

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION.

THE SIXTH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF THE GRAND COUNCIL.

The Grand Council of the Florence Nightingale International Foundation held its Sixth Ordinary General Meeting at Riddell House, St. Thomas's Hospital, London, during the days of September 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th last.

A telegram of welcome and good wishes was received from Miss Lambie (President), who was unable to be present. Miss Lambie's Presidential Address was read to the meeting, and a cable regretting her absence was sent to her.

In the absence of the President, the meeting unanimously appointed Miss Hentsch to the Chair.

The chief item on the Agenda was to receive the report of the Study which had been made of the Foundation by Professor Hamley and Dr. Uprichard and to "decide the action to be taken arising out of the Study." The Study had been printed and circulated to member bodies in June, and the large majority had examined it closely and had sent their delegates with instructions. Of the 16 Florence Nightingale Memorial Committees represented, there were apparently only three which had not been able to do this.

From the beginning the Chairman made it clear to the meeting that no decision would be taken until after the Grand Council had had the opportunity of studying the Plan outlined in Appendix VIII of the Study, informing itself fully of the implications of the Plan and of meeting with the Board of Directors of the International Council of Nurses to discuss with the Board in Joint Session those matters on which the Grand Council wanted further information or guarantees. The Chairman referred the Grand Council to the mandate it had received from its Special General Meeting held in New York on April 30, 1947. The mandate was as follows:—

Resolved: "That the Grand Council of the F.N.I.F. arrange for a joint meeting with the Board of Directors of the I.C.N. after the receipt of the final report of the Advisory Committee on Study of the F.N.I.F."

In accordance with this resolution a Joint Meeting of the Grand Council of the F.N.I.F. and the Board of Directors of the I.C.N. had been called for Friday, September 17th, at 10 a.m.

The meetings held on Thursday, September 16th, were devoted to a detailed study of the "Plan" (Appendix VIII of the Study). Two delegations made it clear that their National Committees, having studied the Plan, did not accept the proposal that the F.N.I.F. lose its status as an independent Foundation. They admitted the need for reorganisation and anticipated that a reorganised F.N.I.F. could look forward to adequate support from nurses and from the public.

On the subject of dissolution, the Chairman called upon the representative of the Trustees to explain to the meeting the legal implications of the present Trust Deed of the Foundation. From this explanation, confirmed by the Solicitor at a subsequent meeting, the following points were made clear:—

1. Under the terms of the Trust Deed, the F.N.I.F. cannot dissolve itself. It can apply to the High Court for a new administration of the Trust. Such action would not only be unwieldy and lengthy, but would have in it a certain element of uncertainty.

2. The Trust Deed, however, provides wide powers for reorganisation, and such reorganisation could be legally effected by decision of the Grand Council to bring the Foundation within the I.C.N. as a legal entity.

Details of such reorganisation had not as yet been studied, but could be worked out if required.

The meeting decided to communicate to the Board of Directors of the I.C.N. that it was unanimous in supporting the principle of a united effort among nurses in building an appropriate memorial to Florence Nightingale: That it was unanimous in agreeing that extensive reorganisation of the F.N.I.F. was timely.

Further clarification was to be invited on the Board's interpretation of certain aspects in the Plan, particularly the degree of autonomy envisaged for the Memorial within the I.C.N. and the status of the National Florence Nightingale Memorial Committees. The Grand Council wanted some guarantee from the I.C.N. that it had machinery for raising the necessary funds to finance the new Memorial and some anticipation of obtaining support from the public as well as from nurses. Miss Hentsch was appointed to present the Grand Council's point of view.

The Joint Meeting was held on Friday, September 17th, with Miss Hentsch in the Chair. After welcoming the Board of Directors, Miss Hentsch retired from the Chair in order to present the case for the Grand Council. Miss Butzerin consented to fill the Chair during this period.

Miss Höjer (President) spoke on behalf of the Board of Directors. She said that the Board had accepted the Plan as it was presented in the Appendix VIII of the Study, with a minor alteration in the composition of the Florence Nightingale International Memorial Council. She accepted, on behalf of the Board, the proposition that the F.N.I.F. would not dissolve, but remain as a legal entity and reorganise. She said the Board was prepared to accept Red Cross representation on the national and international level, but agreed that in order to give the desired freedom nationally it would have to be examined whether this could be incorporated in the new constitution. On the matter of the permanent Headquarters of the Memorial being in London, no final decision could be reached, but the Joint Meeting agreed on the desirability of the Memorial to Florence Nightingale being located in London if this were possible.

Miss Höjer expressed anxiety as to the ability of the I.C.N. to provide money to finance the administration of the Memorial, and this was endorsed by the Hon. Treasurer of the I.C.N. She said, however, that the Board was prepared to initiate an appeal for the Memorial to outside organisations interested in nursing education and to mobilise the united efforts of nurses. They could not say more.

Asked if the I.C.N. could work in countries not affiliated to the I.C.N., Miss Höjer assured the meeting that such machinery existed and that the I.C.N. could assist such countries to participate in the Memorial even if the National Nurses' Association were not active or non-existent.

Following this meeting, the Grand Council of the F.N.I.F. met separately and took action as follows:—

Resolved: That the Grand Council agrees in principle that the Florence Nightingale International Foundation be reorganised within the International Council of Nurses retaining its legal entity and provided that the administrative details of this relationship can be worked out to its satisfaction before the next meeting of the Grand Council.

Resolved: That a Special General Meeting of the Grand Council take place in Sweden before the next Congress of the I.C.N.

A second Joint Meeting was held with the Board of Directors of the I.C.N. on Saturday, September 18th, and the decisions of the Grand Council were communicated.

It was agreed that a Joint Committee be set up to prepare the details of the agreement between the two bodies for presentation in Stockholm at the respective meetings.

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