

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

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ANOTHER PLAGUE-SPOT.

MOTHERS! TO THE RESCUE.

When at our Gisborne Convention Mrs Field spoke of facts which pointed to "White Slavery" in this Dominion, both Press and police treated the matter as pure fancies, and more than hinted that most of the facts sprang from the speaker's imagination.

But the shocking revelations in the cases just tried in Dunedin have been so definite that Mr Statham did not hesitate to allude to Ebzery, the procurer, as a "white slaver of the worst type." Yet the Magistrate sentenced him to eleven months' imprisonment, at the end of which time he can come out and again debauch our girlhood. As usual, the men who provide the money have remained in obscurity. Ebzery pleaded guilty, and so the names of the men for whom the girls were procured were not submitted to the Court.

Public indignation is roused at this inadequate sentence and at the shielding of the real sinners. The Council of the Churches called a meeting of men to protest, when some straight talking was indulged in and strong resolutions of protest passed.

On Saturday, the 17th, a women's meeting has been summoned by the women's societies of Dunedin. They intend to submit to that meeting two resolutions, one of strong protest at the small sentences, both of Ebzery and of the woman Parker, who got one month's imprisonment for keeping a house of ill-fame.

Also a resolution asking that solicitation should be made a crime for both sexes, and that the age of consent be raised to 18 years.

Our Cabinet Ministers from one end of the Dominion to the other have talked about how they mean to deal with "these women." The Commissioner of Police has asked for power to deal with "these women." Is it not time that the mothers of the Dominion asked for punishment to fall upon "these men"? If a girl accosts a man in the street, he can hand her over to the police for soliciting, but these dirty debauched old rouses can day after day worry the young waitress or clerk, or any business girl, who cannot get away from them; they can urge her to go for a "motor ride," and she has no redress. As to the age of protection, the Government have been urged again and again to raise it to 18. Surely if a girl's property is protected by law till she is 21, it is not too much to ask that her person should be protected to 18. Again and again have the Cabinet, both by women and by Grand Juries, been asked to protect little children from social degenerates, but so far nothing has been done. The Government has practically said (not in words, but by its actions) to the mothers of New Zealand, "We don't care a tinker's curse what happens to your girls, so long as they don't infect our soldiers."

Is it not time now that the mothers of the land bestirred themselves and roused the people on this question till an indignant womanhood thunders at

the gates of Parliament House and demands protection for its children?

If the present Ministers cannot bring in legislation to protect girls and punish the men who debauch them, then let them resign in favour of more competent men.

The crying need of our land is a **statesman**. Not a problem, cost of living, incidence of taxation, pensions and allowances for soldiers, or the red plague, has been dealt with in a statesman-like manner. We hope in every centre women will wake up to the need there is for earnest work and zealous propaganda till we get women police to prevent girls being ruined, and equal laws to punish the male offender. If it is a crime for a girl to sell herself, it is an equal crime for a man to buy, and both should stand in the dock together.

It is time for the mothers of New Zealand to impress upon Ministers this fact, that they are not children to be put off with twaddle, but thinking, voting women, who demand reasonable legislation from their representatives in Parliament assembled.

WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT.

Mrs Don, Dominion President, wishes Unions to know that Mrs Napier, of Edinburgh, will be pleased to visit and assist any Union inviting her to do so during her stay in New Zealand. Any Union desiring Mrs Napier's services should write to Miss Henderson, who will arrange.