

Correspondence.

(The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents.)

Frances Willard favoured the Initiative and Referendum.

(To the Editor.)

Madam,—As there is much misconception as regards what the Initiative and Referendum is, I enclose an explanation. The American W.C.T.U. League favours same. The Initiative and Referendum is law in 19 States in America, in three Canadian Provinces, and in Switzerland, South African and Australian States are pressing for same. The late Miss Frances E. Willard, the great President of the World's Women's Christian Temperance Union, wrote in 1897: "I believe in Direct Legislation (known as the Initiative and Referendum). The reign of the people is the one thing my soul desires to see; the reign of the politician is public ignominy. . . . There is no hope for reform under the existing system of voting."

The President of the Californian Women's Christian Temperance Union said at their annual Conference, held at Bertoley, October, 1910: "We should educate, agitate, and help to create public sentiment in favour of legislation for the enactment of a law that will give the State of California the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall. We should have a Government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

The Hon. J. G. Woolley, the noted Temperance orator, says: "The Initiative and Referendum should be dignified, conservative, simple, safe, and powerful."

The Prohibition Party of America has declared for the Initiative and Referendum (or Direct Legislation). The following explains what it really is, and every member should make themselves fully conversant with the principles, viz. :—

The **Initiative** means that any group of citizens may propose a reform measure, and, if they get 10 per cent. of the electors to sign their Initiative Petition Lists, Parliament must place the proposal (or suggestion for reform) on the ballot paper, and place it before the people to be voted on at the next General Elections.

The **Referendum**, as is now generally advocated, requires that no law, save measures for public peace, health, and safety, shall go into effect for, say, ninety days. If, during this time, ten per cent. of the voters sign a petition demanding a Referendum on that law, it would not go into effect till the next regular General Election, when the people

would vote on it, and if the majority voted "No" it would not be law.

I am, yours truly,

G. C. STEWART,

Hon. Secretary Initiative and Referendum Committee.

Box 4, Te Aro, Wellington,

October 25th, 1916.

P.S.—I trust that the W.C.T.U. Executive will take steps to get voters' pro. and con. argument books, ballot papers, and the Initiative and Referendum Act from the Secretary of State, c/o The Legislature, Salem, Oregon, and the Secretary of State, c/o The Legislature, Sacramento, California.—G.C.S.

HAMILTON DISTRICT CONVENTION.

Mrs Shepherd heartily welcomed the visiting members. Convention opened by Mrs Jones. Mrs Snow gave an earnest address on the spiritual side of our work. Reports for Cambridge Union read by Mrs Shepherd, and for Hamilton by Mrs Jones. Resolved to send letters of sympathy to members who had lately lost boys at the Front. Decided to take steps to have means of direction to Soldiers' Club provided. Mrs Auld gave a good report, and Miss Powell gave a bright address. Ngaruawahia report was presented. An instructive paper, written by Mrs Young, of Palmerston North, was then read. Mrs Brown, of Morrinsville, gave a spirited address, during which she urged members to vote consistently when the time came, and send the right men into power. Votes of thanks were passed to all who had helped to make Convention a success.

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