

## SOUTHLAND DISTRICT CONVENTION.

It is many years since a District Convention was held here, but delegates returned from Conference full of zeal and enthusiasm and desire to share their Conference gains with their sisters in the country. As soon as it was known that Mrs Don had consented to be present, it was felt the success of the Convention was assured.

On Wednesday afternoon Mrs Don was entertained at afternoon tea by members of the South "Y" and Central Branches, and Mrs Lillicrap (President of the Central Branch), Mrs McGregor (President of S. Branch), and Mrs Young (Dominion Y Superintendent) all welcomed Mrs Don on behalf of their organisations. Mrs Pasley and Miss Birss also spoke on behalf of the L.T.L.'s and Southland women. Mrs Don, in replying, gave an earnest and inspiring address, and a real heart to heart talk with those present on the value of prayer in our work, and on the greatness of the work placed before us.

Thursday morning was chiefly occupied with welcoming country delegates, receiving Branch reports, and passing motions. The following Branches sent delegates:—Bluff, Riverton, Otautau, Ryal Bush, Edendale, Matura, Y's South and Central. Every branch in Southland was represented, and many of the reports were most encouraging. The following motions were carried unanimously:

"That this Conference of W.C.T.U. workers, including representatives from Riverton, Bluff, Otautau, Ryal Bush, Matura, Edendale, Invercargill South, and Central, and Y Branches, respectfully urges the Minister of Justice to consider the appointment of women police and of women to act as jurors in all cases of indecent assault on women and children."

"That the Southland women assembled in Convention congratulates Mr A. S. Adams on his elevation to the Supreme Court Bench, and expresses its pleasure at the appointment of one of his sons to be Crown Prosecutor."

District officers were then appointed for 1921: Pres., Mrs Lillicrap; Vice-Pres., the Presidents of the country branches; Committee, delegates from different branches; Sec. and Treas., Mrs Fairburn.

Messages of sympathy were sent to Mrs Baird and Mrs Ross, who, through illness, were unable to be present. The morning devotions were led by Mrs MacGregor and Miss Dewar.

Before the afternoon session commenced, Mrs Young, "Y" Superintendent, gave a clear and concise account of the Y's, explained the aims and objects of this Branch, gave good suggestions in regard to programmes of work, how to carry on meetings and to sustain the interest of the young people.

The afternoon devotions were in the hands of Mrs Gray (Riverton) and Mrs Donaldson (Bluff).

Mrs Don then addressed Convention on "Influence," basing her remarks on the text in Romans, "For not one of us lives to himself, and not one of us dies to himself."

On Friday afternoon Mrs Don spoke at Otautau, and the same evening at Riverton to a large audience, at both places gaining new members for the Union.

On Sunday evening an after-church rally was held. There was a very large audience, and Mrs Don gave an eloquent address. Mr Baxter, Chairman of the Prohibition League, had charge of the meeting, and the majority of the town ministers were on the platform. An excellent choir and orchestra helped in the singing, and this meeting brought to a close a very successful Convention, which has roused and stimulated many of our workers to fresh devotion to their cause.

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### FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK.

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Just as we go to press a letter reaches us from Hamilton Union of appreciation, thanks, and congratulation upon excellent number of "White Ribbon," and a message to "Carry on."

From other Unions and members, and from one of our old leaders, Mrs K. W. Sheppard, have come special words of thanks and of loving appreciation. We value these most highly, and from the depth of a heart, and of a life which is yours for service to its last ounce of power, we say, "Thank you."

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Both Swedish Chambers have adopted the Constitutional Reform Bill granting votes to women.

## Correspondence.

### INDENTURED LABOUR.

(To the Editor.)

Dear Madam.—If "S.P.Q.R." proposes taking one question each month, he will be with you for eight months! I am not going to make any contract to reply each time, but with your kind permission I may, at the conclusion of his term, have something to say upon your correspondent's observations.

I feel, however, at this juncture that a word is necessary by way of comment upon the method adopted in the argument of your correspondent. I fear that he is entering the ranks of the Sophists. I would remind him that I am talking of indentured labour between which and an ordinary New Zealand working-man's contract there is no parallel. When the question of Samoan indentured labour was being discussed in the House in September, 1920, under the Treaty of Peace Amendment Bill, Mr McCallum remarked that the indentured labourers were "practically slaves," to which Mr Massey retorted: "Everyone of them left China a free man." Why did he leave China a free man? Mr McCombs supplied the answer when the Bill was in Committee a few days later. He pointed out that "It was necessary for the New Zealand Government to bring them as free men from China, and indenture them after they arrived in Samoa." He continued: "We were told further that it would not be possible to indenture Chinese in Hong Kong because that is under British Rule, and that were it not for the fact that they were being taken from China as free men they could not be carried in British ships." The Member for Lyttelton pertinently remarked: "It is very pleasing indeed to realise that the British flag stands for freedom; but it is humiliating to think that the New Zealand flag stands for slavery."

"S.P.Q.R." attempts to side-track the issue by introducing the New Zealand builder under contract to erect a house. This reminds me of a Member in the House, who declared: "I employ indentured labour myself." Some one interjected, "No!" And he said, "Yes, I do. I have a manager,—and a good one too,—who has indentured into a contract—a term of service,—for a number of years, and he binds himself down by this clause, and that, and the other." But neither the builder nor the manager could be forced by every power of the State to fulfil his engagement if circumstances made it impossible for him to do so. The contractor for the Tira Tunnel entered into an engagement to build the tunnel for the New Zealand Government, but he was compelled to abandon it. Contracts made in New Zealand are safe-guarded by laws of humanity, and both the parties to the contract are, moreover, intelligent persons, possessing the full rights of citizenship, and have complete access to the legally-constituted courts of the country, and a breach