

National Council of Women

The Mirror is the Official Organ of the N.Z. Council

Conference on Child Welfare

The Auckland Branch of the National Council of Women of New Zealand launched upon one of the greatest undertakings of any branch when it decided to hold a three days' Conference on Child Welfare. The meetings were held in the College Hall of the Auckland University, on October 26th, 27th and 28th.

FIRST DAY :

Dr. Hilda Northcroft, President of the Auckland Branch, occupied the chair. The conference was opened by Mr. J. A. Warnock, Deputy-Mayor, who, as a member of the Auckland City Council's Parks Committee, was particularly interested in the Playgrounds Association, and he strongly advocated the provision of a greater number of small playgrounds in the City.

The first address on "The Mother" was delivered by Mrs. A. G. Talbot, who stressed the desire of the modern mother to hand to her children a richer and fuller heritage than she had herself enjoyed. Not only so, when her own were pledged it was her duty to give to the younger mothers the benefit of her experience. There was no doubt that the lessons imparted in the nursery had their reflection in the later history of the nation.

Mrs. A. M. Niblock, followed with a paper on "The Home and the Child," and dealt with the realisation of the physical and spiritual traits inherited by children.

Mrs. John Cook (Dominion President) followed upon the lines of the last speaker, emphasizing the necessity of the mother inviting and enjoying the full confidence of her child.

In the evening, Dr. H. Northcroft (Mrs. W. H. Parkes, President of the Auckland Plunket Society, presiding) dealt with matters relating to Ante-Natal care, stressing the very great importance of early advice and care. She stressed the point of the mentally defective mother, which is the greatest problem with which the National Council of Women is at present dealing, and expressed regret at the dilatoriness of the Government in giving effect to the Commissions' recommendations. Dr. Truby King featured the unprepared state of many present day women for motherhood as compared with the instinctive right living of the primitive people.

SECOND DAY :

Dr. G. Brunton Sweet's paper concerned the "ex-baby." He said that undoubtedly children who lived in areas without proper playing space benefited by being sent to Kindergarten; at the same time he deplored anything that deprived children up to five or six years of their morning sleep. He advocated the mother's supervision of the child's play and deprecated eating between meals.

Miss Kennedy followed with a paper upon Kindergarten, emphasizing the need of companionship amongst children, and the inability

teachers who lacked the incentive of high pay and social attainment as reward of their endeavours. "The shrine of the child's own personality



A SEA NYMPH—WITH HEADGEAR

New Era Co., Auckland

of the busy mother to give the supervision to her child she would only be too glad to afford.

Dr. Paterson (Director of School Hygiene) speaking of the School Child viewed her subject from the viewpoints of diets, fresh air and sunlight; particularly in regard to diet. She thought that backward children could be afforded considerable assistance.

Mr. J. Shaw (Auckland Training College) opened the evening Conference with an address on Primary Education, stressing particularly the fine missionary enthusiasm of many

must be preserved inviolate, while fitting him for community service."

Mr. H. E. Longworth (Director of Physical Education) was the next speaker, taking as his topic the effect of physical exercises in schools, their influence in correcting postural defects and as a counter balance to mental work. He urged that very much needed to be done in this direction.

THIRD DAY :

Miss S. E. Jackson presided in the afternoon, and a most instructive paper was delivered by Dr. Buck-

ly Tarkington on "The Mind of the Child." The most appealing point of her address was the fault of grading children for instruction on the basis of age. When the child seemed backward it was the first charge of those responsible to ascertain the cause; particularly this applied in the case of children who were nervous or dreamy. She believed in clinics for the measurement of the standard of the physical and mental development of children.

Mrs. N. Ferner (Member of Board of Education and President of the Play Association) followed with a paper on "Play and Character Moulding." After dealing with all the characteristics that go to making "the playing of the game" Mrs. Ferner made a very earnest appeal that there should be more playing spaces for the young folk, as quite a large proportion of these who attended the football and cricket matches were only onlookers because they had not the opportunity to be players.

"The Problem Child" was dealt with by Dr. Mildred Staley and Miss Jean Begg. Dr. Staley whose views are well known to all of us, made an eloquent plea for "the child's sick soul," pointing out that the delinquencies of childhood were really in most cases the diversion of natural instincts into the wrong channel. Miss Jean Begg followed with a supporting address.

Mr. J. Beck, Superintendent of Child Welfare, dwelt upon the more important aspects of "The Child Welfare Act," ascribing its introduction at an earlier stage than otherwise would have been, to the work of the Auckland Community Welfare Council, whose Children's Charter has been accepted by all interested as a model document.

Mr. C. J. Tunks, in a very lucid delivery, stated he had been asked to criticise the new Act but that it was too early to level criticism of a drastic nature. He would advocate, however, that all legislation regarding children should be consolidated into one Act; that an illegitimate child should be entitled to share in the estate of the father in the event of intestacy; he certainly thought that there should be a department established to include the administration of child welfare, widows' pensions, supervision of the feeble-minded and bureaux for information and research.

The proceedings closed with an appeal by Mr. E. C. Cutten on behalf of the Young Citizens' League, and votes of thanks to the Auckland University College, to the Press, to the Speakers and to the exhibitors who had supplied material for the information of those attending.

[There was so much of paramount importance on the subject of Child Welfare and Motherhood discussed at the recent Conference of the National Council of Women (New Zealand Branch) that *The Mirror* hopes in its future issues to publish papers from several prominent authorities in the earnest hope that the imparted knowledge may be of help to young mothers.

—Ed. *The Mirror*.]