

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM



CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
TELEGRAM	<input type="checkbox"/>
DAY LETTER	<input type="checkbox"/>
NIGHT MESSAGE	<input type="checkbox"/>
NIGHT LETTER	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patrons should mark an X opposite the class of service desired; OTHERWISE THE MESSAGE WILL BE TRANSMITTED AS A FULL-RATE TELEGRAM	

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

GEORGE W. E. ATKINS, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

RECEIVER'S NO.
CHECK
CASH OR CHARGE
TIME FILED

Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

CABLEGRAM

72
MAY 1, 1919.

BROOKS HILLAR.

16 Avenue de WARREN

PARIS. FRANCE.

ATTEND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WOMEN BRANCH SWITZERLAND MAY 1919

DEPARTURE EARLY YOU GO. TAKE COMPANION IF YOU WISH. SOCIETY ELIZABETH

SWITZER. YOU ARE OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE CHIEF OF NATIONAL CATHOLIC

WAR COUNCIL AMERICA. THIS IS YOUR CONFIDENTIAL.

JOHN J. BUNKER.

change and prepay, National Catholic War Council, 930 - 14th. St. N.W.
WASHINGTON.

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF WOMEN

ZURICH, MAY 12-19, 1919

72

In response to the following cablegram:

"Attend International Conference Women Berne, Switzerland, May 5, Imperative. Take companion if you wish, suggest Elizabeth Sweeney. You are official representative National Catholic War Council, America. This is your credential. (Signed) John J. Burke."

I left for Berne, Switzerland, May 6th accompanied by Miss Elizabeth B. Sweeney. On my arrival at Berne I was informed that the International Congress of Women was to be held in Zurich and we proceeded at once to that city. On reaching Zurich we called on Miss Jane Addams and presented Father Burke's cablegram as a credential. She received me most kindly but said that my not being a member and not being sent from an allied organization was irregular and that the matter of my being sent as a delegate would have to be laid before the Credential Board. This body was already established in Zurich attending to preliminary matters prior to the regular work which was to begin Monday.

I was cross-questioned concerning my views on pacifism and whether I would object to shaking hands with the German women. To the former question I replied that while I was by no means a "conscientious objector" nor a pacifist in a certain sense of the word, I did not believe in war, but in case of war I should act frankly in a way to be of service to my government. I referred here to the type of work that the National Catholic War Council was cooperating in with the A.E.F.

To the latter question I replied that while I was not pro-German, I certainly had no objection to taking a German woman's hand and that meeting as we had for the cause of humanity, I considered only the souls of the persons gathered there for the greater good of humanity.

The following day I was informed by Miss Addams that if I really would like to be one of them that I would be received with full voting power. She added that she hoped I would not be shocked if I heard anything in the Congress in direct opposition to my views as there would be some radical things said. A lady from Holland asked me quite frankly if I had come thru any real interest in the Conference or merely thru a desire to see what they were doing. I replied that whatever my motives were they were thoroughly loyal ones and that no advantage of their hospitality would be taken. One or two others expressed their opinion quite frankly and from many little things that were said I realized that my coming was looked upon both with surprise and disfavor by a few.

I was given a seat at the first table and thruout the whole Congress I was treated with marked respect and consideration, particularly by Miss Addams. The third day of the Congress one of the American delegates was obliged to leave and I was asked if I would like to have Miss Sweeney be appointed a delegate in her place. She was given this position with full voting power and we both sat with the United States delegates. On one or two occasions our vote helped to throw the vote to the conservative side. On one question, concerning a public mass-meeting to denounce the Peace Terms, the vote was so close that our

(3)

vote was challenged by the opposing side which contended that we were not official delegates. Our position was upheld by Mrs. Post, chairman of the American delegation. As far as I know, Mrs. Despard, sister of General French, Lieutenant-Commander of Ireland, was the only other Catholic there besides Miss Sweeney and myself.

Among the most important matters brought forth by the Congress were: (1) Resolutions amending Peace Terms; (2) Resolutions amending League of Nations; (3) Proposals concerning feminist movement; (4) Resolution for lifting Food Blockade; (5) Resolutions concerning Internationalism in Education; (6) Miscellaneous discussions affecting labor, hygiene, child welfare, conscientious objectors, birth-control, suffrage, etc.

While there were some very radical opinions expressed and while religion was left out entirely from the program, the meetings were conducted with great dignity. Discussions were carried on without bitterness and the whole feeling was one of intense desire to solve the problems and lessen the misery of the world. A great many lessons were to be learned from the valuable information given out. The attendance at the Congress was quite beneficial in so far as it acquainted us with what these women were planning to do and showed us what part we, as Catholics, could take in solving these problems.

I can frankly say that the experience there has been very broadening as it brought us in contact with women from all over the world with whom we freely interchanged ideas. The meetings closed

Friday May 18th followed by a banquet the next evening given by the people of Zurich and was attended by approximately four hundred persons. The mayor, several local dignitaries, several professors from the University gave addresses which were responded to by the women from various countries. Songs were sung during the evening by students from the University dressed in costumes representing the various cantons in Switzerland.

When Miss Sweeney and I went to bid Miss Addams, she remarked with great feeling: "Thank Doctor Burke for me for having sent you here. We have been more than pleased to have you here with us. It has meant a great deal to all of us." Dr. Aleta Jacobs, suffrage leader in Holland and Vice-President of the Congress, asked me if I would get in communication with the Catholic women of Holland in order to show them how it is possible for the Catholic and non-Catholic women of America to cooperate in the common cause for the good of humanity.

Thru Miss Sweeney's uniform and the fact that our coming was much discussed, the National Catholic War Council gained an international recognition. We were questioned on all sides about our work in Paris and elsewhere, and were able to enlighten many in a most beneficial way. I feel that while we stood firmly to our principles, that our presence removed some prejudices in the minds of some of the persons present. I can honestly say that I feel it a great privilege and a real benefit that we were there.

M. R. Miller