

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

OFFICIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CONGRESS, PARIS-BRUSSELS, JULY, 1933.

At its recent meeting the Executive Committee of the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain carefully considered the necessary arrangements in connection with the forthcoming Congress of the International Council of Nurses, Paris-Brussels, so that they may be as convenient as possible for Members who wish to attend. The Committee agreed to a revised Itinerary to be issued by Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., which appears on page 77.

Members.

1. Members include all Nurses who are members of any Nurses' Organization affiliated to the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, and they alone have a right to the Identification Certificate signed by the President through which they can claim the privileges of inclusive tickets for travel and hotel arrangements agreed with Thos. Cook & Son, Ltd., and through whose agency they must pay the 50 francs Congress Registration Fee, who will transmit it to Paris. Members are entitled to two receipts from Thos. Cook & Son—one for the round trip and one for the Congress Registration Fee.

Members may speak and vote at Meetings of the Congress.

Non-Members.

2. A limited number of professional nurses, who are not members of the National Council, who might justifiably wish to attend the Congress, may apply for an Identification Certificate and Special Permit, signed by the President, for which they will be required to pay 10s. 6d. towards the expenses of organization, financed annually by the Members of the National Council of Nurses. Non-Members are not allowed voting power, nor can they take part in discussions.

Headquarters.

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

All letters of enquiry should be addressed there to Miss S. Villiers, J.P., Hon. Secretary, N.C.N.

Miss Villiers will be pleased to supply all possible information to help members to make their arrangements for attending the Congress, and can be interviewed weekly on Thursdays, between 2 and 4 p.m., at the above address.

CONGRESS FEES NOT TO BE SENT TO PARIS DIRECT.

The issue of the *Nursing Times*, dated March 4th, contains incorrect information in connection with arrangements for the International Congress, which may cause disorganisation in this country, and which could and should have been avoided by reference to official Headquarters. The statement published "that the Registration Fee for members and visitors . . . should be sent as soon as possible to the Congress Arrangement Committee, Paris, giving name, position and address of the sender" does not apply to Great Britain.

As announced above the National Council of Nurses has decided with the consent of the Arrangements Committee that its members shall pay the 50 francs Registration Fee through Thos. Cook & Son, so please note that no money is to be sent to Paris direct.

PRE-REFORMATION NURSES IN ENGLAND.

THE NUTTING-DOCK PRIZE ESSAY.

BY MISS MARGARET HELEN HART.

(Abridged.)

I.

ORDERS ENGAGED IN NURSING IN ENGLAND.

"Finally, we commend to Thy Fatherly goodness all those, who are any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; that it may please Thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities." (*Book of Common Prayer.*)

"We beseeke you (most deare Sovereine) even for the hope you have in the redemption of Christ, that you call to remembrance that dreadful daye, when your Highness shall stande before the judgement seat of God in no more reputation than one of those miserable creatures which doe nowe daylye dy in the streets for lack of theyr porsion." This solemn protest from Brinkelow ("A Supplication of the Poore Commons") against the suppression of the Monastic Hospitals was by no means an isolated cry. The Petition of the Citizens of London (1530) for the re-opening of some of the Hospitals, shows a similar state of mind.* These institutions, richly endowed by Royal and pious benefactors, had given shelter and Christian care to all those who were "any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate." That they had deteriorated from their original usefulness, there is no doubt. Both financially and (according to the visitors of Henry VIII) morally, they were hampered in their services of the poor and sick. Parliament consented to the Dissolution only because Henry VIII promised to reform these institutions and correct the abuses. It was when he ignored his promise that the country realised of what it had been deprived.

It is easy to imagine, therefore, the importance of these Monasteries and Convents to the poor and sick during the four centuries following the Norman Conquest, when Monasticism was in its most flourishing condition. Each Convent had its Guest-house, the Master of which was reminded that "guests must be received as if they were Christ Himself." All the medical knowledge of the Western world was to be found in the Monasteries. The poor were relieved daily at the gate by the Almoner, whose charity was to be wider than his means.

Apart from these there sprang up various Houses, founded for no other purpose than to care for those who were unable to care for themselves. These Houses were sometimes the offshoot of a large Monastery, and sometimes the foundation of some rich and pious public benefactor. Each went under the name of "Domus Dei"—God's house, Hospitium, or Spital, indifferently, without any reference to its purpose. Clay, in "The Medical Hospitals of England," traces some 750 of these eleemosynary institutions before 1556. It is from them that our modern hospital has its origin. Of this large number about 200 were solely devoted to Lepers.

Of the rest, a great many, especially at the ports, such as Southampton and Dover, looked after travellers and poor pilgrims who were unable to find a night's shelter, besides caring for the sick and old. A few of them became finally almshouses, and as such have remained to this day.

We are more concerned, however, with these "Maisons Dieu" in the full days of their usefulness when they were

* This begged for the re-institution of several hospitals in the City "for the ayde and comfort of the poore, sykke, blynde, aged and impotent persones, being not able to helpe themselves, nor having any place certeyn wherein they may be lodged, cherysshed, and refreshed tyll they be cured and holpen of theyre dyseases and syknesses."

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