

Mrs Glover, of the Salvation Army, and Mrs McVicar, on behalf of the Plunket Society, also warmly supported the reform asked for, feeling sure that it would greatly promote the welfare of women and young people.

The Minister's reply was long, but by no means satisfactory. Ignoring most of the evidence from America, where police women are appointed with full official status, he spoke mainly of the voluntary system; his statements were negative rather than positive in character, and he failed often to touch the real point at issue. For instance, he stated, with reference to Ireland, that there were no positions in the Royal Irish Constabulary that could be satisfactorily filled by women. As the duties of the Royal Irish Constabulary correspond to those of our Permanent Artillery, this is doubtless true, but it does not bear upon the matter in question.

The only suggestion that he had to make was the appointment of more prison matrons, especially in Auckland and Wellington, and the rather vague promise that when these had had sufficient training, their sphere of work should be extended in the direction of taking evidence in cases that concern women and children.

The Minister's reply to the protests re the War Regulations Amendment Act was equally unsatisfactory. To the women's claim for their right, as enfranchised citizens, to be consulted in regard to legislation that specially affected them, his only response was that he failed to see why it was necessary to consult the women on legislation that prevented a certain class of women entering hotels after a certain hour, and that made it possible to close "one-woman brothels." He practically ignored the fact that the indefinite powers under which the Government passed these measures could be used also to infringe the rights of every woman citizen in the Dominion.

The deputation withdrew, feeling that very little had been achieved beyond impressing upon them the necessity for continuing to agitate so as to arouse public opinion until the Government are compelled to yield to the pressure brought to bear on them.

The matter of police women was again brought up a fortnight later at the annual meeting of the Society for the Protection of Women and Children. The annual report referred briefly to the Minister's unsatisfactory

response to the deputation, and later in the evening Mrs Evans brought forward further evidence in favour of the desired reform, which was now removed from the sphere of experiment. Even prior to the war excellent work was being done by women police in other countries, as shown in the case of Dr. Katharine Davis, who by her tact and sympathy succeeded, where a man had failed, in quelling a serious disturbance in a New York prison. It might, or might not, be advisable to appoint more police matrons, but it was impossible for them to do the work in which women police had been found so helpful, such as patrolling parks and similar places, and visiting places of amusement. The Government had overwhelming evidence to the usefulness and efficiency of police women in America, and while our boys and girls were exposed to so many dangers, it was not right to oppose a reform that had done so much elsewhere for their protection. The subject must be pressed upon the public, and every legitimate means taken to compel "our somewhat hesitating Government" to give effect to the wishes of the people.

The Editor of the Dunedin "Evening Star," in a strong article on the subject, rightly complains that the detailed reports forwarded by him on the working of women police in the principal cities of the United States and Canada had been pigeon-holed, in spite of the fact that he had made exhaustive personal enquiries in many cities, and this with the approval of the Minister. In nearly every instance the official verdict was that the women police had "made good," and had come to stay; yet none of this evidence has been produced, nor was any reference made to these reports in the Minister's answer to the deputation.

In the Dunedin "Evening Star" of the 4th November are given the replies of several recognised local workers for social reform, who were asked by the Editor to state publicly whether, in their judgment, the proposal of the Attorney-General to increase the number of police matrons in the Dominion will provide an effective check on—or even minimise—existing evils. Following is a summary of the replies given by six of those communicated with, from which it will be seen that all agree that the proposed appointment of additional

police matrons will not meet the case:—

Rev. Mr Curzon-Siggers (President Society Protection of Women and Children) said to appoint additional women as police matrons was beginning at the wrong end, as they would not realise the ideal. What was wanted was "women to save women from falling, not women to take them in hand after they had fallen"—tactful, intelligent women, who would wisely direct girls and young women who were disposed to be flighty, and would do their utmost to stop the making of criminals and moral derelicts, and would impress upon girls the high ideal of the duties of woman. Mothers ought to teach their daughters what they should know about sex functions. Another need was the provision of motherly women as helpers in the families of men with limited means, at such times as the wife is laid up or away in a maternity home.

Mr V. Bryan King (President Dunedin Men's Mission) considered that the Attorney-General had failed to grasp the true reason and meaning of the request for women police. Prison matrons were trained in the care of criminal women, but we wanted women appointed, not to care for criminals, but to prevent women and girls from coming to this unhappy condition. They must be tactful, discreet, silent women of high moral and religious character, with great love for those who needed help. Though having the full powers of a police constable, they should not, in his opinion, be uniformed, but act as "vigilance women" to aid the existing criminal investigation department by obtaining evidence that a man cannot easily get, e.g., in reference to illegal operations, and by visiting parks and places of amusement.

Mrs Don (President W.C.T.U. of N.Z.) thought the reply given by the Attorney-General not only wholly unsatisfactory, but an insult to the intelligence of all women who are trying to grapple with social problems. What was required was police women who by their wise counsel could prevent girls from becoming immoral, clearing them off the streets, and preventing them from making free with the soldiers. From her own experience, she gave an example of the kind of help such women could render, and referred to testimony she could quote from mothers in Palmerston