

THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF NURSES.

As we go to press, we have received a very informative and valuable report from Dean Effie Taylor, President, I.C.N., for which we regret we cannot find space this month.

The following items of information are of topical interest.

TO OUR NATIONAL MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS AND ASSOCIATE NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES. FROM TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS IN AMERICA.

Postponement of the 1941 Congress.

In answer to the questionnaires sent to the National Associations concerning the possibilities of the 1941 Congress answer has been received from 19 countries. Each country has expressed its desire to postpone the Congress.

In accord with this decision, and because of the disturbing conditions throughout the world, it has been decided that the Congress of the International Council of Nurses which was to have been held in the United States in 1941 shall be postponed indefinitely. This matter will be reviewed from time to time as world conditions change.

In a recent letter to Miss Taylor, the American Nurses' Association reports the following:—

"The Members of the Board of Directors agreed that you, as President of the International Council of Nurses, should be advised that the Board of Directors of the American Nurses' Association regrets very much that the International Council of Nurses cannot hold its Congress in 1941."

The Board voted also:—

(1) That the American Nurses' Association should inform the I.C.N. that this Association would request the privilege of having the invitation considered with others which might be extended for the Congress, if and when world conditions permit the Congress to be held.

(2) That if it is possible for the Grand Council to meet in the United States of America in 1941 (or whenever desirable) that the A.N.A. trusts that it will hold its meetings in this country as previously planned.

Education Committee.

The educational questionnaire compiled under the chairmanship of Miss Isabel M. Stewart has been sent to the members of the Education Committee. Each member is to be responsible for organising (in as far as possible under the present conditions) the necessary sub-committees in her own country, and providing these persons with mimeographed copies of the questionnaire. It is hoped that the completed copies will be returned to Temporary Headquarters by September 1st, 1940, in order that the compilation of this material may be completed by July, 1942.

For the information of the Board of Directors and the Associate National Representatives, a copy of the above questionnaire, together with the list of directions for study, and the letter Miss Stewart has prepared to accompany the material has been posted to you (third class) in to-day's mail. May we ask that after you have had the opportunity to read this material, that you forward it to the offices of your National Association for filing.

THE ASSOCIATION OF HOSPITAL MATRONS

The meeting announced to be held at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, on May 25th, was cancelled owing to war conditions, the members all being more or less engaged in public duty.

The General Superintendent, Queen's Institute of District Nursing, states that:—

Following the recent appeal made by Miss Florence Horsbrugh for recruits for the Civil Nursing Reserve many Queen's Nurses do not seem to have understood that any

applications they might make for inclusion in this Reserve would not be accepted. It was stated in the appeal that it did not apply to nurses already employed in hospital or public health services, and as district nursing is one of the latter the Matron-in-Chief wishes it to be quite clear that Queen's Nurses should not apply for work of that kind. While understanding the anxiety to serve her country that every nurse feels at this critical time, it is hoped that all district nurses will realise that their contribution to the civilian population is of immense importance and is likely to become increasingly valuable.

BRITISH NURSES THROW DOWN THE GAUNTLET TO THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

On June 2nd, the following paragraph appeared in *The People*:—

"Note. Recently the London County Council appointed as Matron-in-Chief of all their hospitals a German-Swiss born nurse, naturalised.

"We have no complaint against the woman, but we do suggest that a full-blooded British nurse could fill the job just as well."

An action so incredible upon the part of the London County Council during this war to the death, instantly aroused the necessity for investigation.

We therefore visited County Hall, and in interviews with responsible officials learned that the statement was true. In succession to the late Matron-in-Chief, the lady in question had been appointed Principal Matron-in-Charge at a salary of £900 per annum.

She was recommended by the Hospitals and Medical Services Committee of the Council, of which Dr. Somerville Hastings is chairman, and the recommendation was approved by the Council early in May.

It is true that the lady in question was a German-Swiss alien—trained at Guy's Hospital, London, 1918-1922, and although not naturalised, she was placed on the English Nurses' Register in April, 1923; for eleven years she was permitted to work in England as an alien.

In 1934, just before being appointed to an official position by the L.C.C., she became a naturalised British subject, and has been permitted to retain her official connection with it since war was declared upon Germany in September, 1939.

WHAT ABOUT IT!

That this official of German-Swiss blood should have been appointed to control the 10,000 British Nurses who compose the staff of the L.C.C. at the present crisis, is proof of its most obtuse attitude in so far as the sensibilities of its nurses are concerned; and the consequent indignation throughout the Nursing Profession at this unjustifiable reflection on its patriotism, has already inspired the demand that the Senior Nursing Officer of the L.C.C. shall be a British-born subject.

The Council is being bombarded, Members of Parliament petitioned, the Home Office approached, to release the L.C.C. Nursing Staff from the intolerable position in which it has been placed.

When we realise that hundreds of these nurses are in charge of our wounded, the flower of our manhood, maimed by the ruthless German barbarians, blinded, deafened, limbless, their dear faces unrecognisable, shell-shocked, mentally afflicted, and that a woman of German blood is in command of their services, it needs no further argument upon our part to rouse the public in protection of our nurses from the indignity to which they have been subjected.

Let justice be done at once by those in power, or they will be compelled by public opinion to rectify their unjustifiable action.

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