

BRITISH DOMINIONS WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE UNION.

Dear Mrs Don and White Ribbon Sisters,—The Third (Biennial) Conference of the British Dominions' Woman's Suffrage Union was held in the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of June. The subjects dealt with were of wide interest and of practical importance, and almost all the opening addresses were given by those who had made long study of their subject, and could speak with the authority of deep thinking and many years of experience. Miss Newcomb, the main organiser of the Conference, is to be congratulated on the unqualified success of the meetings. A letter from Miss Henderson, with my credentials as delegate for the N.Z. W.C.T.U., arrived the very morning that Conference opened. (See what it is to have a really punctual Corresponding Secretary.) I was proud to represent such a Union as ours, and such a country as New Zealand. I wish to thank you, Mrs Don, Miss Henderson, and those of you who had any part in bestowing this honour upon me. The meetings were well attended, the subjects ably discussed. Unfortunately, owing to difficulties of travelling under war conditions, all the Dominions were not able to send delegates; also much of the correspondence dealing with resolutions, etc., was lost owing to "enemy activity." Nevertheless, all the affiliated Societies will later on receive a full report of the deliberations and conclusions come to by the overseas delegates fortunate enough to be present. I hope it will always be possible for our Union to be represented at these Biennial Meetings, and more than ever now in the coming years the voice of the women must be heard as it never has been in the past. We are all part of one mighty Empire, which is now fighting for her very existence and that of the small nations, as well as for the Liberty of the World. When Peace and Reconstruction come women will have an immeasurably wider field for their activities than in the old pre-war days. We women of New Zealand and other overseas parts of the Empire, blessed for many years with a larger freedom than they possess in the Home Land, owe a duty to the British women as far as our opportunities and power permit to help them in their after-war efforts for the

betterment of the world conditions. To keep in close touch with the B.D.W.S.U. headquarters and to relieve Miss Newcomb of considerable work, it would be very desirable to have a special Corresponding Secretary in each Dominion, to whom Miss Newcomb could write, and who would undertake the necessary correspondence with the affiliated societies in the Dominion she represents. Time and paper are very limited in the Old Country, so as the report will be printed as soon as possible, I shall not deal with the meetings as a whole, but with apologies for appearing egotistic, will deal only with the share your representative was privileged to take. I had attended as many of the committee meetings as I could. I was asked to read extracts from our "White Ribbon" article, "The Maiden Tribute to the Modern Mars," in moving the following resolution:—"The Conference condemns as lowering to the moral standard and as an unwarrantable insult to the great majority of men, the practice of regularly supplying prophylactics to soldiers on leave, and urges that all measures for stemming the progress of venereal disease should be based on the belief in the nobler side of human nature, and that all necessary instruction to the men should be accompanied by an appeal to the sense of duty, patriotism, and chivalry which exists even in the weakest." Mrs Waldgrave (Wellington) seconded. An amendment was moved by an Australian delegate. As it meant entirely shelving our protest, it was fortunately thrown out by an overwhelming majority—only four voting for it. In moving the resolution, I took the old but to us unanswerable argument that what was morally wrong must be physically wrong, and that to remove the consequences of sin was to encourage the wrong-doer to continue his wrong-doing—to place great temptation in the way of the weak by giving sanction of authority to the breaking of one of God's holy commandments. My small efforts were magnificently supported by Dr. Jane Walker and Dr. Beadon Turner (Chairman of the British Medical Association), in speaking on "Is it reasonable to expect from men the same moral standard as from women." They spoke with no uncertain voice. Dr. B. Turner's address was inspiring, and must carry conviction to the most ignorant or sceptical hearer or

reader, for as it is to be prohibited, it should be widely distributed by our Union and all Societies who have the welfare of our boys at heart. (Some extracts from this address were published in last month's "White Ribbon."—Ed. "W.R.")

Each session we had a change in the chair. Miss Newcomb asked me to preside one afternoon, and later on I had the opportunity of moving a resolution against supplying our boys with drink. There was no other dealing with the subject of alcohol, and I felt, as your representative, it was incumbent on me to show our colours. I was proud to be able to pay a tribute to the mothers of New Zealand, who, with ungrudging self-sacrifice, have given their men. As to our boys, they need no praise over here from one of their country. One hears nothing but good of them, not merely as soldiers of courage, skill, and endurance, but as a body of men their character ranks as high, if not higher, than any other set of men who go to make up the British Army. When I spoke of the dangers of drink to the young recruit and the efforts of our women to protect our boys from it by insisting on dry canteens and six o'clock closing, and that I did not think the authorities in the Old Country had "played the game" with the Dominions in not supplementing their efforts, the applause was very hearty. The resolution, to my great surprise and immense satisfaction, was carried, the Chair said unanimously, though I believe one hand was said to have been raised against it. An address I enjoyed very keenly was one on Women Police by Miss Damer Dawson, O.P.E., commandant of the W.P.S. Dressed in dark blue uniform, long coat to the knee meeting high gaiters, with official cap, she looked the very embodiment of emancipated womanhood, keen, capable, an organiser, and a leader entirely lacking in self-consciousness, and yet aware of her own powers, and fully determined to use them all for the good of her country and her sex. All she said was intensely interesting, and one would gladly have listened to her for a much longer time. You will see the report of it later, but I will just mention one point which appealed to be particularly as typical of what we hope and think will follow the entrance of women into the larger responsibilities and duties of civic life. The great work of the women