

SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTERS.

MAORI REPORT.

The following Unions have contributed to the Maori Fund since last published list (see September "White Ribbon," 1917):—Oxford (2nd subscription), £1; Pahiatua, Oct. 4th, 16s 6d; New Plymouth, Oct. 4th, £2 2s; Wellington Central, Oct. 27th, per Mrs Helyer, £1 14s; Ngaere, Nov. 12th, 15s; Nelson, Nov. 12th, per Mrs Judson, £1; Nelson, Nov. 28th, per Mrs Brown, £3; Wellington District, Nov. 28th, per Mrs Boxall, £1; Kaia-poi, Nov. 29th, per Mrs Blackwell, £1; Auckland District, Nov. 30th, per Miss Dewar, £1.

I am glad to report that Pahiatua and Katikati (a newly formed Union in the Bay of Plenty) are working for us in the matter of distribution of Maori leaflets; also that Miss Woodhead has been able to visit some of the native Unions in North Auckland. We welcome her active interest in this work again, and trust that her health may continue to improve. The thanks of the Union are also due to the Rev. and Mr Paikea, of that district, for again this year placing their steam launch at Miss Woodhead's disposal for a two days' trip, thus saving the Union a big expense. I would also remind all Unions that reports of any work (no matter how small) done in this department are now due, to enable me to draw up Convention report in good time.

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MEDICAL TEMPERANCE.

Dear Fellow-Workers,—At the present time, when public feeling is in favour of restricting the manufacture and sale of alcoholic liquors because their use lowers our national efficiency, ought we not to make special efforts to educate the public on the medical side of the question?

In the new evidence against alcohol it is shown to be a depressant, never a stimulant. "Impairment seems to be the keynote expressed by the depression," says the Journal of the American Medical Association in an editorial review upon some of the latest scientific experiments of the

effects of alcohol upon the nervous system. The editorial quotes approvingly what Quensel said: "Work and alcohol do not belong together, especially when work demands wide-awakeness, attention, exactness, and endurance."

Professor Conn, in his review of these experiments, says: "Two very important general conclusions concerning the physiological action of alcohol seem to be reached from this new series of tests. Alcohol is the one universal narcotising drug. Various other drugs have a narcotic effect upon certain actions, and are somewhat selective as to the functions they will depress. But alcohol seems to depress all vital functions, and it appears to be the only one of the narcotics that has this universal action."

"Alcohol in small quantities has the same effect that it has in large quantities, although less in amount. The apparent stimulating action which is sometimes seen in small doses of alcohol, when traced analytically to its cause, proves to be due to the fact that the alcohol has paralysed certain mental functions, allowing others to run riot, as it were, unchecked by the normal controlling functions of the undrugged human brain."

Dr. Sims Woodhead, professor of pathology at Cambridge University, England, said some years ago, in speaking of alcohol as a medicine: "In 90 per cent. of cases where alcohol was given it was found that instead of getting a better condition, the heart and blood vessels attained a condition more dangerous to the patient."

Dr. Woodhead was asked for a substitute for brandy in cases of collapse for home use. He recommended hot water and hot milk. These could be carried in a thermos bottle as easily as brandy is carried in a flask. He was asked also if port wine is blood-making, and replied that it is no good whatever in that respect.

Madame Von Wolfig, of Paris, the well-known bacteriologist, reports that her observations show that alcohol produces the same reactions in the blood as are produced by the poisons of bacteria.

Sir A. Pearce Gould, recognised all over the world as an authority on cancer, in a recent lecture stated that the experience of the United Kingdom Temperance and General Provident

Institution (insurance company) was that death from cancer was more than twice as frequent among the non-abstaining section of their policyholders as it was among the abstaining section. His experience with this disease led him to say that it is more rapid and more distressing among those who take alcohol.

Dr. J. Wallace Beveridge, formerly instructor in children's diseases in Cornell University Medical College, declares that the consumption of spirituous liquors by parents materially reduces the birth-rate, particularly that its use by mothers of babies results in infant disease and death. The effect of alcohol upon infant mortality is appalling.

He also says: "Just let us glance for a moment at the physiological action of alcohol. It causes a lowering of the body temperature of from one to three degrees. At first it increases the heart action, but lowers the blood pressure through the dilation of the blood vessels. It affects the nervous system directly through the blood.

"It has been found present in the blood stream fifteen minutes after taking. It causes a tremendous flow of blood to the capillaries and small blood-vessels that supply the stomach. At the same time there is a corresponding lessening of the blood supply in the brain.

"After alcohol has been taken for some time, either in small or greater amounts, the muscle cells degenerate through a fatty degeneration or through direct starvation. The small blood vessels of the brain often are ruptured, and minute clots form.

"This breaking down of the cell structures of the body, of the lessening of the oxidation, creates a distinct toxic condition which is very difficult to eliminate. In time various portions of the body, such as the liver, stomach, and kidneys, become seriously damaged.

"One very interesting fact which I have noticed is that in the majority of cases when a patient is suffering from malignant growths, such as cancer in the abdominal organs, there is usually an alcoholic history. It is reasonable to presume that where a vital organ like the stomach has its delicate tissues constantly irritated, as is done by the steady use of alcohol, that the way is opened for whatever pathological change may take place wherein