

WELLINGTON PROVINCIAL CONVENTION.

The Provincial Convention of the Wellington District was opened on September 1st in the Kent Terrace Presbyterian Church at 9.30 a.m. Mrs Crabb (Vice-President) took the chair in the absence of Mrs Evans, M.A. There were ten Unions represented, the delegates coming from Wanganui, Palmerston North, Masterton, and Wellington districts. Mrs Houlder welcomed the visiting delegates, and Mrs Crabb (President of Palmerston North Union) replied, expressing the gratitude of the visitors for the hospitality experienced in Wellington. Miss Powell, Dominion Organiser, reported that Lower Hutt Union had voted £5 for material for sandbags for the soldiers, 120 being sent to the front, and another consignment being under way. Mrs Crabb reported that Palmerston North had organised a War Committee, that was working steadily with the Red Cross League. Mrs Spearman (Secretary) presented her report, which showed that one Branch had collapsed, but a new one had been organised at Greytown, and though only five days old had already set on foot a recreation room for the soldiers in the neighbourhood. The Treasurer's report showed that the sum of £7 5s 10d passed through the treasury, a balance of 8s 4d remaining. Mrs Evans (President), in her address, which was received with much appreciation, expressed her regret at her inability to be with us in person, but was confident that all had worked loyally and enthusiastically. Amongst other topics, Mrs Evans referred to the war, and said: "When we met in Convention last September it had been going on only a few weeks, and we had not had time to realise all its terrible seriousness. Our feeling was rather that of anxious anticipation and dread as to what might happen. Now, after twelve months of experience, we look at it from a somewhat different standpoint. There are many to whom it has brought the pain of separation and bereavement, but with this is mingled pride in the heroism of their dear ones, who have been deemed worthy to suffer or die for their country's honour. To all who have been called on to suffer thus, we extend our sympathy. May we not also offer them our congratulations that they have

had the privilege of proving their patriotism by making the greatest sacrifice. All over the world women are finding that the war has opened opportunities such as no lesser national upheaval could have afforded. There is the splendid opportunity for service, open alike to the highest and the humblest. From the wealthy noblewoman who throws open her country seat for the accommodation of the wounded and the sick, and gives herself and all her power of sympathy and love to the work of nursing, right down to the little eight-year-old in the primary school, who voluntarily spends her playtime in learning to knit, that she may do her little share in helping the soldiers, not one but finds some way of proving her patriotism by sacrifice. Everywhere women have risen to the occasion, and shown that when some great national crisis comes, empty conventionalism gives place to womanly devotion, expressing itself in unselfish service. In a truly wonderful way women have been coming to their own in the matter of labour and employment, being called to fill positions that hitherto have been practically closed to them, so men may be set free for service at the front. As regards our Temperance work, many of our Unions have already answered with no uncertain sound, for they are working heart and soul in the 'One-Win-One' and pledge-taking campaigns. And then one is grieved and ashamed to find how many there are with whom even the noble example of our own Sovereign has little weight, when one sees that our legislators, who should be our leaders in supporting all projects for our country's good, decline to deny themselves to the extent of voting against the license for Bellamy's."

Mrs Evans closed her paper with a quotation from that magnificent hymn of Chorley's, so appropriate to the present time—

"God the all-wise! By the fire of
Thy chastening
Earth shall to freedom and truth be
restored;
Through the thick darkness Thy
Kingdom is hastening,
Thou wilt give peace in Thy time,
O Lord."

The afternoon session was opened by Miss Powell urging members to induce as many people, soldiers and citizens alike, to sign the Kitchener

pledge. The next matter discussed was some of the proposals brought forward by the Medical Conference in regard to the Public Health Amendment Act, which was held in Christchurch a few months ago. It was pointed out that the subject of venereal disease was without the shadow of doubt a woman's question, because of the fact that many innocent women and children suffered through its existence, and in a country where women had political power it was emphatically a matter in which they should rouse themselves from their apathy, and take active steps to grapple with an evil that struck at the very roots of their being.

Mrs A. R. Atkinson read the resolutions brought forward against the proposals of the Medical Conference by the New Zealand W.C.T. Convention. The proposed Bill contained all the objectionable proposals of the C.D. Acts, which the Unions throughout New Zealand so strongly opposed, and succeeded in getting abolished. These were: (1) Compulsory notification; (2) compulsory examination (on suspicion only); (3) compulsory detention. Mrs Atkinson quoted, in the course of her remarks, the statements made by the highest European experts, who conceded that compulsory notification, examination, and detention were not only utterly useless, but were absolutely pernicious in their effects. In regard to the matter of detention, it was pointed out that such a thing would be a menace not only to personal freedom, but to the public health, because in the opinion of the highest medical authorities it would only drive the evil underground by causing sufferers to apply to quacks and unqualified persons. It was urged by the speaker that education and general enlightenment, as well as the provision for facilities for effective, complete, and in many cases free treatment, would do far more to lessen the evil than compulsory notification.

Dr. Edith Huntley and Mrs Peryman both stressed how much might be done by mothers in preventing this evil by the proper safeguarding, training, and instruction of their children, and by instilling into boys chivalrous ideas in regard to their attitude to girls, other boys' sisters as well as their own.

In the evening a public meeting was held. A musical programme opened the first part of the proceedings, fol-