

NEW ZEALAND WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

President:

Miss C. M. McLAY,
79 Haupapa Street, Rotorua.

Vice-President:

Mrs. H. N. TOOMER, Songer Street,
Stoke, Nelson.

Treasurer:

Miss G. GIBBS, 118 North Road,
Dunedin, N.E.1.

(Incorporated)

Organised 1885

"For God, and Home, and Humanity"

DOMINION HEADQUARTERS:

46 and 48 Brougham Street, Wellington, C.4.
Phone 52-062.

Recording Secretary:

Mrs. V. UNDERHILL, Lakings Road,
Yelverton, Blenheim.

Corresponding Secretary:

Miss J. ATKINSON, 57 Pitt Street,
Wadestown, Wellington.

Legal and Parliamentary Superintendent:

Mrs. E. J. CHESSWAS, 7 Field Street,
Aramoho, Wanganui.

Official Organ:

The White Ribbon.

Editor:

Mrs. F. N. CHRISTIAN,
"Fairlight," Tauranga.

Business Manager:

Mrs. J. H. GRIGG,
1 Mallam Street, Karori, Wellington, W.3.
Telephone 26-903.

All matter for publication, reports, etc., should be in the hands of the Editor by the 15th of the month.

All Union advertisements must be sent to the Business Manager, to whom all payments for Advertisements, Beacons, Y.P. Supplements and subscriptions must be made.

Why Do We Fight?

How Do We Fight?

Address given at the Canterbury
District Convention, 1949, by
The Rev. S. Baird

With the knowledge that we have of the dire effects of alcohol, it may well be asked why it should still be necessary for such organizations as yours to fight for the promotion of Temperance amongst any citizens.

There was a time when Strong Drink was regarded as a food, but that day has passed. Men, at one time, thought it was necessary to health and physical fitness. Now, athletes will have nothing to do with it. Then, it was claimed to help endurance, but explorers, mountaineers and other pioneers fight shy of it. At one time it was used in hospitals; now it is very little used there. In Charles Dickens' day people thought there could be no real social life without it. Some, of course, still think so, but many people do enjoy themselves in company without it; and claim that they have better times without it.

Why, then, we may ask, is it so difficult to eradicate? One reason, I think, is that people want to protect that very precious thing called LIBERTY.

In our day, we have seen liberty trampled under feet by dictators. Hence, there is a feeling that it must be protected. Then, when it comes to the question of Temperance, people believe that if they vote for the abolition of the liquor traffic or any curtailment of it, they are imposing their will on other people, thus taking away their liberty. Of course, the liquor people play this for all it is worth.

What is "Liberty"?

Many people have been taken in by the definition of Liberty, which,

roughly expressed, is "Do as you please." Now, temperance supporters must make it clear that they do not attempt to interfere with the liberty of other people, nor desire so to do. But they must also define clearly just what true liberty is.

A man's liberty only extends to that point where he does not interfere with the liberty of someone else. I am at liberty to drive a motor car, but I am not at liberty to drive it to the danger of other citizens. You see, a man's liberty is not a personal thing. It is civic. That is to say, it is conditioned by his social environment. It must not be inconsistent with the welfare of others.

I believe that temperance workers should hammer at this point, and stress the true meaning of Liberty. One is amazed at the numbers of people, themselves abstainers, who will not vote against the traffic for this reason, that they fear they will be interfering with the liberty of others.

Revenue and Employment

Many people are misled by the story of the large amount of labour employed, and the revenue produced by the liquor traffic. Now, we know the answers to these statements. We know that the employees would soon be absorbed in other industries; and that the revenue is absorbed, and more than absorbed, in repairing the damage liquor inflicts. Nevertheless, many others do not see this, and it is necessary that it should be clearly presented to them, and underlined.

The Positive Approach

A further thing that has counted against the progress of Temperance is that it has been regarded as a "kill-joy," that its action is negative. "The common phrases such as "abstinence," "prohibition," "local veto," too often suggest something negative—something opposed to the general trend of human desire. We must reverse this mistaken idea. In the great Victorian days, General Booth said: "The devil is busy. God's soldiers must be busier. If the devil seduces men with silly tunes, God's soldiers must take the tunes and put God's words to them." The important fact was seized upon by Booth that the single relief the deeply impoverished people of the slums of England had from their misery was the warm and well-lit public house, in which there was congenial company and gaiety. The half-starved labourer returned from work to a dirty house where wife and unkempt children completed his misery. The contrast between his home and the gin palaces was too strong for him to resist the alternative of the latter. So Booth felt that, if there was gaiety in the gin palaces, there should be gaiety in the Salvation Army barracks. He would turn the devil's weapons into weapons for God. We can learn from Booth.

The Temperance Movement should not be negative in the approach to the liquor problem. The slogan that you must not "touch, handle or taste" drink is not enough in itself to break the people from it. We must show them that drink really prevents them from sharing in those things that really do give us joy and life. They must be led to see that Temperance is the way to fulness of joy and fulness of living.

In this direction there is a great opportunity before the Temperance movements.

The Problem of Leisure

One of the problems of our time is the use people make of leisure. Shorter hours of work have left them with a considerable amount of time on their hands. How are they going to use it? Can those interested in Temperance progress give a lead? Have they something positive and instructive to say about this? If they have, it will be far more effective than merely denouncing drink or trying to get people to sign the Pledge. These are both negative methods. Our method should be to try to lead people into new sources of interest—healthy recreation, encouraging them to read,