

Correspondence.

(The Editor is not responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents.)

(To the Editor.)

Madam,—In the October number of the "White Ribbon" I was very sorry to see a letter from a member of the W.C.T.U. asking that the Annual Convention be postponed on account of the war.

I sincerely hope that such a suggestion will not be considered seriously. There never was a time when Christian women had such splendid opportunities of pushing the work of the W.C.T.U., and the prohibition of the liquor traffic. It seems incredible that the greatest foe any nation has to fight (alcohol) should be given every license, while the lesser one of the war is to absorb all our activities.

In my visiting and canvassing for new members I have never met with so much sympathy for our cause, more particularly amongst those, who before the war could not be persuaded to listen seriously to arguments for Prohibition. In Palmerston we have had little difficulty in obtaining fifty new members this year. It is only a matter of giving the time necessary to calling on them in their own homes; it is useless waiting to get them to meetings before joining.

Instead of lessening our work we should be pushing on with more eagerness.

The painful sight of so many drunken soldiers in our streets has disgusted even some of our leading moderates, and if only a poll could be taken at once I am certain we would register a greater number of votes for Prohibition than ever before.

There is another aspect of the question which should lead us to think seriously. By the time this dreadful war is over the population will be on a more equal basis than ever before. The frightful loss of life amongst our men will throw the responsibility of deciding as to whether Prohibition can be carried or not more than ever on the woman voter. Now what are we going to do with this opportunity?

We must educate and keep on educating the women.

Who is to do it?

I know of no other all round educational institute on moral questions for women but the W.C.T.U. Women are woefully ignorant on these subjects. You only need to go into their homes and talk with them to find that out.

Our churches teach general principles. The Union teaches them to apply these principles in practice against the great moral evils that have come down to us through all the ages. Let the Wanganui Convention be a record one for numbers, enthusiasm and up-to-date practical ideas for the next year's work.

I hope to see some great demonstration organised for Convention week to force on the attention of the public the fact that the liquor traffic is helping Germany in the most effective manner possible, by ruining the efficiency of the soldiers for whom we are paying heavy taxes to send to the front, and let us denounce every one who sells alcohol, as well as those who permit them to do so as traitors to their country. I consider we are far too modest in the way we are dealing with this subject during war time.

The people are ready for any drastic measure the Government would bring forward, but of course the liquor traffic controls the Government, as it does the Press, and every thing else in the Dominion.

Is it going to control the women of New Zealand?

It remains for the W.C.T.U. to answer that question, but we will never answer it by slackening our efforts, and talking of not holding the Convention. We are constantly asserting and asking permission to be allowed to show our capabilities as leading women; now is the time to prove ourselves. By all means help in all the good work being done in your district for the men in the firing line, but don't for a moment think of lessening your work as a W.C.T.U.

Here is a suggestion for increased membership. Let every branch elect a certain number of members, whose duties will be to obtain full lists of every church woman in their district, and systematically call on every one of them, explaining the aims of the Union, and asking for their support.

If they cannot attend meetings they can sign the pledge, and pay their fees, thus helping the local and Dominion funds, and swelling the membership lists so that when a deputation waits on a member of Parliament they can say they represent 20,000 or 30,000 women voters, instead of the 3000 as at present. Besides there are quite a number of women who if they think they cannot join the Union will very often give a yearly subscription.

It is evident we are not much in earnest in our work or we would have done much more than we have. As Mrs Don says, "It is only the will that is wanted. We could get Prohibition if we wanted to badly enough."

I have often wished when sitting in some of our large churches or concert halls, and have seen the hundreds of women gathered together, that there was some way of utilizing the great force that is latent in the womanhood of New Zealand. Only the fringe of it has been touched by different local societies; the great bulk of it is being wasted on amusements. If the Union does not get control of it something else will. There are great capabilities waiting to be used. See how eagerly the women who have never thought of much else but pleasure have thrown themselves into the patriotic schemes that have been brought forward. All that energy should

never be allowed to drift back into a love for amusement. I know it is difficult to attract the attention of the ordinary woman to reform work, but it is still more difficult to persuade men who are immersed in business cares to take it up. Therefore we must look to the women to do the greater part of the reforming of the world. When war was first declared, the liquor traffic exclaimed at the meanness of the Prohibition Party in using the war as a means of pushing our work, and said we should close down during the war. Of course we may talk of closing down when they close their bars.

One can understand that attitude in the enemy, but it makes one hot with indignation to hear that one of our own members should bring forward any suggestion, but that of more enthusiasm, more organised effort, and more hope in the future.

With God's help we need not be afraid. All things are possible.

PRISCA CRABB,

Dis. President.

Palmerston North.

Dear Madam, I notice in your last issue of the "White Ribbon" a member suggests we put off Convention for twelve months. I would like also to make a few suggestions. I think it would be a good plan if we spend less on pleasure and finery; there are lots we could do without, such as birthday parties. Our children delight in their annual tea party, and how much happier they will feel (for my experience is that children are less selfish than adults) if we were to give them a coin to spend on our soldier boys instead. Grand wedding "sprees" can also be done away with in such times as these. Excursion trips and other such pleasures could very well be done without.

I certainly think it a pity to cut short our subscriptions to church and social purity work, for they must be kept going for the sake of our country, and those who cannot go to the fighting line, also for the men who will return to us again.

I do not think it wise to postpone Convention, for I believe good work is done there which is well worth the expense, and to put it off for twelve months may cause a set-back in the work, which will take years to catch up again. Our present Parliament delights in placing immoral laws on the Statute Book, so we must keep pace and insist that they should be replaced with laws that will do good, and not evil. There may be ways and means of curtailing expenses while Convention is on.

Delegates to Convention get such an inspiration that they go back home and inspire the members of their own Union, and so the work goes on.—Yours in the work,

"ALSO A MEMBER."