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LEGAL AND PARLIAMENTARY.

Owing to the want of more robust health on the part of the Superintendent, the work of this department has not been prosecuted as vigorously as could be desired.

In response to a request made through the "White Ribbon" that each Union should appoint a local Legal and Parliamentary Superintendent, the following names were received by the New Zealand Department:—Ormondville, Miss Webb; New Plymouth, Miss Douglas; Tairiki, Mrs Jamison; Studholme, Mrs Dohrmann; Ashburton, Mrs Lill; Whangarei, Mrs Hutchison; Wanganui, Mrs Varney; Kaiapoi, Miss Evans; Waipuku, Mrs Fenwick.

While these names are, so far, encouraging, it will be seen that a large majority of the Unions have made no provision for enabling Legal and Parliamentary work to be carried on effectively.

In this colony our Unions are Unions of citizens, and if no provision is made for united work, how can we expect to make the vote "For God, and Home, and Humanity" felt? Our Unions exist for work, and it is only by united effort that we can hope to attain the objects for which we are banded together. The Superintendent would like Convention to urge upon every Union the imperative duty of appointing an officer to correspond with the New Zealand Superintendent, and carry on the work in her own district.

During the year Mrs Macalister, the Anti-Gambling Superintendent, worked splendidly in promoting a petition for the abolition of the totalisator. The Legal and Parliamentary Superintendent afforded Mrs Macalister what assistance she could in the matter. The report of the Anti-Gambling department will afford full particulars in connection with this petition, but it may here be said that owing to the death of the late Premier, and other causes, no decisive action was taken by Parliament during last session.

Mrs Cole, our New Zealand President, with Miss Roberts, waited on the Premier, Sir J. G. Ward, as he passed through Christchurch, and urged him, on behalf of the New Zealand Union, to use his influence to bring about the abolition of the totalisator. Sir J. G. Ward expressed his entire sympathy with the wishes of the deputation, agreeing with the view that the gambling evil was a great and a growing one, and therefore a menace to the welfare of the State. He promised to introduce legislation which would check the evil. One method, however, which Sir Joseph has since proposed to adopt will not, in the opinion of this Department, prove a satisfactory one. He proposed to earmark the revenue received by Government from the use of the totalisator for charitable purposes. The proposition to derive benevolent funds from so vicious a source as gambling is as objectionable as a proposal to endow schools from the revenue from the drink traffic. Should an attempt be made to

give legislative effect to such a proposal the Unions must be prepared to combat it by every means in their power.

Since "No License" was carried in Ashburton, the friends of law and order in that electorate felt that they had grave cause to believe that the Resident Magistrate of the district was treating persons charged with the offence of sly-grog selling with such leniency as to bring the law into contempt. At the request of Mrs Lill, President of the Ashburton Union, this Department drafted a petition to the Premier, asking that the Magistrate might be removed, and that one might be appointed who would see the law enforced. Petition forms were prepared, and an energetic canvass by the Ashburton W.C.T.U. resulted in the securing of a gratifying number of signatures. The petition was presented by a deputation of Temperance workers to Sir J. G. Ward as he passed through Ashburton, and the Premier promised to give the matter his earnest attention. The law-abiding citizens of Ashburton have had the satisfaction of finding that the Resident Magistrate has recognised his position, and that any charges of sly-grog selling in future will be heard before magistrates who are determined to uphold the law.

Much remains to be done in connection with this Department in the direction of bringing about a fairer condition of things for the women who are now, and for the girls who shortly will be, citizens of this colony. The first thing to be done is to overcome the apathy of the women electors, and the Superintendent deeply regrets that she cannot give the energy required for so strenuous a task. But with the help of the members of the Union, and of the local superintendents, who, it is hoped, will be appointed, much may be done to remove the disabilities of women, and to make New Zealand in reality a land of free women as well as of free men. Were our women freed from the legal inequalities now imposed on them solely on account of their sex, it is reasonable to suppose that their power and influence in the State would be greatly enhanced, and that the reforms so dear to many of our hearts would be the more speedily gained.

K. W. SHEPPARD,

Superintendent.

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