

## The International Council of Nurses.

THE Danish Council of Nurses in celebrating its 50th anniversary invited quite a number of guests from several countries to participate in their Golden Jubilee celebrations on October 26th, 27th and 28th.

A dinner was held on October 26th, and on another night a historical play was performed at the Theatre Royal, Copenhagen. Miss Gerda Höjer, President of the International Council of Nurses, planned to attend, as well as Mlle. Bihet, President of the Belgian Nurses' Federation, and other members of the Board of Directors.

In connection with the celebrations, Miss Daisy C. Bridges, R.R.C., S.R.N.; Executive Secretary, I.C.N., was asked to address a group, consisting of members of the Danish Council of Nurses, together with post-graduate students from Aarhus University on "The Practical Co-operation between the I.C.N. and the National Nurses' Associations."

She was also asked to remain in Copenhagen over Sunday, October 30th, in order to broadcast in the State Broadcasting Service. This took place at 11.30 a.m., the duration being 12 minutes, the title of the broadcast being, "The Value of International Relationships in Professional Work", which we have pleasure in recording herewith.

The Danish Council of Nurses joined the International Council of Nurses in 1909, five years after the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain, which was the first association to be affiliated in 1904.

### The Value of International Relationships in Professional Work.

More than one thousand years ago Denmark and England were at war with each other. Denmark invaded England and conquered, and for a considerable number of years Danish kings ruled over both kingdoms. Only recently in my country, which is England, we have enjoyed a visit in a modern Viking boat, of the descendants of the ancient Vikings, clad in the armour of long ago. They landed at a South Coast seaside resort and later sailed up the river Thames which flows through the centre of the city of London. Students of a famous London hospital, the site of which happens to be on the bank of the Thames, arrayed as ancient Britons, armed with bows and arrows, rowed out into the centre of the river to launch an attack upon the Danish invaders. But this visitation by descendants of the ancient Vikings was made as a friendly gesture. The welcome they were given in England, I am sure they will agree, was warm and enthusiastic. The enmity of long ago between our two countries has now given place to friendship; a feeling of amity between nations has grown and flourished, strengthened and consummated in recent years by our mutual efforts against a common foe.

What has happened through the centuries to provoke this change of feeling? How is it that friendly exchange and interchange between industrial and professional groups has replaced the ancient rivalry, that the sea between us is no longer considered beneficial as a defence against attack, but as a friendly bridge uniting rather than separating our two countries? It is a platitude to say that the world is growing smaller and that we are all growing nearer and nearer to each other for its truth is so apparent that we cannot but be aware of it. The distances which the ancient Vikings covered in a number of weeks can now be flown in the same number of hours. People can even travel from the ends of the earth in a matter of days, or even hours, distances that not many years ago would have taken weeks or months to cover. Therefore, we can no longer afford to be insular; whatever our occupation, our trade, our

profession, we must be prepared to share our interests and our problems with people of other countries, as they on their part must be prepared to share theirs with us. We all have our problems, whatever our field of work or interest, and we find that we gain immeasurably if we try to solve these problems together.

I feel I have a special right to speak on this subject for I am a nurse, and nursing is, of all others, an international profession. We have no barriers; we nurse irrespective of race, creed or colour. Those of us who, during the recent war, nursed outside our own countries, realised probably as never before the truth of these words. We did, in fact, nurse patients of almost every race, creed, caste and colour. We did so alongside the nurses of their own countries and found that we had many things in common; in fact that their desire for the betterment of health conditions amongst the peoples of their countries was every bit as ardent and sincere as should be our own. It was the tragedy of war that brought us together, but even so we were without doubt richer for the experience of knowing each other. It is because of this mutual benefit to be derived from international relationships that we nurses are united in an international federation. We are proud that our federation is the oldest international association of professional women—the International Council of Nurses. We have recently celebrated our 50th Anniversary by holding a conference in Sweden. At this conference some 3,500 nurses were present from 36 countries. Thousands of others unable, through difficulties of one kind and another, to attend in person, were nevertheless with us in spirit and sent us messages of friendship and of goodwill. In fact this spirit of goodwill emanated from our conference, and this alone will have—indeed is already having—world-wide repercussions.

But congresses and conferences are but *one* activity of our Council. At them we make and strengthen our friendships, share our professional knowledge, deepen our understanding, and extend for ourselves and others our vision of the many and growing potentialities of all aspects of nursing. The work of our Council, however, is continuous. It is concerned with the maintenance of the highest standards of nursing service, and of nursing education in all those countries who are in membership and the assistance in building up such standards in other countries which have not yet achieved membership. For these purposes the International Council of Nurses acts as a co-ordinating, standard-making, fact-finding body, collecting information on nursing from all over the world and distributing such information to all parts of the world as and when required.

What one profession can achieve in professional organisation others might do well to consider, for professional organisation is the necessary structure upon which professional activities can grow and develop. Moreover, it is the essential "machinery" by means of which exchanges of personnel for purposes of study or of experience, sharing of knowledge for the better solution of common problems can be brought about. There is little hope for the world and no final solution for the problems of individual nations until they have learned to work together, to put principles above politics, and to realise the right of every nation, indeed of every individual, to have and to express a point of view. Surely it is right that the professions, and perhaps more especially the humanitarian professions, should lead the way towards this ideal. Professional organisation on an international level for the fuller development of international relationships is the translation of this ideal into a practical possibility, and we might all do well to remember some words of Florence Nightingale, who was both pioneer and statesman, as well as being the greatest nurse of her generation, who said, "Professions like nations can only flourish through an individual sense of corporate responsibility."

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