauerbruch of the University of Berlin, Dr. Rajchman, Director of the Health Section of the League of Nations, Mlle. Chaptal, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, the newly-elected President, Miss A. Lloyd Still, Miss C. D. Noyes, Miss Musson, Miss Reimann and the Presidents of the Federated National Councils.

Speech of the Minister of Social Service Hygiene.

M. Carton de Wiart, said he saw in the Congress of which the three first days had been held in Paris and the three last in Brussels, a sign of the Franco-Belgian friendship. He was happy to give a particularly warm welcome to all the delegates coming into a country which was forced to react against the obstacles which ultra nationalism brings, not only in the commercial world, but also in the intellectual world.

He continued: You will find here, ladies, in all classes and groups of opinion a feeling of admiration and solicitude for the noble career in which you are engaged.

In the darkness and difficulties of the hour, your presence amongst us throws a ray of comfort and hope. It is not at all a new thing and of which the 20th century can claim the honour of admitting women to take a devoted part in helping the unfortunate and notably in relieving the sick, that part is, for woman, a traditional work as old as humanity. Not that man lacks sense, and does not exert himself to help his neighbours, but, taking some of the words of one of yourselves, Mlle. Marguerite de Laveleye: "The ingenuity of woman in all classes, when she applies herself to do good is infinitely varied and never wearies. Coming more into contact, than man, with the minute details of life and more intimately convinced of the hidden miseries, she is also more ready to help others and to interest herself in them with a modest beneficence.

But that which has improved during the last years, has been the scientific and technical formation of the work of nurses."

M. Carton de Wiart then called attention with feeling to the devotion of the nurses during the War. He recalled how, after the Armistice, the doctors, profiting by the lessons of the War, thought of the national organisation of schools for Nurses. In Belgium, under Dr. Pechère and Dr. Peremans, directors of the School at Stuyverberg, a programme was agreed upon, organising instruction by a professionally competent staff and special practical apparatus. This programme consisted of three years of probation and systematic instruction in general nursing and severe discipline. M. Carton de Wiart expressed pleasure with the results obtained since 1921, thanks to this reorganisation and concluded:

"In wishing you, this evening, the good will of the Government for the success of your work, I do not want you to accept it as a mere common courtesy. We wish that the nurses will gather more and more esteem and the consideration which is due to their merits. We praise them and thank them for their example to society which is too egotistical and individual."

This speech, delivered with such evident sincerity, was received with warm acclamation.

Dr. Pechère recalled that it was M. Carton de Wiart, then Minister of the Interior, who signed the Royal Decree of September 3rd, 1921, thanks to which the Profession of Nursing was established and is developing on such sound educational lines in Belgium. He thanked the present Minister of Social Service and Hygiene for having given a new testimony of the interest which he had in nursing.

M. Pechère then presented a report on "Nursing Education in Belgium," the result of which is acknowledged in the progress being made in all its branches.

After our delightful welcome to Brussels, we realised we were going to have an ideal time and looked forward to the morrow when nursing questions of world-wide importance were to be discussed in the Congress, and when the 2,500 members assembled in Brussels had been graciously bidden to a Reception by their Majesties the King and Queen of the Belgians at the Royal Palace of Laeken.

AN EXCHANGE OF TELEGRAMS BETWEEN M. CARTON DE WIART AND M. DANIELOU.,

During the International Congress of Nurses M. Daniélou, Minister of Public Health in France, received from M. Carton de Wiart, Minister of Social Service and Hygiene, in Belgium, the following telegram:

"Permit me to take the opportunity of the opening in Brussels of the International Congress of Nursing, to express to you my good wishes for the success obtained in Paris by the Congress and to send you my sincere greetings and cordial sympathy."

The Minister of Public Health replied:

"I thank you for your kind wishes on the opening of the International Congress of Nursing. I can assure you that under your patronage the Congress will continue its work in Brussels with the same degree of success that it had in Paris and I would have you accept my sincere remembrances and cordial wishes."

We members of the Congress may indeed feel flattered at such an exchange of courtesies between eminent Ministers upon our behalf.

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