

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

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EUROPEAN ACTIVITY FOR PROHIBITION.

(By Mark H. C. Hayler, Secretary World Prohibition Federation.)

The Dry issue in Europe is a real thing. I have returned from a journey through eight countries in North Eastern Europe, in every one of which there is a direct battle proceeding against the Liquor Forces. As Mr Emil L. G. Hohenthal (European Commissioner, W.P.F.) rightly says, "The vigour with which the liquor interests are meeting every move of the Prohibitionists is proof positive of the fear that animates them."

I left London for Ostend, via Dover, to attend the International Conference of the World Prohibition Federation (and the meetings of the Anti-Alcohol Congress) in Tartu, Estonia. In Belgium the work is not without much significance. The consumption of spirits is half what it was before the War, whereas in the olden days a Belgian Minister once stated that in spirits alone his people drank the value of all the canals, roads, railways, harbours, and fortresses which the State had constructed during its whole existence. There is a most useful propaganda being carried on to-day by the Catholic Total Abstinence Societies and a number of other bodies.

To speak of Germany is to at once remember the monster petition which was supported by hundreds of thousands of signatures demanding Local Prohibition. This was the biggest petition ever presented to the Reichstag on any social question of any kind whatever. It speaks well

for the fine organising abilities of the workers there. I learned through Dr. Reinhard Strecker that the *International Record*—the German edition of which he supervises—is much valued and extensively culled from.

One has to pass through a part of Poland to get into Lithuania which lies beyond Prussia. The Poles would seem to be developing their work slowly, due, doubtless to the still unsettled state of the country caused by internal and external enemies. The work of the Good Templars there has been much hampered of late, but generally speaking, there is a spirit of optimism among the various abstaining groups. The State continues to think that Drink Revenue is a practical policy, but judging by similar experiments in other parts of the world, one does not see how Poland can escape the misery which follows a state monopoly in vice.

In Lithuania there is a growing movement towards Local Prohibition. Already, I learn of 30 communes where the sale of alcoholic beverages has been suppressed, either as a result of a poll or by some other means. There is much to encouragement one in the prospects.

Talking with Advocate Frindenberg, I gathered that Latvia is concerning itself seriously with the alcohol question. This country, like the other Baltic States, has only in recent years regained its independence which necessarily means much work of adjustment and re-organisation. Nevertheless, though this work is absorbing, the Temperance Question is being pushed by the more

ardent propagandists. The recently passed Local Option Law would seem not to be working very well, owing to its very limited scope, but the admission of the principle is recognised as a gain.

One cannot arrive in Estonia without feeling that here there is leadership and organisation greatly developed. The fact that it was on the investigation of the Estonian Government, that the Anti-Alcohol Congress was called together in the University City of Tartu (Dorpat), is proof of the "live" workers in the country who are desirous of letting their people know the latest there is to be known on the Prohibition Question.

While at Dorpat, I attended also the First International Christian Abstinence Conference, presided over by Prof. John Ude (Craz), a most able and active worker on behalf of Total Abstinence in the Catholic Church, and one whose leadership of this movement will be available. Dr. Ude made a strong plea for this newly-formed body, so that the Total Abstiners in the world churches of all denominations, Protestant as well as Catholic, might be gathered together to fight the Drink because "the honour of God is at stake."

From Dorpat I travelled via Reval (Tallinn) to Finland as a fraternal delegate to the World Y.M.C.A. Congress, held in the beautiful City of Helsingfors. Here Mme. Weissenberg, W.C.T.U. (who was herself a delegate to the Dorpat Conference) gave me much assistance. I was able to meet many people and make many connections. There is much to say about Prohibition in Finland. People