

Outlines of the Woman Suffrage Movement in New Zealand - IV.

The task to be undertaken was a long and arduous one, but the Franchise Superintendent brought to it a clear and logical brain, an untiring energy, and an invincible determination. Friends of the movement were corresponded with, literature bearing on the subject was procured from England and America; short and pithy leaflets were written, printed and circulated, and the district and local Unions were urged to take the question up, and to appoint superintendents. Counsel was taken with the veteran Parliamentarian, Mr Alfred Saunders, and the possibilities of a Parliamentary campaign discussed. Literary and Debating Societies were communicated with, and urged to give the question a place on their programmes. Papers to be read before these Societies were prepared, and correspondence was opened up in the daily newspapers. The Synods, Assemblies, and Unions of the various Churches were asked to give a public expression of opinion on the subject. It was not all pleasant work. Many rebuffs were met with, and unkind and unpleasant things were spoken of the Franchise Superintendent and those who worked with her. Many good and well-meaning people were honestly shocked that women should be so oblivious of all womanly modesty, as to want to vote at public elections. Nor were there wanting insinuations of a disagreeable nature emanating from lewd fellows of the baser sort. From the outset, those engaged in the liquor traffic saw in the enfranchisement of women a danger to their trade, and were not chary of using very questionable methods for frustrating it. On the other hand, there were numbers of good men and true who, by voice and pen, heartily supported the courageous women who were working for this great reform.

Chief among these were Mr Alfred Saunders and Sir John Hall. Both were veteran politicians (usually on opposite sides of the House), both were full of years, and each had a long and honourable record of public service. The prestige of their names gave weight and influence to the movement; and their great experience rendered them invaluable advisers; their unselfish co-operation and generous advocacy lifted the question high above the mire of mere party politics.

Of the pioneer party of settlers who

arrived in Nelson by the Fifeshire in September, 1841, Mr Alfred Saunders was the first to land. He was a born reformer. A Temperance worker in England, his principles emigrated with him, and on the voyage he formed the first New Zealand Temperance Society with a membership of five. A little society, truly, but probably the first of its kind in the Southern seas, and important therefore, as being the herald of the Temperance crusade in the new hemisphere. Only pioneers or students of the history of colonization know the toils and hardships of the founders of a colony twelve thousand miles from its base. But amid the trials and difficulties which beset the infant settlement, which at times was threatened with starvation and by warlike natives, Mr Saunders never abandoned his propaganda. He inaugurated a series of lively public discussions on temperance, which lasted for several months, and resulted in the formation of the Nelson Temperance Society, with three hundred and fifty members, an immense proportion of the tiny population.

Mr Saunders' political career began in 1855, when he was elected to the Provincial Council of Nelson. In 1858 he was returned to the House of Representatives, and in the following year was offered and refused the Colonial Treasurership. This refusal was quite characteristic, for although twice Superintendent of Nelson, and a member of many Parliaments, he has always valued his freedom of speech and action too highly to take pleasure in holding office. His fearless outspokenness was early exemplified, for in 1859 he publicly charged one of the Judges with giving a verdict at variance with the evidence, and with sending a garbled account to the Press. A criminal prosecution was instituted, and Mr Saunders was fined one hundred and fifty pounds, and was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. But although condemned by the Judge, the moral sentiment of the community was with him. While in prison he was re-elected by his constituents, his cell was daily crowded with visitors and presents, and he was specially released by the Governor without reference to the Judge. Mr Saunders has been a voluminous writer, his latest work being a History of New Zealand.

Sir John Hall had learned something of official life before leaving England. Arriving in the Colony in 1852, two years after the arrival of the Canterbury Pilgrims, he took an active part in the affairs of the settlement, and

three years later became Provincial Secretary of the Canterbury Province. In the same year he was returned to the House of Representatives by the Christchurch electorate, and in 1862 was called to the Legislative Council. His active brain, however, desired work rather than dull dignity, and four years later he resigned his seat to re-enter the Lower Chamber. To fully describe his career would be to write the political history of the Colony. Colonial Secretary, Postmaster General and Premier, has Sir John been, and whether in office or out, his enormous capacity for work, and his acute intellect, have made him a conspicuous figure and a man to be counted with. Courteous, keen, alert and wary, a past-master in the art of political tactics, who has never lost an election, a more skilful general of the Woman's Franchise parliamentary forces could not have been found or desired.

W.S.S.

ECHOES.

From the World's W.C.T.U. Convention.

When I first joined the W.C.T.U. I did not think much about working by method, but I was converted by something that happened at a meeting I was at. A long discussion took place upon a certain subject, and then the President passed on to the next question.

"But," said I, "Aren't you going to take a vote on that question?"

"Oh, no," she replied, "We never take a vote on anything. We settle everything by love!"

Mrs Pearsall Smith.

She (Miss Willard) was not a spirit set at liberty in certain directions. She was born free.

Lady Henry Somerset.

"Lovest thou Me more than" anything else? When that question gets settled we are easy to work with; our elbows don't stick out as they used to do. We don't want our own way.

Mrs Barney

I have lived twelve years in Topeka, and I could not to-day take a young man to a place where he could get liquor. There are such places, but I don't know them; they are upstairs, down cellar, up an alley, &c. The Prohibition law in Kansas is as well enforced as any other law. The drink-seller is a criminal. It is worth everything in the world to a man to know