

## THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

### SPECIAL REPORT ON PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING.

By Miss Mary S. Gardner.

Read at the International Congress, Paris, 1933.

#### Public Health Nursing Throughout the World.

In presenting my report of the Committee on Public Health Nursing, may I express the deep regret that I feel at my inability to be present at these meetings of the Congress. May I also express my warm appreciation and gratitude to the representatives of public health nursing in the various countries who have collected the valuable information upon which the following report is based. In addition to the questionnaires a large amount of most interesting and informing material has been sent to the Committee, all of which is most gratefully acknowledged by its chairman.

The Committee on Public Health Nursing was appointed in 1925, and has now been in existence for eight years. The purpose of the Committee was to perform such duties as were referred to it from the Board. Up to the present time no specific duties have been referred by the Board. The Committee has therefore carried on certain activities with the Board's general approval.

During the first four years of the Committee's existence (those preceding the Montreal meetings) an effort was made to ascertain certain facts regarding the volume and scope of the public health nursing being done in the various countries, the type and preparation of those engaged in it, the conditions under which it was done and the opportunities afforded nurses in this field of work.

The interesting data regarding these questions which was gathered during the first four years was presented at the Montreal meeting and has formed a basis for further effort.

In presenting this report it seemed wise to follow the general form used in 1929 in order that comparison might be facilitated. As before, the questionnaire method of acquiring information has been used, and only information furnished by accredited representatives of each individual country has been made use of. All temptation to supplement incomplete statements with information from outside sources has been resisted.

A questionnaire was sent to the 23 regular and the 9 corresponding members of the Public Health Nursing Committee in July, 1932. Up to date (July 1st, 1933) answers have been received from 19 regular members (one incomplete and one too late for analysis) and 5 corresponding members (one too late for analysis).

The completed forms have not yet been received from 4 regular members (Brazil, Cuba, Germany and the Philippine Islands), nor from 4 corresponding members (Japan, Latvia, Switzerland and Turkey). The information as given below was obtained from the following countries:

Austria	Holland
Belgium	Iceland
Bulgaria	India
Canada	Irish Free State
China	Korea
Czechoslovakia	New Zealand
Denmark	Poland
Esthonia	South Africa
Finland	Sweden
France	United States
Great Britain*	Jugoslavia**
Greece	

\* Great Britain: England and Wales, Scotland not included.  
\*\* Jugoslavia. Information given for only one Province.

In analyzing the information contained in the questionnaires and otherwise collected, it is evident that public health nursing is in very varying stages of development in the various countries, according, in some measure, to the number of years since its inception, and according also to the national conditions upon which its growth depends.

Looked upon as a modern institution we may give Great Britain the credit for establishing the first public health nursing organisation—called then a district nursing association, in 1859. Other countries, Canada, Denmark, Latvia, Sweden and the United States also date their work from the last century. The early years of the twentieth century saw the establishment of public health nursing in several other countries, though in many the principal impetus has come since the war. Since our last meeting, four years ago, there has been a decided strengthening of the movement throughout the world in spite of the depression which has had its effect on many old as well as new pieces of work.

#### Total Number of Nurses in the Various Countries.

It is impossible to give absolutely accurate figures regarding the number of public health nurses employed, since the numbers stated by several of the countries has necessarily been estimated and not according to an actual count. It seems safe, however, to say that there are between 39,000 and 40,000 nurses employed in the twenty-two countries studied, the probable number being about 39,700. While in some of the countries a certain number of these nurses are partially, or, more usually, specially trained (principally for child welfare work) and while a certain number of others have received a health visitor's training, or training as *Fuervoggerin*, a great proportion of the nurses listed are, according to the questionnaires, fully trained in the usually accepted understanding of that term. The large body of untrained women, and in some instances men, who are doing work in closely allied fields have not, in most of the countries, been taken into account in these figures. In almost all of the countries the nurses are entirely women, although in China there are twelve male nurses and in the United States 247 men doing industrial nursing.

Though the number of nurses per country might be expected to follow the proportionate size of the population, this is not the case. The countries where public health nursing has been longest established, still, for the most part, lead numerically, irrespective of size. Thus Great Britain (England and Wales) have approximately 6,000 public health nurses, small as is the square mileage covered.

The largest number in any one country is in the United States, where there are just over 20,000 nurses at work. The smallest number is in Iceland, where nine nurses work along the seacoast, the interior being more or less uninhabited. Great Britain, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Sweden and the United States all have over a thousand nurses, France following the United States and Great Britain numerically. Bulgaria, China, Esthonia, Greece, Iceland, Korea, and South Africa have less than one hundred, the other countries falling between these two groups.

#### Types of Work.

Public health nurses are engaged in:

Visiting nursing,	Industrial nursing,
Child welfare work,	Mental hygiene,
School nursing,	Hospital social service.
Tuberculosis work,	

Thirteen of the countries are offering in varying proportions all of these seven services, namely, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, France, Great Britain, Holland, New Zealand, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, the United States, and Jugoslavia. Six services are offered by Czechoslovakia,

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