

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

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"Kindergartens."

A PAPER READ BEFORE THE WOMEN'S
NATIONAL COUNCIL.

(By Mrs Bendeley, of Christchurch).

I have been asked to contribute a paper in furtherance of a project very dear to all our hearts, viz., free Kindergartens in every centre of population; yet I feel that but little of weight or importance can be added to the subject of early education after the wise suggestions offered last year at the Convention held in Dunedin. Nevertheless the grave results of the neglect to establish real Kindergartens for the very little children in our midst, must give us pause, ere we boast of our progress and enlightenment in this fair land of New Zealand.

The addition of a Kindergarten class in many of our public schools is, doubtless, a matter for congratulation, but I venture to think that the impossibility of adequately applying the system in its integrity, under present arrangements, deters many from investigating the principles and so seeing their way to engraft Froebel's methods into the ordinary curriculum of boy and girl, so that a little manual work is all that is attempted, and "Kindergarten taught here," is rather a slur than an incentive."

Now, it seems to me that society at large, would be benefited, were there a regular, I would almost say compulsory, attendance required, for every child, from three years and under five years. If the teaching and methods of Froebel were understood, it would be realised that there is a wonderful and



BARONESS ALEXANDRA GRIPENBERG,
TREASURER OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN,
1893-1899.

beautiful continuity, from the time that the child left the narrow circle of home life for the Kindergarten, then passing into the wider association of the school, therein to acquire further knowledge by experience in the broader life of the world. These institutions,

for which I plead a fuller recognition, should not be left to chance support by voluntary subscriptions, as in America, every town could municipalise them, when the Government would neither incorporate nor subsidise, and I feel sure that the incorporate life of any community would be benefited to an incalculable amount. In referring to the general advantage accruing on the establishment of the Kindergarten, I wish to be understood, as recognising that they are not only educative but preventive, that the benefits derived are not only to the little child, but have a direct tendency to improve the home life by sheer force of example. Parents begin to be ashamed of course language, dirty, untidy surroundings, and personal lack of refinement; they gradually and unconsciously develop to higher ideals, and are more able to cope with the difficulties of a large family when assisted by the Kindergarten, insensibly they learn from their children, who take home the saying and doings of their teachers and the part they themselves have been taking in all the varied and pleasurable conditions brought to bear on them to make life fuller, happier, and more beautiful and useful.

The influence of very little children on the parents is much greater than those of older growth, who are sadly handicapped by the example of those

around them, but the tinies are not so powerfully influenced for evil as for good; they always seem fresher from the hands of their Maker, and the inherent goodness of human nature has better opportunities of development if taken when the subject is in its most receptive and plastic stage. Parents are, as a rule, very careful and loving to the helpless infant, but as soon as it begins to assert its capacity for enjoying a measure of self-government, then it is that through their ignorance in thwarting it in every direction, because its efforts to

"Find Out Things"

sometimes bring about unpleasant results, that so much mischief to the nascent will is done. Just here should step in the Kindergarten, and by its scientific means of directing, controlling, yet developing the child's energies and giving it scope to practise its strength, ingenuity, and resourcefulness, make its life a joy, saving it from that starvation of mind and heart, more cruel and far-reaching than starvation of the body, and sparing the community and nation the shame, sorrow, and expense of trying to cure that which might have been prevented altogether. The Kindergarten, in all advanced communities, is sought to be made a continuously progressive and all-round method of education. In the desire for technical instruction, we have a proof that mere book-learning is now considered an incomplete and inadequate education unless supplemented by scientific training of eye and hand, which begins in the Kindergarten. I plead for the Kindergartens for another, and perhaps the most important reason that can be given, viz., that they shall give to the child that

Opportunity of Development

which, in many cases, has been refused through ignorant pre-natal conditions, and continuance of the same when ushered into the world, where its environment too often is such as to foster depravity.

It is very difficult to say which is the all-potent factor in the various stages of human life and growth, but it seems to be summed up in the word "education." Step by step we are guided by that unseen power which leads all to the issue of truth, beauty, and happiness; yet on our way to the goal we hate to pass through such agonies of misery and degradation in the unfolding or educative process that it would seem

a due penalty for some unrecognised crime that life has to be lived at all.

The absolute necessity, then, for a purer, wiser motherhood is the first step to be considered, for according to the aspirations of the mother during pregnancy, depend an incalculable amount of happiness or wretchedness for the child, and what mother is sufficient, alone and unaided, for such a stupendously important duty as that of introducing into the world a being possessing in embryo all the promise and potency of perfection? Yet I would not limit the conditions of the babe's life solely to the mother's influence, so much depends on her choice of the one who shall be the father of her child, that the education of both sexes is imperatively necessary if the future generation is to be in advance of the present. Out of the ignorance prevailing of the true sex duties, rights and responsibilities arise most of the hardships, miseries and crimes which we to-day so deeply deplore, yet see no way to remedy but by punishing innocent and guilty alike, and in most cases the sin is only ignorance.

I have suggested in the beginning of my paper that there are difficulties of applying Froebel's methods under the present system obtaining in our Government schools. It is generally believed that our infants get their schooling in kindergarten fashion, at least in the larger towns, but there are three great hindrances which render the true method of kindergarten well nigh impossible of application, and because under present conditions it is impracticable, the system is, to a large extent, ignored or so partially applied that it amounts to a failure. Take, first, the fact, that on account of the

Excessive Numbers in the Classes,

it is utterly unreasonable to expect any teacher to attempt training or educating the children by the slow, sure, but wise means which alone will serve her purpose. It is no marvel she sees nothing in the "gifts, games, and occupations" but a pleasant (to the children) and tiresome (to herself) way of getting through the day's work, and knows so little how to make these means serve her purpose that it is no wonder she only gives something called "kindergarten work" as a relief to the wearied little ones, rather than using them as an educative medium, the whole nature of a child, body, mind, and heart, being elevated and ennobled by the well-

directed and much-enjoyed efforts to acquire knowledge in the pleasantest and most enduring manner. Secondly, the youngest and most difficult classes are given to the

Youngest and least Experienced

pupil teachers to practise on. The "attractive power of love," such an omnipotent factor in all progress, is conspicuous by its absence; no blame to the teacher, because she has to "hurry up" to get the children ready for the Inspector, whose visits might be hailed with pleasure if only she and he knew what could reasonably be required of a class educated on natural, scientific and philosophic lines. Thirdly, where is the space in the school premises for the variety of physical exercises (which include the mental and moral) such as calisthenics, ball games, action-songs, and games?—all such a necessary and inevitable part of the training of the individual taken in its entirety of body, soul and spirit. Every activity of the child must be guided, helped, controlled, and trained. This can only be done by allowing those faculties (innate in all) full development; at the same time taking into consideration its birth, character, and environment. These seeming difficulties or obstacles are all met and surmounted by the all-roundness of Froebel's method. It is generally acknowledged, where tried with an unprejudiced desire to tests its highest capabilities, that the kindergarten gives the child a far greater advantage in after-school life when it has been so trained from the age of 3 to 7 than the old, worn-out, and cruelly inadequate methods which still obtain, and are yet held with a grip of iron and a despairing clutch, for it is dimly seen that "old things must pass away, all things must become new."

The beautiful underlying spiritual meaning of all the various methods Froebel has invented to draw out the latent faculties of the child and teacher are well worthy of study by all those who believe that education for life's duties, responsibilities, and pleasures

Cannot Begin too Early

for the child, nor be too earnestly considered by the teacher. This system aims at building character, which can only be secured by presenting to the child such objects for play and work as will draw out its powers of observation, attention, obedience, neatness, accuracy, patience, perseverance, and order; while the teacher is so trained that she can perceive the beauty and harmony

which the "within, the above, the beyond" present to her more thoughtful and developed nature.

"Learn by doing" has precisely the same significance to my mind as "He that doeth the will shall know of the doctrine," and these two mottoes present the practical side of Froebel's basic proposition — "harmonious development."

General instruction, or the awakening of the interest of the child in things outside itself and its direct personal requirements is given in every Kindergarten, and the various "gifts and occupations" can be used as valuable aids in imparting knowledge of the universal law of cause and effect. Music, arts, and science, in their initiatory stages, take their place in all Kindergartens, so that the child has the best possible chance, and at a very early period of its life, to develop any particular bent it may possess, while more or less of all-roundedness is imparted to the budding nature.

I desire earnestly to recommend the general establishment of Municipal Kindergartens for the consideration of this assembly of wise, cultured, and noble women, all of whom are working for the good of humanity, and know that the "day of small things" is not to be despised.

NEWS OF THE UNIONS

[We rely on our local Unions to send us news for this column. We cannot evolve it out of our inner consciousness.]

Naseby.

A Garden Party was arranged for by this Union to introduce the petition *re* Women's Disabilities. Owing to the weather an afternoon tea was held indoors. Miss McCarthy gave a short address which was listened to with attention, and resulted in a number of signatures.

During April three meetings were held. The meeting for May the 7th, was adjourned till the 14th.

For five days Miss Powell has been working in Naseby in the Temperance interest. During that time three public meetings have been held. On Sunday the combined Anglican and Presbyterian Sunday-schools were addressed. On Monday a public meeting was held, at which the Mayor presided. Resolutions were passed against the retrograde clauses in the new Licensing

Bill, pledges were taken (24), and literature circulated. At the W.C.T.U. meeting on Tuesday a good number of ladies attended, and listened with interest to Miss Powell's address on the work and scope of the Union. An increase of 12 members was one of the results of this meeting. Briefly, this has been the most successful campaign held in Naseby. Miss Powell has delighted Temperance workers and won the respect of all classes in the community.

Nelson.

Our Union has long been desirous of commencing work in the "Social Purity" department, but from various causes had not been able to take it up definitely until last month. In connection with some other Christian workers, it was decided that Mrs Cunningham, of Christchurch, be invited to give addresses to women and girls.

Mrs Cunningham came amongst us and gave several addresses in the country places, and, in the town, two addresses to mothers only, one to girls over fifteen years of age, and one to men only at the P.S., on Sunday afternoon. These meetings were largely attended, especially the one for girls, which was held in the Theatre Royal. The subject of "Purity" was most delicately handled, the speaker dealing with principles and the laws of nature. Some literature has been distributed, and other meetings for girls are to be held in the future.

May 14th, at our monthly meeting, a thoughtful paper was read by Mrs Wastney on the training of girls for domestic service, and much discussion followed. It was decided to forward an expression of interest in and sympathy with, the Nelson Educational Board, in its efforts to establish technical classes in the schools. It is hoped that a better system of cooking etc., will aid the temperance cause.

Auckland.

At the meeting on May 8th members of Ponsonby, Onehunga, and Devonport Unions were present by invitation to hear the report of Mrs Thorne, delegate to Convention. During the afternoon refreshments were served and a letter of sympathy sent to Mrs Hughes *re* accident to her son.

On May 22nd correspondence from the Town Clerk, Inspector Cullen and others, relative to overcrowding etc., the trams and buses, was dealt with. It was resolved to again write to the Council, urging it, as the responsible

body, to take action in the matter. It was resolved that the Union advertise in the WHITE RIBBON, and also that efforts be made to induce proprietors of temperance boarding-houses to do likewise. It was decided to make enquiries *re* a tent or stand for refreshments, either in the city or at Potter's Paddock, during the Royal visit.

Greymouth.

One special and two monthly meetings have been held since our last report. It was decided to hold educational meetings alternately with business ones. Mrs Wake was appointed to preside and Mrs Taylor to read a paper. We have purchased an organ for our own use and for the use of the L.T.L.

Owing to very wet weather there was but a small attendance at the first educational meeting, held on June 6th. The paper was on the Use and Abuse of Alcohol, and was read by Mrs Taylor. An animated discussion followed, and it was agreed that alcohol was in no sense a necessity for the human body. We accepted Mrs Brown's resignation as superintendent of evangelistic work and appointed Mrs Sweetman to the vacant office.

Colyton.

The usual monthly meeting was held on May 9th. Arrangements were made for Mrs Atkinson's (N.Z. President) visit. Mrs Wilson was elected Treasurer, and one new member was enrolled. Delegates were elected to represent the Union at the Temperance Convention to be held at Palmerston North on Victoria Day.

Reefton.

The usual monthly meeting was held on June 5th, and took the form of an educational meeting. Mrs Crumpton gave an address on Temperance work, specially appealing to young mothers. We have lost one of our members through removal, but have gained a new one.

Miss Powell At Work.

The month's work was commenced with a trip to Oamaru, in which town we have not yet succeeded in raising our White Ribbon Banner, though some years ago a flourishing Y. existed. Hampden, Herbert, and Maheno were also visited. In all these little townships a strong temperance sentiment exists, and great satisfaction was expressed at the promise of a meeting and

house-to-house visitation in the district. Our energetic sister, Mrs Napier (recently from Edinburgh, but known to many of our workers in this colony), was my travelling companion during a part of the trip. I paid a flying visit to Port Chalmers, and talked over Union work with Mrs Johnston. The friends had postponed their May meeting for a week, in the hope that I might be able to attend. This was, unfortunately, impossible, but I hope to be present at the next. On Monday, May 13th, I went to Milton, where our work has unfortunately collapsed; but I think there is a possibility of reviving it. Gore, to which I travelled on Tuesday, is also in a state of quiescence, but, by the kind invitation of Rev Gray, I had an opportunity of addressing the Presbyterian Ladies' Visiting Society, and raising a little more sentiment on the subject of the proposed Licensing legislation. That night I arrived in Invercargill, which was my headquarters for a fortnight. The friends there are very busy collecting for the memorial to the Queen, which is to take the form of erecting a fine building for the Victoria Home for Friendless Girls. All White Ribboners will be glad to know that at last the efforts of the District Union have been crowned with success, and a branch opened at the Bluff. The few members left at Ocean Beach have decided to join this, thinking it better to have one strong union than two weak ones. At Riverton not a single temperance organization of any description exists. I hope soon to do a little systematic visiting there. At Winton the friends are holding the fort in spite of weather. I visited several and set out for another, but finding the creeks were in flood, and not being provided with stilts, relinquished the idea.

On Monday, 27th, I travelled to Balclutha. It is a serious blot upon our escutcheon that we have never succeeded in planting our work there.

At Kaitangata, which I visited the next day, the Rev. Scott Allan is doing a grand work among the lads, having gathered sixty into a gymnastic club, for which he is trying to erect a building. During his six months' residence he has made his mark. He told me, with much relish, of the threatening letter he had received, with its allusions to lamp-posts, bullets, etc.

Wednesday, 29th, found me at Dunedin at 7 p.m., and at 8.20 next morning I was commencing the romantic journey through Central Otago. O! that

wonderful Gorge. I held my breath with wonder and delight. But residence amid these romantic scenes has its drawbacks. We picked up fifteen children and carried them to school, where they arrived about 11.30, being compelled to return by the train at 2.23—a short school-day! It has long been my ambition to visit energetic little Naseby, which organised itself without assistance, and I am not one whit disappointed. I addressed the United S.S., held a public meeting, and at the ordinary Union meeting gave an address, after which three who had already promised to join were initiated with nine more, augmenting the numbers from ten to twenty-two. Now, if every Union in the colony will double its membership this month, we shall make an impression.

Outlines of the Woman Suffrage Movement in New Zealand.

CONCLUSION.

“What has been the effect of the enfranchisement of women in New Zealand?” is a question that is frequently asked. A full and complete answer to that question cannot yet be given. But as nearly eight years have elapsed since the Parliamentary franchise was given to women, and during that period three general elections have been held, it is possible to attempt a partial reply. In the first place it may be said that a number of anti-franchise arguments have been proved to be fallacious. Opponents used to declare that the extension of the franchise would result in much domestic misery because of the political differences of husband and wife. After eight years' experience of adult suffrage a repetition of this well worn argument would bring a broad smile on the faces of a New Zealand audience. As a rule husbands and wives adopt similar political views. When they do not they apparently agree to differ in a seemly fashion. “Women will be insulted at the Polls” was another bogey that was regularly used, and this also has been consigned to the limbo of the past. So far from being insulted they are respectfully welcomed at the polling booths. As the ballot is absolutely secret a want of courtesy would be a political folly, and the contending parties vie with each other in respectful attention to women. It is no exaggeration to say that the presence

of women has fairly transformed the elections. The riotous horseplay of bygone days has disappeared, and election day with its flowers and gay dresses has become a semi-festival, bright and decorous.

Another phantasy that haunted the precincts of the Upper Chamber and that caused a number of the Legislative Councillors to implore the Governor to refuse his sanction to the franchise has also been laid to rest. They said that the enfranchisement of women would disastrously affect the financial equilibrium of the Colony and would shatter its credit in London.

It is pleasant to reflect that peace of mind has been restored to those venerable Senators, for the past eight years have shown a record of uninterrupted prosperity. We have no unemployed, taxation has been reduced, the annual budgets have shown large surpluses, and the credit of the Colony in London stands higher than ever before.

It must, however, be admitted that to those ultra-enthusiasts who believed that all virtue and right-mindedness was concentrated in woman, and that the casting of her vote would bring about an immediate millennium, there has been some disappointment. Parliament has not become an assembly of absolutely pure and unselfish men. King Alcohol has not been suddenly deposed, nor have vice and crime entirely disappeared.

But to those who claimed for women the right to vote on the ground that they were responsible human beings, and who believed that the granting of that act of justice would be of benefit to the community, there has come an ample confirmation of their belief. The temperance vote has been increased three-fold, and if ten per cent of votes can be won from the other side, the temperance party will have an absolute majority at the end of next year. Although still disfiguring our Statute Books the C.D. Acts are a dead letter, the Bill for their repeal has been passed several times by the House of Representatives, and they are only retained by the obstinacy of a number of the Legislative Councillors who have a life tenure of their office.

An equal standard of morality has been set up, and the conditions of divorce have been made the same for both sexes. Women may now recover damages for slander without having to prove special damage. Women have been admitted to the practice of law in our Courts. Legal separation can be obtained summarily and without expense, thus giving

protection to working women against worthless husbands. By the Testators Family Maintenance Act a man is prevented from willing away his property without making suitable provision for his wife and family. Pensions for the aged poor, both sexes being treated equally, have been provided. An Act for the establishment of Inebriate Asylums has been passed and is just being put into operation. Labour laws in which the health of women and girls is carefully guarded, their hours of labour limited, their holidays fixed, and the payment of a minimum wage enforced, have been passed. The principle of the economic partnership of husband and wife has been recognised in at least two Acts. The Criminal Code has been amended in the direction of purer morals. An Act has been passed to regulate the adoption of children. The Infant Life Protection Act is to prevent baby farming. Servants Registry Offices have been brought under regulation, greatly to the advantage of girls and women. The interests and health of Shop girls have been safeguarded, and amendments have been made in the Industrial Schools Act. In addition to the above measures, all of which directly affect women and children, much time and consideration has been given to the passing of laws which affect more or less the social life of all classes. The nature of our recent legislation has been so pronounced as to attract the attention of thinkers outside the Colony, some of whom have visited New Zealand in order to study the effect of its legislation first hand. One of these, Mr H. D. Loyd, of America, in lecturing on this Colony to an audience at Berlin said: "In most countries civilisation is an excrescence, in New Zealand it is an efflorescence." Without wishing to exaggerate, it may be safely said that the advent of women into the politics of this Colony has been a great moral gain. The welfare of the home, the protection of the weak, the causes of crime, of poverty, the best methods of education, are being sought for with a zeal and earnestness that is almost inspiring.

Much remains to be done, mistakes may be made and have to be rectified, but we have now a unity of heart and brain that cannot fail to ultimately triumph over evil.—W. S. S.

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Our Illustration.

The Baroness Alexandra Gripenberg, whose picture appears on our front page, held the office of Treasurer to the International Council of women from the year 1893 to 1899. In her own country—Finland—she is at the head of that great organisation, the Finish Women's Union, which, it is hoped, will soon be formed into the National Council of the women of Finland. In introducing the Baroness at the International Congress, Lady Aberdeen said: "In all her journeys she has endeavoured to advance the Council idea, and from her knowledge of languages she has been able to bring it before the women of several Continental countries, and to obtain much reliable information as to the position and prospect of the movement."

Fraulein Helene Lange, of Berlin, is the present Treasurer of the International Council.

The Ownership of the Child.

By KATE AUSTIN.

One of the popular fallacies now happily being exploded, is that of the ownership of the child by the parent. It is now gradually being conceded that the child belongs, first of all, to himself. Even yet, however, many parents are loth to accept such an idea, but still cling to the old opinion that a child has no inherent rights. This ancient theory is a relic from the days of patriarchal government, when the civil power was embodied in the father of the family, even unto the power of life and death. As the tribes of men increased this primitive form of government became inadequate, and the power of life and death passed from the hands of the father to the state tribunals; the child ceasing to be the subject of the father.

But the idea of absolute ownership survives to this day. You could scarcely startle some parents more than by hinting that their children were not absolutely their own property, to be dealt with according to their own will. "It is my child," they maintain, and from their standpoint nothing more is to be said.

Nevertheless, it is beginning to be dimly apprehended that no human being can be absolutely the property of another; that even the fact of generation cannot confer such a right. Each individual is a sacred unit and has the inalienable right to stand for himself before his Creator, and no mortal possesses the right to defraud him of his individuality. Even the authority of the parent is only to be exercised for the benefit of the child. The government of the parent must be a limited monarchy, not an absolute one. He has literally no right to tyrannise over a child, simply for the gratification of the domineering instinct; still less has he a right to make use of the child to further his own ends, at the expense of the child's best good. Least of all has he a right to take advantage of his greater strength against the child's weakness; or make it the object on which to vent the spite decency forbids him to show towards his equals in age. Oh, the outrages of ignorant, thoughtless or unscrupulous parents against poor, helpless childhood.

It need not be feared that these views would loosen the bonds of lawful parental authority. To the child the parent stands in the place of God, to interpret to it the Divine commands, and the child is to render the implicit obedience due the Divine Will. Once let a parent fully understand the sacredness of his position and all abuses of power will fall away. His authority is delegated from a Divine fountain, and is to be exercised only for the child's good. Further than this he has no shadow of right to domineer over the youthful life. Human nature cannot stand the test of unlimited authority.—"Union Signal."

FINLAND.—Mr F. W. Lonnbeck, at the recent Scandinavian Temperance Congress at Christiania, read a paper which stated that last year, "out of 310 country districts from which returns had been received in Finland, 194 demand complete prohibition of the manufacture, sale, and importation of intoxicating drinks; 60 districts demand the same or local veto power; 51 demand local option only, while three districts are content with the present position." This looks as if the Finns were alive to their country's interests.

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T. TAYLOR,

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Women's Christian Temperance Union

OF NEW ZEALAND.

ORGANISED - 1885.

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UNION meets second and last Wednesday in
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NAPIER W. C. T. U.

THE Union meets every alternate Thursday
in St. Paul's Schoolroom, at 3 p.m.

President—Mrs. Troy. Treasurer—Mrs. R. Saunders. Secretary—Mrs. J. S. Houlder.

AUCKLAND W. C. T. U.

GENERAL Meeting in the Central Mission
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The White Ribbon:

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY.

SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 1901.

The National Council at
Wanganui.

The recent sessions of the National Council of the Women of New Zealand were an unqualified success. The attendance of both delegates and visitors was good, the daily papers were generous in their reports of the proceedings, and, under the guidance of the Mayor, every attention was shewn to the members of the Council. The hospitality committee was indefatigable in its efforts to make its guests as comfortable and happy as possible, and it certainly accomplished its aim.

However inconvenient it may be to the delegates, there is much to be said for the itinerant system of meetings. A large amount of misconception as to the aims, methods, and manners of the Council still exists, and there is no better way of dispelling it than that of holding the sessions in the various centres of the colony. When people have an opportunity of seeing the Council at work, of meeting its members personally, of reading the detailed reports of its proceedings day by day, the hostility and dislike which is born of ignorance disappears. Each centre in turn becomes familiar with the matters which the Council has at heart, and a public opinion is thus created throughout the colony.

The papers and addresses at the recent meeting were thoughtful and earnest, and the discussions were conducted with ability and moderation. The usual abstract is being printed in book-form, and our unions and women's societies might do worse than get copies and read and discuss the various topics at some of their meetings.

There was the usual amusing, because unconscious, testimony as to the educative work the Council has done. Congratulations were again offered to the Council for having abandoned its former chimerical ideas, and having settled down to a practical programme. Of course the funny part of this is that, practically, the Council's programme has remained unaltered, and the change is simply in other people's ideas about it. Nevertheless, the congratulations are very welcome, because they show that the leaven is working.

It was a matter for regret that the Salvation Army representative was unable to be present. The useful experience and strong common sense of the Army's delegates have been very welcome, and it was unfortunate that other pressing engagements prevented Adjutant Hutchison from taking her seat at the Council table.

There was a spirited debate on the Temperance resolutions, and it was satisfactory to find these carried by an overwhelming majority.

Taken altogether, the sessions were both pleasant and useful, and there is every reason to believe that the Council has fully justified its existence.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

MISS POWELL AT WORK.—Our Corresponding Secretary's campaign in the South Island has been highly successful. Especially has Naseby to be congratulated on the results of her visit. A

brief account of her work during the month appears on another page.

* * *

A CLOSING UP OF THE RANKS.—The news has just reached us of the passing away of Mrs Bridge, a most active member of the Wanganui W.C.T.U. The gap caused in the Union will not be easily filled. Mr Bridge is President of the Prohibition League in Wanganui, and he will have the sympathy of a large circle of Temperance workers and friends.

* * *

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL AND THE PRESS.—The Press Association's telegraphed reports of the Council's meetings have been meagre. This is probably due to the excitement in connection with the Royal visitors. The Editorial comments have, on the whole, been decidedly favourable. There has, of course, been the usual flippantly superficial advice given, based on the assumption that delegates were ignorant of matters which some of them have been studying for a quarter of a century. That, of course, was to be expected. There is no arrogance like ignorance.

*

WAS IT A COMPLIMENT?—One newspaper assured its readers that there was nothing of the conventional "strong-minded" women to be seen at the Council's table. "Intellect and refinement were more conspicuous than mere outward beauty!" Now the whole paragraph was highly commendatory and therefore satisfactory. But there was that one ambiguous sentence. Was it possible that it concealed a reflection on the personal attractions of the delegates!

* * *

"KINDERGARTENS."—Mrs Bendeley's paper, published in this issue, was one of, if not the shortest paper read before the Council, which enables us to reproduce it verbatim. Abstracts of the

other papers are being prepared for the year book, and we intend inserting them in future issues as space permits.

* * *

THE TEMPERANCE PAPER.—Mrs Atkinson's paper, on "Revenue and the Liquor Traffic" which occupied over three lengthy newspaper columns, was published in full in both of the Wanganui papers. This is a matter for congratulation, as the paper was a valuable contribution to the Economic aspect of the Temperance question—a very important aspect from a National standpoint.

THE SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

NATIONAL COUNCIL

OF THE

WOMEN OF NEW ZEALAND.

THIRD DAY.

The Council met at 10 o'clock, when matters were considered in Committee.

At 2.30 there was a fair attendance of the public. The business of the afternoon session was to consider the subject of "Technical Education."

Mrs Blake (Christchurch) read a lengthy and able paper on the subject under discussion, which she said she felt to be amongst the most important to which the Council's attention was drawn. The establishment of a thorough and comprehensive scheme of such education faithfully carried out in this country would beneficially affect the moral and social life of the people.

At the conclusion of Mrs Blake's paper, Miss Henderson said that our system of education should be such as would develop every faculty and fit the child to make the best of life. Much dulness arose from insufficient development or cultivation of eye and ear, and the child's training should be such as to remedy this.

Mrs Atkinson said the spirit that

animated Labour should be that expressed in George Herbert's lines—

Who sweeps a room as to Thy laws
Makes that and the action fine.

Mrs Williamson thought that the want of adaptability in the ordinary workman was due to the one-sided nature of our educational system. She urged that compulsory continuation classes should be held in the evening: this would be a means of clearing the streets of many of the young people who frequent them. But the classes must be compulsory and free. She referred to the practice of exploiting children on farms, and expressed the opinion that this should be stopped.

Mrs Wells said that the cause of the hardships of farm life was want of organisation. One of our aims in education should be to discover the special bent of a child, and to cultivate as far as possible every gift. She thought that in the future horticulture and fruit culture would be work for girls, and that special attention might be given to this.

Mrs Smith said that poverty prevented many parents from giving their children a technical education, a co-operative system would enable them to do this.

Mrs Sievwright said that nothing could be done till the staffs of the public schools were increased. The objection to this was the expense, but our goals and our other institutions for the reception of the failures of society were a huge cause of expense. She described the result of the founding of a Field Club in Gisborne.

The President briefly summed up the points of the paper, and Mrs Blake having replied, she was warmly thanked for her paper.

Despite the inclemency of the weather there was a large attendance at the Borough Council Chambers in the evening, when the subject set down for debate was "Kindergartens."

Miss Sievwright (Gisborne) read a paper written by Mrs Bendeley (Christchurch) on Kindergartens.

Mrs Blake moved—"That the Kindergarten system be introduced throughout the infant schools of the colony."

Mrs Bullock seconded the motion.

Miss Henderson, Mesdames Williamson, Atkinson, Wells, and Sheppard all spoke in favour of the motion, which, after being put, was carried unanimously.

Miss Fraser then read an excellent

paper on "Looking Backward," which dealt with the principles of education as advanced by Plato and Milton.

FOURTH DAY.

The morning was devoted to the consideration of committee business, and no sitting was held in the afternoon, owing to the return of the Contingents from South Africa. In the evening there was again a large attendance.

The first paper was that delivered by Mrs Wells (Christchurch) on "The Influence of Literature on the Education of the Race." The writer dealt exhaustively with the subject, and her ably-written paper, was full of interest.

An interesting discussion ensued, Mesdames Williamson, Bracher, and Sheppard speaking in high terms of Mrs Wells' paper.

Mrs S. V. Bracher (Associate of the Sanitary Institute, London) then delivered an exceedingly interesting and instructive lecture on "Sanitary Homes." This lady, who was engaged for several years at Home lecturing on sanitary matters, was thoroughly conversant with her subject, and, being a ready speaker, greatly interested her audience.

FIFTH DAY.

At the morning session of the National Council of Women, to which women were invited, the following resolutions were carried:—

1. That this Council urges the Premier to introduce a Bill raising the age of protection of young persons to 21 years.

2. That this Council feels that it is urgently necessary that the Public Health, Hospital, and Charitable Aid Acts be amended so as to make provision for the establishment of special wards for the admission of patients suffering from venereal disease and voluntarily presenting themselves for treatment.

3. That this Council gratefully recognises the steps that the Government has already taken in establishing wards for the temporary accommodation of patients suffering from *delirium tremens*, and urges that similar provision should be made for cases of lunacy, and extended to all large centres of population.

4. That this National Council of Women requests the Premier again to introduce the Bill for the repeal of the C. D. Acts, and urges upon him not to allow the present Session to expire

without removing this blot from the Statute Book.

At the afternoon session, Mrs Williamson gave a very able address on "The Broadening of Women's Outlook." In the course of her address she indicated briefly the general results of the movement for the enfranchisement of women, showing how they had won their way into many departments of public service, and were now taking their place on Municipal Councils, Charitable Aid and Hospital Boards, Licensing Benches, and other public administrative bodies. The enfranchisement of women had given added importance and weight to the representatives of women's societies, and the result had been immensely beneficial with respect to a great deal of social legislation.

Mrs A. R. Atkinson thanked Mrs Williamson for her able statement of the progress of women.

Mrs S. V. Bracher said that a fully occupied mind was absolutely necessary to a healthy body, and that while she held strongly that home should receive the first attention, there were many women who would greatly benefit by taking up some work outside the home.

Mrs Wells said that it would be a good thing if some variety of work were afforded to women in prisons. Out of door work would have a beneficial effect.

Mrs S. V. Bracher, delegate from the Vegetarian Society (Christchurch) then read a paper on "Food Reform," written by Miss L. M. Smith, of Christchurch.

At the evening session there was a large attendance of the public, when Mrs A. R. Atkinson, one of the delegates from the New Zealand W.C.T.U., read a paper on "Revenue and the Liquor Traffic."

Mrs A. R. Atkinson moved—"That whereas the liquor traffic is declared on undisputed authority to be the cause of much misery, much vice, and much crime, therefore this National Council of women pledges itself, on humanitarian grounds, to do all in its power to discountenance the manufacture, importation, and sale of alcoholic liquors."

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

Mrs S. V. Bracher moved—"That this Council approaches the Minister of Education with a view to having scientific instruction in the nature of alcohol and its effects on the human system given to the children in our State schools."

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

then dealt with the question of municipal laundries and kitchens, saying that she saw no reason why such should not be established. She did not think the people of the colony looked upon work as degrading. In her opinion the reason so many preferred industrial to domestic work was that there was not the same necessity for brains to enable one to serve behind a counter as to perform domestic duties. Mrs Williamson said that the hours quoted by Miss Mackay were absurd. Emergencies would arise in every household, when a servant would have to work long hours, but this was generally balanced by kindnesses shown by a mistress to a servant when ill or in trouble.

Mrs Atkinson said she was in sympathy with both sides. Things would not have been in their present state if girls had always been treated as they should have been. She favoured tuition in domestic science. Payment for overtime would be offering a premium for idleness. The suggestion *re* a non-resident girl was very good, but it would not be practicable in scattered districts. She did not think a girl would enjoy sitting at the drawing-room fire, but she (Mrs Atkinson) was of opinion that she should be allowed to bring her friends to the house. The question of half-holiday was not one that could be governed by law.

Mrs Blake was of opinion that girls should be trained in domestic science. She thought that mistresses would find it beneficial to do their own housework, merely employing a trained girl for a certain number of hours per day. From a monetary point of view girls were better off in domestic service than in other branches of labour.

Mrs Wells said she thought (and it was the method practised by herself) that a girl should be allowed to choose the afternoon on which she would have her holiday, and on that day she could either go home, go to her room, or invite a friend. The matter was very easily arranged. She thought every girl should qualify herself before entering a situation. Mrs Wells spoke strongly in favour of municipal laundries and kitchens.

Mrs Sheppard expressed herself as strongly in favour of municipal kitchens and laundries. If there were neither cooking nor washing in a house work would be minimised and many of the present difficulties would vanish. Labour-saving machinery should be used whenever possible. It was unfair

to blame either mistress or maid for the existing state of affairs.

On being put the motion was carried with one dissentient.

SEVENTH DAY.

With rare thoughtfulness, the Hospitality Committee had arranged that the *Seventh Day* should be a day of rest for the Council. By the generosity of a number of friends the delegates were afforded an opportunity of seeing some of the beauties of the Wanganui River. The steamer "Manawai," which was kindly lent by the Mayor, was freighted with members and friends of the Council, and proceeded up the river, returning in time for the "At Home" in the evening. This function was held in the Museum, and afforded a very pleasant opportunity for chatting over Council topics in an informal way. A number of vocal and instrumental items brightened the proceedings.

EIGHTH DAY.

The morning session was devoted to the consideration of a paper on "Some Defects in our Primary School System," written by Miss McCarthy (Naseby). After discussion on the various points Mrs Sievwright moved:—"That in the opinion of this Council each delegate should be invited to ask her Society to discuss the question of introducing a systematic course of moral instruction into our State schools." This was seconded by Mrs Bullock.

At the afternoon session the following resolution was approved—"That the International Council of Women do take steps in every country to further advance, by every means in its power, the movement towards International arbitration."

Mrs Blake moved—"That all men and women entitled to exercise the Parliamentary franchise shall also be entitled to exercise the local franchise." The speaker commented on the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act, showing the powers that were conferred on Councils. The motion was seconded by Mrs Wells, who urged that the citizens of a town were more closely affected in matters of health and daily comfort by the work of a City Council than by the work of Parliament, so that there was certainly as much need to give a citizen a municipal vote as to give him a Parliamentary vote. She emphasised the necessity for public baths, hot as well as cold, spaces for recreation, free libraries

where special attention should be devoted to the needs of young people, and municipal markets. Mrs Smith spoke of the necessity for having women inspectors. Mrs Williamson and Miss Henderson supported the motion. The President spoke strongly of the necessity for municipal control of such markets as those for fish and fruit.

Mrs Williamson moved—"That it is desirable that women shall occupy seats on all local bodies, and that all Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards shall be directly elected by the people." She thought that local Boards should be elective, and that on bodies it should be compulsory that a certain number of women should be elected. With regard to Borough Councils, so many matters were dealt with by these that women should have a place on them. At present women could only obtain seats on Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards by the courtesy of some other body. There was crying need for women on Education Boards, but they had no opportunity of getting there.

Mrs Wells seconded the motion, and spoke of the difficulty experienced by a woman in getting a seat on a Charitable Aid Board. She said there was great need for reforming this system. The tendency was for these Boards to treat all applicants alike. There was crying need for classification: special consideration should be given, for instance, to widows with young children. These should form a class by themselves. Justice should be done to respectable people who, by no fault of their own, had come upon the rates. The genuinely pauper class should be carefully dealt with. In the case of some families receiving aid, there were three generations of paupers. The little children, usually boarded out, should be placed in cottage homes. The shiftless ones, those who wouldn't work, should be made to work as a condition of receiving help. Many who came before the Boards were mothers of illegitimate children, and in these cases those who had had such children should be segregated. The obstacle in the way of reform was that these Boards were really nominated Boards.

Mrs Sievwright read a paper written by Mrs Tasker, of Wellington, on "Party Government." Miss Barry also read a paper on the same subject by Mrs Daldy.

Mrs Wells moved—"That the system of Party Government in New Zealand has many evils connected with it, and

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is entirely unsuited to the circumstances of the colony." Mrs Atkinson seconded the motion. Mesdames Blake and Williamson and Miss Henderson spoke strongly in support of the motion, expressing the opinion that the end of party government was in the near future. On being put the motion was carried, with one dissident.

Mrs Sievwright then moved: "That this Council views with dissatisfaction the manifest inefficiency of the New Zealand Parliament as an instrument for readily obtaining beneficial legislation or administration. The Council is of opinion that, in order to effect any real improvement in Parliamentary methods, the House of Representatives should elect the members of the Cabinet, who shall thus be made individually directly responsible and removable by the House. The Council is further of opinion that each member of the House should be free to act according to the wishes of his constituents or the dictates of his conscience, and should not be the mere slave of party." Mesdames Williamson, Wells and Sheppard spoke in favour of the resolution, which on being put was carried, with one dissident.

Miss Henderson moved: that this Council urges upon the Government the necessity of introducing a Bill providing for the application of the Initiative and Referendum on all questions of social importance." Mrs Atkinson seconded, and Mesdames Smith and Blake spoke in favour of the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Mrs Atkinson then moved—"That the Government be asked to bring in a Bill which shall insure Major Representation." This was seconded by Mrs Sievwright and carried.

The following motion was then moved by Mrs Williamson—"That to mitigate the evils which arise from the present system of appointment to the Civil

Service, a Board be appointed directly by the House of Representatives, such Board to have sole power to appoint all Civil Servants." Mrs Wells seconded the motion, which was carried with one dissident.

NINTH DAY.

At the morning session the election of officers was proceeded with, and resulted as follows:—President, Mrs Sievwright; secretary, Miss Henderson; treasurer, Mrs Williamson; vice-presidents, Mesdames Sheppard, Atkinson, Daldy and Wells; representatives on Standing Committees of the International Council—Committee on Laws concerning Domestic Relations, Mrs Sievwright; Press, Mrs Wells; Peace and Arbitration, Miss Sherriff-Bain.

At the afternoon session Miss Henderson moved: "That this Council is of opinion that in all cases where men and women are engaged in the same work, either in the employ of the Government or of private individuals, equal wages should be paid for equal work." The mover said that this matter was one of growing importance, since women were entering so freely into industrial life. But women had for so long had such limited interests that they failed to recognise the wider social claims. One of the greatest difficulties was that so many young women work for a pocket-money wage.

The motion was seconded by Mrs Williamson and supported by Mesdames Beere, Sievwright, Smith and the President, and carried unanimously.

Mrs Sievwright (the new President) presided at the evening session.

The first subject set down for discussion was "The Economic Independence of Women." Mesdames Sheppard and Sievwright read papers on the subject, and after discussion the following resolution was unanimously pas-

sed:—"That the legal recognition of the economic independence of married women is desirable for the attainment of justice, and for the furtherance of a truer marriage relationship."

"Removal of Women's Disabilities" was next discussed. Mrs Sievwright read a very able paper on the subject.

At the conclusion of the paper, Mrs Sievwright moved—"That, in the opinion of this Council, the time has come when all disabilities which at present hinder women from sitting as members of either of the Houses of Legislature, or from being elected or appointed to any public office or position in the colony, should be removed, and that with regard to all powers, rights, and duties of citizens, absolute equality should be the law of the land." The motion was seconded by Mrs Smith, and carried unanimously.

Miss Henderson then moved—"That this Council approach the Premier and represent to him that the most sincere tribute that can be paid to the memory of her late Majesty Queen Victoria is the removal of the disabilities of the women of this colony as a recognition of her beneficent rule." This was seconded by Mrs Williamson, and carried unanimously.

Votes of thanks were passed to the Hospitality Committee, the Press, Mayor and Councillors, and the Hosts and Hostesses.

Miss Barry was also accorded a vote of thanks for the able manner in which she had carried out the duties of Recording Secretary.

During the evening Mrs Sievwright, on behalf of the Council, made a presentation to Masters C. Newcombe, Neville Pownall, and Roy Spackman, for the assistance they had rendered during the Convention. The first-named was the recipient of a pair of gold sleeve links, whilst the other ladies received silver pencil cases.

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