

Rev. J. A. Luxford welcomed Miss Kirk on behalf of the ministers of the town. Miss Kirk then gave a most happy and instructive address. Both of Miss Kirk's meetings in the Theatre were largely attended, and must have influenced many not already decided to cast their votes aright.

### Winton.

Under the auspices of the W.C.T.U., Miss Kirk addressed a well-filled hall, Rev. J. Baird occupying the chair. Though saying she had nothing new to tell, Miss Kirk dealt with her subject in an able manner, and proved to the audience that she is a speaker of no mean order. Vocal items added to the enjoyment of the evening.

### Gisborne.

The Union has been working with unceasing earnestness during the past few months, visiting from house to house, distributing literature and sparing no efforts in the cause. The opening of the Coffee Rooms was a great success, the Free Reading room being crowded with men during the whole evening. The members of the Union were busy serving refreshments from eight to ten o'clock. There was no programme but all were encouraged to feel themselves quite at home.

### Auckland.

We have been favoured with addresses from candidates Foulds, Rosser, and Allen at recent meetings. Our first district Convention was held on November 22nd. Delegates were sent from Thames, Onehunga, and Devonport, and letters received from Waihi, and West Hamilton. Very cheering and hopeful reports were brought from the various districts, and all testified to the great benefits of house to house visitation coupled with the distribution of literature. At the afternoon session Mrs Thorne gave a short address. Reports were read by secretaries and superintendents of departments, all showing steady, earnest work. An interesting account of the work of the Greymouth Union was given by Mrs Hansen. Solos were contributed during the afternoon and addresses given by Messrs Mitchell and Richardson. In the evening we joined the "No License" meeting held under the auspices of the Wesleyan Synod in the Pitt St. Church.

Our members have decided to join in demonstrations on Saturday, 2nd inst. On Saturday evening we are to hold a mass meeting in the Salvation Army Barracks, (kindly lent for the occasion.

The volunteer camp is to be visited on Sunday and Monday, literature distributed, and meetings held, if possible. Our Friday evening open-air meetings draw large crowds.

### Christchurch.

The annual meeting was held on December 13th, and the election of officers took place for the coming year as follows—President, Mrs Bain; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs Widdowson; Treasurer, Mrs Seed. The appointment of Recording Secretary was held over until next month. The retiring President, Mrs Cole, said that there was great cause for congratulation in the advance of the "No License" vote. The union should begin in real earnest at once to work for the next poll. Afternoon tea was dispensed, and the meeting closed.

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### The Church in Social Reforms.

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[Extracts from a paper read by Albert Spicer, M.P., of London, at the International Council of Congregational Churches, Boston.]

I need not linger on the necessity for social changes. We are none of us satisfied with the existing state of things. We long for the day when there shall be more equal opportunities for all to exercise their powers, and to live their individual lives to the best advantage. We are also aware that, whatever our personal attitude may be on these social questions, these questions are with us, and with us to stay—they cannot be evaded.

The last fifteen years have growingly witnessed a new voicing of the wants of the people that can neither be silenced nor misunderstood. Each year sees an increase in the demands that are made in many directions. Amongst others, for a system of national education that shall fit every boy and girl for undertaking the work of life; the popular control of the drink traffic; shorter hours of labour; greater protection to be afforded by the State for the worker; better homes for the people; suitable provision for the aged poor; and a living wage.

Assuming, therefore, the necessity for changes and the justification of the people in asking for them, the question that I have to try to answer to-day is: What part our Churches should take in the movement? In what direction can help be best rendered? And in replying to this I would quote two passages from the pens of two very different men. In the

preface to the volume which contained an account of the work of our first International Council, our late revered friend and President, Dr Dale, used these words:—

"The Church should create in its members an eager desire to lessen the sorrow, the suffering, and the injustice, as well as the sin of the world; but it is not yet clear to my own mind that the Church, as a religious society, should take part in political, social, and economic agitation."

And in a recent number of the *Mansfield College Magazine*, our friend, Percy Alden, the respected warden of the Mansfield College Settlement, wrote:—

"But before long the great majority of the religious teachers of England will have to face the question, 'What is my relation to the labour movement and the organised workers of the country, and how far am I justified in insisting only on spiritual truths and neglecting the hard facts of social environment?' . . . The religious man who thinks cannot escape the social problem. It follows one as closely as the black Care of the Roman poet. It is seated close behind us, it never quits us, and it never will quit us until Christianity is not only preached but applied, until we have learned the lesson that man is his brother's keeper, not merely from the spiritual but also from the economic point of view. The duty of the Church, it seems to me, is very positive; it has not come to destroy, but to fulfil; its policy is a constructive one; it must have a clearly understood and defined moral tone for politics, for industry, for poverty, and for all the social inequalities and miseries of the age."

Surely, in these two utterances, there is a good deal of agreement. They each insist upon the duty of the Church as a whole to make its influence felt on all the questions that affect the social well-being of the community, as well as upon the truly sympathetic spirit in which that work should be undertaken.

Now, are we doing all we can in these two directions? There are many outside our churches who tell us plainly that we are not doing so; that in our Church life we are willing to help one another; that we are prepared to do something for the spiritual advantages of our fellowmen at home and abroad; that on the social side we are also prepared to help in the direction of charity, but that we are unwilling to interest ourselves in trying to solve social questions by remedial which pr-