

ON GAMBLING.

The "Eden Gazette" in a recent issue writes as follows:—

"In a recent "Star" I notice the Rev. G. Gordon Bell struck a true note, when recently, he asked at a Council of Christian Congregations meetings. "If we, as a Christian people, believing that betting and gambling are productive of evil, are we prepared to stand by our convictions and to agitate for the abolition of the totalisator, and the efficient combating of the evil of bookmaking? Unless we are prepared to do that, all our talk about art unions and other things will be useless, and the public will take very little notice."

The Rev. C. J. Tocker, (The League of Nations Secretary), also spoke on the far-reaching evils of gambling. He held "that gambling produced in the individual and in the community a moral and spiritual condition which could only be described as destructive." It was, he declared, an insidious peril. There was a great deal of loose talk abroad, and one had to make clear what was meant by "gambling." To say that "Life is a gamble," and "Business is a gamble" was crass stupidity. The evil might be summed up under three heads. First, it was something that exploited the element of chance; secondly, it meant the giving of no service in return for the gain sought for; and thirdly, the making of gain out of another's loss.

It was time the press, the schools, and the Government combined to create and to foster a public opinion which should be hostile to gambling, continued Mr Tocker. It was useless to argue that human nature was always the same, and that gambling was a natural impulse, as history revealed that human nature changed. Cannibalism had gone, so had unashamed drunkenness, duelling, and negro slavery. But they had gone only because public opinion had been educated. Gambling could go in the same way.

Many respectable people and members of the church, he went on to say, used the argument that so long as they could afford it, there was no harm in putting a shilling on, and that it did not hurt them now and again. But was there ever a time when one could afford to gamble? Economically, gambling was an ab-

surdity; it infringed the law of love and service, and was a fruitful source of crime."

TARANAKI ANNUAL DISTRICT CONVENTION.

The Convention at Waitara was enthusiastic, and went with a good swing from the public welcome in Knox Church on Tuesday evening, through the reports and business on Wednesday, to the speeches at the final service on Wednesday evening.

Mrs Duxfield, the District President, presided.

Much of the business was routine: reports by the District Branches of the year's work. The total gave a slight falling off of numbers in practically every department, except that of "White Ribbon" subscribers, but this apparent drop was due to one Union not having sent in its report. Unless this was a large Union, however, the year has not shown an increase good enough for the great cause in which we are engaged. Certainly we have not doubled our numbers in any department.

The President read a letter from Miss Henderson advising that the district should be divided into two, as this had given good results in Canterbury, the smaller districts being easier to organise effectively. After some discussion, the question was put to the vote, and carried, Mrs Duxfield remaining President of the Southern Division, from Turakina to Hawera, Mrs D. E. Scott, President of Normanby Union, taking the Northern District, from Normanby to New Plymouth. The division was as nearly geographically equal as is convenient.

Inglewood's invitation for next year's Convention was accepted. Inglewood is exceptionally fortunate in the enthusiasm of its delegate, Mrs Bond, who started the competition for the five minute speech with one on Sunday School work, coming third. Mrs Piper gained first prize in this, taking as her subject the much-needed "Personal Touch," instancing its value by personal experience. Would we could all do this! If we could all throw ourselves forward to gain, for ourselves and the cause both, the beneficial experience of the "Personal Touch," our-

selves taking part of the job in hand instead of letting so much fall on our leaders, there could be no doubt of our winning the day at this election. Mrs Hill, a veteran worker, came second in this competition. Mr Grinstead was judge, and six competitors entered. If I dwell at rather great length on this small item in the programme, it is because it seems to me so necessary that our smaller branches should encourage as many members as possible to take part in debates as part of their education in holding meetings, so that the work does not come consistently on a few officers, and their removal or absence make the meetings fall through. The five minutes speech competitions are very good practice for this, especially in such a friendly audience as the Unions provide.

Some time was taken up by discussing slight changes in Mrs Don's Itinerary, and a good deal in planning the meetings and their advertisement, which we all realise important. Some discussion also followed the President's urging the increase of "White Ribbon" subscribers, as to whether it was wise to pass on the paper after reading it. Mrs Duxfield applauded the habit as likely to raise interest in the paper.

New Plymouth delegates told of their efforts to build a Sailors' Rest. A reminder this, to those who were present at the Dominion Conference, held in New Plymouth last year, of the enthusiasm and success of Timaru in a similar effort. This detail serves as a reminder also, and in fact started me wondering if it was not partly connected with the gradual growth of many local Branches. This is the fifth Convention I have attended, and by now most of the faces present were well known to me. Experienced workers, carrying on the fight since it was newly started, are fortunately known by name and appearance, in many cases personally, to all of us. We cannot honour them too much, or try too hard to back them up. But why do not the Unions try to send also more new delegates? It is not a question of personal cost, as Unions pay travelling expenses. Except for the Executive and the Branch that is acting as hostess, the Convention does not entail tiring work. Indeed, it gives personal encouragement to all attending, to feel the enthusiasm and take note of the facts of our advance. It seems to me