

## WOMEN'S Christian Temperance Union Of New Zealand.

Organised 1885.

"For God and Home and Humanity."

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## The White Ribbon.

For God and Home and Humanity.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18, 1915.

### DOCTORS DIFFER.

We have noticed in the reports sent in by several Unions that they desire more knowledge before dealing with the proposals brought in for the treatment of venereal disease. The New Zealand doctors are asking for compulsory notification and compulsory detention for these diseases. Now, to show how doctors differ, and that the expert medical opinion in Great Britain is against these proposals, we publish below some evidence given before the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases, appointed by the British House of Commons. We ask every White Ribboner to read this evidence, and see that almost unanimously the doctors are against all compulsory methods, and how they advocate free treatment and education.

If Unions will "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" this evidence, they will see that the W.C.T.U. Convention, in opposing all compulsory measures, and asking for free treatment for patients who voluntarily present themselves, and education for all, is in accord with the highest medical opinions of Great Britain.

If a doctor comes to a White Ribboner and orders alcohol, he is at once told, "Sir, you are behind the times; no doctor of any standing orders alcohol." And when the N.Z. Medical Association comes to us and asks us to support compulsory treatment for venereal disease, we say, "Sirs, your advice is against all the best medical opinion of Great Britain. Army and navy doctors with wide experience all condemn compulsory measures. Compulsory measures have been tried in older lands, and the disease has increased. Why should we join you in asking for measures that have proved a failure wherever tried? We intend to stand side by side with the expert medical opinion of the Motherland, and with them demand Free Treatment and Education."

### ROYAL COMMISSION ON VENEREAL DISEASE.

Towards the end of 1913 a Royal Commission was appointed in England to enquire into the best means of dealing with venereal diseases with a view to their diminution. Its labours extended through a great part of the following year. The sittings were private, but brief summaries of the proceedings were supplied to the press, and from these we can glean a good indication of the trend of opinion. Up to the issue of last evidence 27 witnesses had been examined, most of them were medical men, and included three from the Medical Army Corps, two from the Naval Medical Service, two from the Society of Medical Officers of Health, two nurses; while three were statistical from the offices of the Registrar-General.

We are glad to note that there is no desire on the part of these eminent men "to return to the policy or provisions of the C.D. Acts," and it is interesting to note the unanimity with which they recommend free treatment and education as the best means of combating these diseases.

Not one witness was in favour of notifying them as other infections are notified. Two favoured notification under careful restrictions and safeguards, two inclined to notification of certain forms of congenital disease, but the very large majority was absolutely opposed to notification, holding that it would prevent consultation in the early stages when the disease is most infective and most easily treated.

We give extracts from the evidence of these eminent men, and they ought to strengthen our Unions in their demand for free treatment and education, and in their opposition to compulsory measures which would have the effect of re-introducing all the horrors of the C.D. Acts. The Report of Recommendations of this Royal Commission are being eagerly watched for.

### TREATMENT AND EDUCATION.

(Dec., 1913, Ninth Sitting).

Mr J. Ernest Lane, F.R.C.S., Senior Surgeon of St. Mary's Hospital, and of the London Lock Hospital, and himself a member of the Royal Commission, laid stress on the necessity for improved and free hospital treatment, and said that every patient suffering from any form of venereal disease ought to be entitled to **gratuitous treatment and medicine, and to bacteriological and other tests.** If it is desired to cure syphilis, anything that would aid early diagnosis ought to be at a patient's disposal without expense to him. On the subject of notification Mr Lane said that though he had formerly been in favour of notifying all cases of venereal disease to the sanitary authority he had now modified his view because **he was convinced that notification would deter sufferers from seeking proper advice, and would lead to increased recourse to quack treatment.**

11th Sitting, January, 1914.

Lieutenant-Colonel T. W. Gibbard, of the Royal Army Medical Corps, head of the Rochester Row Royal Military Hospital, said that the most important causes of the decrease of venereal disease in the army were the improved treatment and the instruction of the men by lectures and individual talks, greater temperance as regards alcohol, increased attractions of barracks, and the greater encouragement given to sports and outdoor games. The problem of the preven-