

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

VOL. 3.—No. 34.

CHRISTCHURCH: APRIL, 1898.

2s 6d Per Annum.
Post Free.

English Women Workers.

WE have received the official report of the Conference of Women Workers held at Croydon in October last. The Conference was arranged by the National Union of Women Workers of Great Britain and Ireland.

This Union consists of (a) ordinary members, who shall be women workers subscribing at least five shillings annually, and (b) corporate members, that is, members of local unions which subscribe at the rate of five shillings for every twenty-five members or less, on their roll. The Union is federated with the International Council of Women. The Governing body of the Union is called the National Council, and consists of representatives of the Local Unions, representatives of all Societies of Women nationally organised, and of all members of the Executive Committee. This Executive Committee is elected by the National Council, but has power to add four to its number. No one is eligible for nomination who has not been a member of the Union for at least a year.

The report of the Conference is published in two vols., containing some 268 pages, and is sold for 2s 6d per copy. It contains the addresses and papers delivered and read; lists of the officers, General Committees and Sub-Committees; Constitution, Bye-laws and Standing-Orders, and lists of the sub-

scribing members. The latter contains the names of a large number of titled ladies, and shows that many members of the British aristocracy are not content to be counted among the drones of society.

The Conference lasted four days, and those who think that our New Zealand National Council undertakes too much work would stand appalled at the activity of these English ladies. The programme for the first day included half-an-hour for devotion, an address of welcome, the Presidential address, and no fewer than *twelve* papers. Nearly all these papers were followed by discussion, and the English method (that of nominating speakers), alone could have enabled the Conference to get through such a mass of work. Many of the subjects were what may be considered specially women's subjects, such as the care of children, nursing, the life of women as elementary school teachers, rescue work, young Englishwomen on the Continent, and Prison work.

Temperance occupied a prominent place in the programme. It consisted of a paper on the medical aspect of temperance by Mrs Clare Goslett, methods of attacking intemperance (a) through the medium of Homes, by Lady Elizabeth Biddulph, (b) by Bands of Hope, by the Hon Mrs Eliot Yorke, and (c) by Legislative action, by Mrs H. J. Wilson.

The fourth day was devoted to a discussion on the attempt to revive the C.D. Acts, and to a consideration of practical rescue work.

The resolution on the former was moved by Mrs Fawcett in a very able speech, and was seconded by the Hon. Mrs A. T. Lyttelton. Mrs Fawcett quoted statistics published by the Government, showing that during the operation of the Acts in India venereal diseases increased in twenty-four years from 212 per thousand in 1865, to 480 per thousand in 1889. She said that the Acts were a failure because they were based on wrong moral principles. A number of instances were quoted from official documents showing that the Acts were regarded as direct and open inducements to vicious habits.

The educational side of co-operation was the title of interesting papers by Mrs Greenwood and Miss C. Webb. Many of the co-operative societies make grants out of their profits for educational purposes. Last year the grants for these purposes had amounted to no less than £46,752. The aggregate capital of the co-operative societies amounted to over sixteen millions, their turn-over to fifty-two millions, and their profits to between five and six millions. Besides the grants for educational purposes, some twenty thousand pounds was voted to charity.