

Correspondence.

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

(To the Editor.)

Madam,—The W.I.L. has instructed me to write an appeal for help in a matter which will awaken sympathetic feeling.

On July -6, the Government saw fit secretly to place upon one of the outgoing transports a section of the conscientious and religious objectors who had been in military detention. The men's relatives were not notified of their departure, so no preparations could be made for their needs on the voyage, nor farewells. The men were told that they were to be taken to Somes Island, presumably to prevent protest prior to getting the men on board the transport, and the surprise at the deceit is said to have broken some of them down. One person reported that they "cried like women"; another less tastefully said that they went off "squealing like pigs," and his method would be to put them with their backs against a wall and shoot them. If this latter account represents the spirit in which these men have been deported, what is likely to be their treatment?

Mr Isitt, M.P., who is in no way averse to Britain's war policy, writes on August 4: "I do not approve of the action of the National Government with conscientious objectors. I never have, but I appealed in vain for any help from my brother-members, and my opinion is that nothing can be done inside the House. . . . The Churches should take the matter up."

Outside opinion is only awakening slowly, owing to the silence of the Press upon the deportation. Few as yet know that there has been such, and some are almost incredulous that such a thing should have taken place.

Approaching the matter from a material standpoint, one asks, what is the use of such a piece of tyranny? Shipping space is needed for material help for Britain, not for the purpose of dumping more mouths to feed upon a country which is finding extreme difficulty in feeding its own population, and which has its own thousands of conscientious objectors filling its gaols. Why, too, should New Zealand be put to this useless expense when economy is so urgently needed? Sir James Allen excuses action by the hope that the men will, "on reconsideration, see it is their duty to comply with the laws of the land." But these men have already been tested by detention treatment, and there is no reason to suppose they will ever be available for military purposes. Also, if the reason is what Sir J. Allen states, why the secrecy. Why not have allowed the parents the

usual opportunity for farewell, instead of leaving it to accident to reveal the facts. Is not the inference a sinister one?

From the moral point of view, and to you, as Christian women, this will appear the more, is it not a wrong thing to force any man's conscience to compel him to perform an act by which he feels that he denies the religion which guides his life? Some answer with the sophistical phrase, "It is the first duty of a citizen to obey the law." To those who know the detailed history of Britain, or any other country, such a statement is not an argument. Much of the "freedom" of our land has had its birth in conscientious revolt of men and women in past ages. Many of the names we honour to-day are those of men who have in their time faced imprisonment, and even death, rather than obey laws which were not in accordance with the highest dictates of their consciences. Jesus was a law-breaker. Penn, Sir Thomas More, Bunyan, Hampden, Ridley, Hooper, and thousands of others who are shining lights to later generations were, in their day, conscientious objectors. Protestants, Catholics, Churchmen and Dissenters have each at some date been conscientious objectors to man-made and temporal laws. Man-made law is not as a law of Nature or of God. It is a law to be examined and amended where it is unwise or presses too hardly on innocent people, and we ask you to join with us and other bodies in attempting to amend the Military Service Act so that it shall not be the means of taking men from useful civilian employments, and throwing them into gaols, detention camps, or—above all—sending them as prisoners thousands of miles away from home to serve no purpose but the gratification of a regrettably vindictive spirit.

Other intended deportations are rumoured, and will probably take place unless there is a strong protest from outside.

L. M. PIPER (Mrs),
Cor. Sec., W.I.L.

(To the Editor.)

Dear Sister,—In the Oxford report appearing in the September number of the "White Ribbon" it was stated that £23 had been forwarded to those injured in the London air raid. May I explain that this money was raised and sent, not by the W.C.T.U., but by the "Y" Branch? The members of the "Y" Branch spent much time and trouble in training the L.T.L. boys and girls to take part in a concert, which proved a great success, the aforesaid sum being raised and forwarded to the fund.

Thanking you in anticipation for allowing me to make this explanation.—Yours in the work,

A. H. CAVERHILL, Hon. Treas.
Oxford, October 2nd, 1917.

(To the Editor.)

Dear Madam,—Might I, as a further contribution to the discussion re differentiation in education, suggest that girls who are leaving either the primary or secondary schools, intend taking up domestic work, or who are not taking up any definite work, might be required to take a course of domestic training, and to pass an examination which would be a guarantee that they were capable domestic workers.

Such a scheme would not in any way handicap qualifying for any definite work, and it would be a distinct gain to many who otherwise would learn nothing thoroughly.

It would, at any rate, be a good beginning, and could be extended later on if found desirable.

It would of course mean that mistresses employing such girls would have to allow them time to attend their classes, and also that they should give them opportunity to practice what they were learning. It would also mean in time more capable domestic help.

Thanking you in anticipation.—I am, etc.,

JESSIE FIELD.

ORGANISING WORK.

(To the Editor.)

Dear Madam,—I heretofore endorse the sentiments expressed by our N.Z. Treasurer in your last issue, upon above subject, but I would go further. We need not two Dominion Organisers, but three, two for the North Island, and one for the South, and, as suggested by Mrs Bendely, they could change over occasionally. While it took one less than twelve months to work the South Island, I have hardly covered the North in two years. It may be said that there are a number of places in the South Island where we ought to organise, but the same is true of the North Island, to which there has been a considerable migration of population within the last few years. The absolute impossibility of the work of the whole of New Zealand being overtaken by one worker is a thought I am obliged to resolutely put from me or I should despair.

Furthermore, we ought to have headquarters in Wellington, where we could concentrate our literature, badges, and all other requisites, and which would be a rallying ground for workers travelling through the Dominion. A salaried White Ribboner would be in attendance during certain hours, and when not on duty there she could organise the suburban electorates. In fact, she could act as organiser for the Wellington District, her place at the office being occasionally taken by a local member.

In all these very necessary arrangements the chief difficulty is a financial one, but it seems to me that this might be overcome. The fact that, in spite of the huge sums that have