

lowing tests to every proposal dealing with this great problem:—First, will it tend to strengthen or to weaken that sense of individual responsibility in relation to sexual conduct, which is the strongest and most effectual bulwark against the spread of disease; and secondly, can it and will it in actual practice be applied with impartial justice to both sexes and in all classes? We are told that where the prohibitory law is well enforced commercialised vice cannot exist. In prohibition Kansas there has been a distinct falling off of venereal and similar diseases, according to the testimony of medical men of that State. Dr. W. E. Swan, Secretary of the Kansas State Board of Health, says that a decrease in the consumption of intoxicants lessens venereal diseases. Every clean-minded citizen desires at almost any expense to rid his city of every agency for the promotion of vice. He will have taken a long step toward the desired end when he has secured the abolition of the liquor traffic, upon which immorality is so dependent for existence.

Gambling.—In spite of the fact that the strongest foe that ever confronted our nation is hammering at our gates, and that this is our fourth year of war, and that the Empire is threatened with famine, gambling steadily increases. The totalisator turnover in New Zealand for ten days, that is from Boxing Day to January 3rd, amounted to £755,914. We are repeatedly told that the Empire has no grain to spare for race horses or alcohol. It has no surplus of men to bestow upon luxury callings, yet more than three million pounds were staked upon the totalisator, and this when Great Britain is actually short of food.

Our Losses.—Our hearts go out in tender sympathy for the many among us who have been bereft through the war, and to all who have lost loved ones at home or abroad, we pay our tribute of tender affection.

The sudden death of Professor Bedford has cast a gloom upon our forces throughout the Dominion. He was a tower of strength to our Reform. His full life, his lofty principles, his indomitable courage and willingness to work, were always an inspiration. He has laid down his life in the highest service of his country. And we thank God for his memory, and pray that his strong influence may be upon our daily lives, enabling us to continue our work with consecrated purpose and spiritual power. May God comfort his widow and little children.

We are meeting again in Annual Convention under the shadow of war. The stories of cruel woundings, heart-breaking desolations, physical agony, and death seem to grow worse as time rolls on, and the horror of it is telling upon us all. These are the most exacting months we shall ever live through. The clouds continue dark, nor can it be said with any assurance that there are indications of the coming of a better day. The enemy have not been overcome; the cry is

still for more men, and ever more men; and the promise is that the most trying time of all is yet to come. Because of the depletion of our manhood, women have to do strange duties and make hard sacrifices, and carry grievous burdens for themselves and for others, and sometimes there seems no limit upon our sacrifices. And yet the importunate call comes pleading for added sacrifices still, and we have to make them. Women's part in war work has been a vital contribution to its success, but what concerns us at this time is not so much what women have done or are doing, but what we are to do. In all probability we shall have an election this year. If we are to win the poll this Convention should be the beginning of the end. There are strong reasons why this year should be the year of victory. One is the need that exists for clearing the country of its deadliest peril for the soldiers returning from the war. The liquor, which is bad enough for everybody, is specially dangerous to those who have been racked and strained in going through the horrors of war. Another reason is that the eyes of the people have been opened to see the evils of the liquor traffic and its economic waste. Our Allies and overseas Dominion have prohibited the manufacture and sale of drink in the interests of victory, and the opportunity to do likewise is before us. Reverently I say we must move heaven and earth to secure victory. Heaven by our concentrated and importunate prayers, earth by every device that our minds can think of to win out and win through. We know what Deborah, the prophetess, accomplished when inspired and helped by the living God. She was only one woman. What might we accomplish if filled with dynamic Spiritual power? We have put our trust in strong men, in politicians, in organisations; but now we must cease from men and things, and trust in the living God. My mind has been dwelling on the verse in Psalm 89, which I pass on for your consideration: "Thou hast a mighty arm, strong is Thy hand, high is Thy right hand."

If you turn to the Old Testament Scripture and read the history of the Israelites, you will see that it was the mighty arm that stretched out and redeemed them; the strong hand that led them; the mighty hand that saved them from their enemies. It was the hand that accomplished all things for them. It is that same mighty, strong high hand that we must depend on for every movement in this fight.

"WHITE RIBBON" REPORT.

At 1917 Convention, owing to increase in cost of paper and labour, the printers had to increase the price of the paper. Convention by resolution asked Unions to each secure six new subscribers. Some Unions worked splendidly, and we closed the year

with 2625 subscribers, an increase for the year of 410 subscribers. In spite of an increase of about £15 in cost of printing, without raising our price, we have paid this increased cost and have a balance in hand of £9 16s 3d.

This year we have again to face an increased cost of about £17.

We give special thanks to those agents who have helped us so well all through the year; also to Mrs Evans, our Associate Editor, our thanks are due for help given, and to Mr Lynneberg for auditing our accounts.

The following are the Unions which have sent the six new subscribers asked for by Convention:—Miss Powell, 99; Auckland, 28; Christchurch, 26; Palmerston North, 27; Oxford, 22; Ashburton, Wellington District, Wellington Central, 18; Pakiri, 13; Nelson, 12; Hikurangi and Wanganui East, 10; Whangarei, Wai-pukurau, Stratford, Dunedin, Timaru, 9; Port Chalmers, 8; Greytown, 8; Normanby, 7; Kati-Kati, Avondale, Cambridge, Morrinsville, Tokomaru Bay, Mata-Mata, Urenui, Wakapuaka, Avondale Y's, South Dunedin, Mosgiel, Aramoho Y's, New Plymouth, 6.

NELLIE PERMAN, Editor.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY'S REPORT.

The reports from the Branches show that in 1917 the advance made in the previous year was more than maintained. The majority of the Unions appear to have worked most enthusiastically, and with splendid results. The Strength of the Nation Movement, which was inaugurated with such vigour at the 1917 Convention, and carried on with such success by Mrs Cowie, gave a great stimulus to the Unions. Undoubtedly the tremendous amount of work done by members in connection with the demand for six o'clock closing of liquor bars, and the ultimate success of that petition were largely the result of the Strength of the Nation Movement. A very direct effect of this campaign was the accession of many new members to our ranks.

A large share of the energies of the Unions was devoted to patriotic work. This is a feature of all the reports. Some Branches took part in every patriotic effort to raise funds in their districts, and the amount of money raised has been very considerable. The special Union effort in this direction made during the year was in connection with the appeal from the Dominion Superintendent of Work Among Seamen for warm clothing and comforts for the mine-sweepers.

More than usual activity has been shown in educational work—chiefly through public meetings, and the distribution of literature. The year has provided unusual opportunities for both these departments of work. The Strength of the Nation Campaign, the demand for six o'clock closing, the recommendations of the Efficiency Board with regard to the liquor trade, and the introduction into Parliament of a Social Hygiene Bill have all meant