

Letitia Burke Home From Cyprus After Teaching Nursing Four Years

Out of the hundreds of people working for the World Health Organization only 10 people a year are awarded fellowships. And only a few go to nurses.

Miss Letitia Burke, whose home is 381 Lacroix Street has gained one of these fellowships. She starts a summer session at the University of Western Ontario, in

London, before taking a two-year course at the university to get her master of science degree.

She has been working with W.H.O. in Cyprus as a nurse educator for the past four years.

Miss Burke said that it was becoming more and more important for nurses these days to have a university background so it was even more necessary that teachers of nurses should have a higher training.

For all the time she was in Cyprus she was based at Nicosia and her duties were training nurse teachers. She also worked for the upgrading of the standard of the nurses school. While she was there the school received full recognition from the General Nursing Council of England and Wales.

This she said would help in the recruiting of a larger number of girls.

She added, "We seemed to attract more male students than girls into nursing."

Miss Burke said she loved Cyprus because, "I find it very stimulating. What I particularly like about it is its beauty." She added that there were few chilly days and there was sunshine for 360 days of the year.

It was not all smooth sailing — for during the time of fighting between the Turks and Greek-Cypriots she was very much involved.

"I was kept very busy helping with the care of casualties — anybody who had any knowledge of nursing

— was called upon to help."

"It was rather terrifying to see how people who were formerly friends and associates become enemies almost overnight," she added.

And during this time she had to move to another apartment in a safer area.

But she said that now the situation was improved.

It is a country of contrasts. In the cities, she said the women were sophisticated and wore the latest fashions. But in the villages the women still wore the traditional black dress and the women worked in the fields — even in the building of roads and on construction.

"But the city women are really pampered. Many come back from overseas with degrees and they don't go to work. They just sit at home waiting to get married."

The girls are still chaperoned — not allowed to date alone unless they are engaged. And it is still the practice, though this gradually dying out, for bridegrooms to be given a dowry by the bride's father. The dowry could consist of a house of a large sum of money.

"Sometimes marriages are arranged — particularly in the wealthier families — and this does lead to marital problems later on," she said. She explained that arranged marriages only took place in the Greek community.

Miss Burke said that the two communities were very similar — the population is made up of 18 per cent Turks and 78 per cent of Greeks with some other minorities.

"The difference is in the religion — Greek Orthodox and Moslem — but as far as physical traits are concerned you would not be able to tell the difference between a Turk and a Greek she said.

Living was rather expensive because all household items had to be imported. Meat was expensive, but the fruit and vegetables were

quite reasonable.

"Rents for apartments and homes were certainly quite reasonable," she added.

About three weeks after she arrived in Cyprus she acquired a black mongrel puppy, Gigi. And Gigi was everywhere with her. Gigi is now back in Canada.

During her tour of duty Miss Burke has visited Israel, Lebanon, Egypt, taken a cruise to the Aegean Islands, been to Greece, Germany and England.

After she has finished her studies Miss Burke hopes to be reassigned to the Middle East.

She said of her work with W.H.O., "It is extremely interesting and rewarding. You are able to fulfill two objectives — to travel and to learn about other people and cultures of the world. You are also able to give service by using your own particular skills and training."

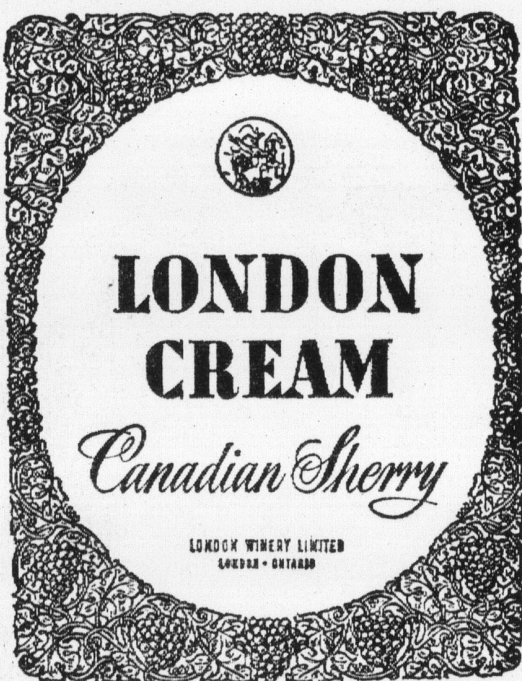
She trained at the Hotel Dieu of St. Joseph, Windsor and then went to the University of Western Ontario to get her diploma in nursing education.

She was a member of the teaching staff at St. Joseph's Hospital, Chatham, for a time before returning to Windsor. While there she took her BSc nurse instructor degree. Then Miss Burke went to a Chicago hospital as a staff nurse and was eventually promoted to supervisor.

ON ITS OWN

Lusaka (NPA) — Kambia, the copper-rich independent African nation which has in the past had to knuckle under to Rhodesia when it wanted to ship its mineral to the Indian ocean ports, will be by-passing its erstwhile partners in the Central African Federation by next March. By then, it proposes to have in operation through a system of alternate highways and rail lines to get its copper ore to the coast.

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