

This was seconded by Mrs Wells and carried.

Mrs Atkinson moved—"That this Council re-affirms the great democratic principle of Government by a majority on all questions."

This was seconded by Miss Henderson, and carried, with three dissentients.

SIXTH DAY.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15TH.

A paper on "Human Betterment," by Miss Sheriff-Bain (Auckland) was read by Mrs Wells.

Mesdames Atkinson, Bullock, Bracher, Wells and Williamson expressed their appreciation of the spirit of the paper.

"Peace and Arbitration."—The following motion was moved by Miss Henderson and seconded by Mrs Wells, while Mesdames Blake, Bullock, Bracher, and Williamson spoke in support:—"That this Council deplores the militarism which is extending its ravages over the world, increasing the burdens of every people, fomenting national and international jealousies, and inciting virulent racial hatreds. The Council considers that the difficulties between nations are always capable of peaceable settlement, if mediatory methods be employed in time, and it therefore heartily welcomes the establishment of the International Court of Arbitration." The resolution was carried unanimously.

At the afternoon session Mrs Douglas (delegate from the Auckland Women's Political League) read a paper on "Parental Responsibility," by Mrs A. Daldy, Vice-President of the Council. At the close of the paper the President expressed regret that Mrs Daldy, one of the earliest members of the Council, was unable to be present at the meeting this year.

Mrs Blake moved—"That the sole qualification for an old age pension be twenty-five years' residence in the colony and a certified age of sixty-five years, and that the amount of the pension be increased to ten shillings a week." This was seconded by Mrs Wells, who pointed out some of the defects of the system, notably that which penalised those who possessed a little property but nothing in the way of an income. Mrs Williamson supported the proposal, and urged that the municipalities should erect cottages for the housing of old age pensioners. Miss Henderson, Mesdames Bracher and Sievwright supported the motion. The

President warmly approved of the proposal. The motion was carried.

The motions dealing with prison reform were then considered. Mrs Wells moved—"That all sentences for serious offences should be decided as to duration by the reform of the criminal, and should be limited to the maximum penalty attached to the crime." Our present system, she said, was designed to punish crime, not to reform the criminal; and that such was its result was evidenced by the number of those who were re-convicted again and again. She detailed the system pursued in the Elmira Reformatory, which produced such excellent results. Mrs Blake seconded the motion. Mrs Williamson referred to what had already been done in this colony, instancing the Probation Act and the proviso by which prisoners are allowed to choose out-door work. The motion was carried.

Mrs Williamson moved—"That women Visiting Justices be appointed to our prisons." The present system of honorary women visitors was nothing but a farce; the visitor had no standing and no authority. She was sure that women could do much on behalf of the women and girl prisoners. Mrs Sievwright and Mrs Wells supported the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mrs S. V. Bracher moved—"That capital punishment should be abolished." She thought that in taking the life of a human being we were usurping the right of God. The whole spirit of Christianity as expressed in the Sermon on the Mount was gentleness; the punishment of death breathed the spirit of revenge. The motion was seconded by Mrs Sievwright. Mesdames Blake, Sievwright, Douglas, and Wells supported the motion, which was carried.

There was a crowded "house" in the evening at the Borough Council Chambers.

Miss Henderson read a paper, written by Miss Jessie Mackay, on "The Domestic Servant Question."

Miss Henderson then moved—"That in the opinion of this Council domestic servants should be legally entitled to a weekly half-holiday." In speaking to the motion, Miss Henderson said that, whatever the cause of the present trouble, it had been greatly aggravated by the fact that many women had entered industrial life, where they had so many specified holidays during the year and a weekly half-holiday. Steps had been taken to procure a weekly half-

holiday for those engaged in industrial pursuits, and that fact made it more aggravating to domestic workers, who, more than any others, deserved and required such a holiday. For that reason she had great pleasure in moving the resolution. She said that in Christchurch domestic service was looked upon as degrading; at dances, social gatherings, etc., domestics were "tabooed." There was a tendency to think that educated girls should not perform domestic duties; they were trained to look upon such as beneath them, with the result that when they left school they were entirely ignorant of such matters. Miss Henderson was of opinion that girls should receive instruction in domestic science.

Mrs Bracher seconded the motion. She said that at Home great difficulty was experienced in procuring servants, as girls preferred to work in mills, factories, or shops, where they had specified hours to work, and had the time afterwards to themselves. The speaker said she had travelled considerably in the Old Country, and had come in contact with all grades of society. She had made a study of the relations existing between mistress and servant, and had come to the conclusion that a great deal depended on the character of the mistress. If there were good, thoughtful, Christian mistresses, there would be similar servants. She heartily agreed that servants should receive a weekly half-holiday in order that they might have sufficient recreation.

Mrs Williamson asked for a definition of the term legal half holiday, as a great deal depended upon what was meant thereby. If it had the same significance as that applying to factory workers, she did not think she could support it. It would mean that a girl would have to leave the house on a certain day, whether she wished to do so or not, because if she were discovered on the premises on that day the mistress would be liable to prosecution. She was of opinion that a girl would be better pleased if allowed to do as she pleased in the evening instead of being forced to sit with her mistress. The whole system of servitude was dying out. It had been urged at League meetings that servants should be addressed as "miss," but she (Mrs Williamson) jokingly said that she should have no objection to addressing one as "duchess" if it would be of any service. She agreed with Miss Henderson that girls should be taught domestic science. Mrs Williamson