

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

At the Good Citizenship meeting, Nelson, on August 25th, the subject of Proportional Representation was taken for discussion, an address being given by Mrs Claude Graham. This subject was taken specially in connection with an effort made to get the system adopted by the City Council at its next election, each Councillor having been asked if he would be willing to support it. The question was to be considered at the Council meeting on the evening of the same day, and invitations were sent out to the Councillors to be present at Mrs Graham's address. Only one responded, but we had a good meeting, the address being most interesting and instructive.

Mrs Graham pointed out the need of reform in the present methods of choosing representatives, election by proportional representation being one of the reforms now under consideration, and having already taken a place in practical politics as an established fact, being in use in some parts of the British Empire, and proving itself equitable, scientific, up-to-date, and satisfactory. She went on to speak of the advantages of the system over the present methods, showing that it gave a wider representation to all parties in the States and to all shades of opinion, providing for the representation of minorities as well as that of majorities, in due proportion to their strength. It is thus a much fairer method, and it also facilitates the representation of all parties by their ablest members, not lending itself to manipulation for hidden ends, as do the present systems, which in this way often prevent the wishes of the people being given effect to. Having briefly sketched the rise and spread of the Proportional system, particularly the variety known as the Single Transferable Vote, the most popular amongst English-speaking peoples, and the results of its working in Tasmania, where it has been in use for some years, and has proved satisfactory, Mrs Graham went on to speak of the three political ideals democratically recognised, showing that these are more easily attained by Proportional Representation than by any other method. (1) That every elector shall, as far as possible, have an equal voice in the election. (2) That the poor candidate shall have equal opportuni-

ties with the rich. (3) That the freedom of the elector shall be protected from the tyranny of the caucus. The principal aims of the system were given as follows:—(1) To represent the opinions of the different parties amongst the electors in due proportion. (2) To secure that, while the majority rules, the voice of the minority shall also be heard. (3) To give to the elector a wider choice of representatives. (4) To give representatives greater independence from financial and other pressure of small sections of constituents. (5) To ensure to parties representation by their ablest and most trusted members. The great difference between this system and the present methods was also pointed out, viz., that in the latter we have a large number of small single-membered constituencies, while under the former there would be a few large multi-membered ones; the proposal in New Zealand being to form two in each Island, the two in the North Island having 11 members each, and the two in the South 9. This refers to the election of the Legislative Council, which, according to the present intention of the Government, is to be made an elective body. Mrs Graham then explained the method of election, which, from the elector's point of view, is perfectly simple, all he has to do being to put the figure 1 against the name of the candidate he wishes to vote for in the list on the ballot paper, placing 2 against his second choice, and 3 against his third. The method of counting the votes is more complicated, and it is hardly possible to explain it in detail in a short report such as this. The principle of it is that every candidate who obtains the requisite number of votes, which is ascertained by a simple calculation, is elected, the surplus, that is, the number of votes obtained above the necessary quota, being transferred to the second or succeeding choices of the electors, as needed. In this way no votes are wasted in large majorities, and all voters are represented.

Those who wish to study the system will find it explained in Mr McCombs' pamphlet on Proportional Representation, and there is also a very good explanation of it in Hazell's Annual, 1914. In view of the possibility that the system may be introduced at the election of the Legislative Assembly, it is certainly to be desired that all electors should be acquainted with its objects and methods, and I would

strongly recommend all Unions who are taking up work or study under the Good Citizenship department, to make a study of it. If there are any who would like a fuller report of Mrs Graham's address, I shall be glad to supply them with a copy.

MARIAN JUDSON,

N.Z. Supt. of Good Citizenship.

"A LITTLE GIRL'S THANKS."

(Here is a very beautiful little poem; it had no name attached to it, but it appeared a few weeks ago in a magazine called Woman's World. We have substituted the word New Zealand instead of Ireland as appears in the original. You should all learn it for a new recitation this year).

Oh, thank you, Mister Soldier,
For all you've done for me;
You left your home and friends, I
know,
To go across the sea.
All day you tramp in mud and mire,
The rain beats on your head,
That I may stay here, nice and warm
Within my cosy bed.

The sun shines bright in New Zealand,
The grass is green and sweet;
There is no war in our town,
All quiet in our street;
And just because you went away
To make the war to cease,
So here the little children play
In quiet and in peace.

I'm only just a little girl,
But one thing I can do—
Each night before I go to bed
I always pray for you;
I pray that God will keep me good,
Will bless mamma, and then—
"God guard and keep the soldier man,
And bring him home again."

Ashburton, 2nd Tuesday, 2.30 p.m., in Baring Square Schoolroom; Pres., Mrs W. E. Watson, Box 37; Rec. Sec., Miss Trevurzon, 169 Peter Street; Asst. Sec., Miss Wise, Short St.; Treas., Mrs W. T. Lil, Willowby; "W.R." Sup., Miss Butterick, Wakanui.

Auckland District, 2nd & 4th Wednesday, 2.30 p.m., Central Mission Hall, Albert St.; Pres., Mrs Cook, Point St., Mt. Eden; Cor. Sec., Miss N. Dewar, Pompaier Terr., Ponsonby; Rec. Sec., Miss Evans, G.F.S., Wellesley St.; Treas., Mrs McLean, Princeps St., Grey Lynn; Org. Treas., Miss Dewar, 4 Pompaier Terr., Ponsonby; "W.R." Agent Miss Pudney, 16, Wallace St. Ponsonby.

Blenheim District, 1st Tuesday, 3 p.m.; Pres. Mrs A. Jackson; Sec., Mrs D. P. Sinclair, Box 27; Treas., Mrs Hay, Stephenson St.; Mothers' Meeting and Cradle Roll, Mesdames Brewer and Hancock; "W.R." Agent, Mrs W. Parker, Grove Rd.

Cambridge, first Tuesday in month, in Victoria Hall, at 8 p.m.; Pres., Mrs W. D. Shepherd; Sec., Mrs A. Wallace, Weld Street; Treas., Mrs C. H. Rycroft; Cradle Roll, Mrs Reeves; W.R. Agent, Mrs A. T. Watson.