

SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTERS.

DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND ARBITRATION.

Those who were present at the Convention at Timaru will probably remember that one of the points emphasised by our President was that resolutions which had been passed by Convention should be discussed by the different Unions, with a view to doing what they can to carry them into effect. It is with this in mind that I call the attention of our Unions to the following resolution, which was passed this year:—"A recommendation having been made by the National Efficiency Board that weekly lessons should be given in all the public schools on the history of the Empire and our duty to it, with a view to inculcating in the minds of the children a patriotic and national spirit, this Convention of the W.C.T.U. would respectfully suggest to the Minister of Education that such lessons should have a wider, international bearing, cultivating a sense of their responsibilities and an appreciation of their privileges, not only as citizens of the Empire, but as members of that wider community of which every nation is one small part." As will be seen, the main idea of this resolution is the replacing of the purely national feeling by the wider sense of internationalism—the recognition of the fact that no nation exists solely for itself, but that in this, as in every other case, the part must ever be inseparable from and subservient to the whole. That is a fundamental principle in the evolution of the race; all through we see gradual expansion of interests and relationships; the individual interest merging into that of the family, the family into the community, the community into the nation, and as the next step, the national into the international. This is the point we have now reached, any one who makes even a superficial study of the suggestions towards the reconstruction of society put forward by the majority of the leaders of public opinion at the present time, cannot fail to notice how these are all based upon the international ideal in one form or another; one and all recognising that this ideal is the only one that can ensure future peace and prosperity to the world.

The second idea embodied in the resolution is that this reconstruction will rest largely with our children; they will be the builders of the future civilisation, and the nature of the

building will depend mainly upon the direction which is now being given to their thoughts and aspirations. If the international ideal is to be the basis of the society that is to be, then that ideal must be implanted now in the minds of those who will have the making of that society. A very useful little contribution towards the study of this ideal was published in the year preceding the outbreak of the present war, under the title "How the Nations Help One Another." It shows how nations, like individuals, are dependent upon each other for the production of the necessities of life—how this runs through all aspects of life, physical, mental, moral and spiritual, being based upon the essential unity of all men as children of one Father. It further points out how the international idea enters into all social matters, regulating the postal system, finance, commerce, etc., all of which are arranged by mutual agreement between the nations concerned; and how all these things depend upon peaceful relationship, and are disturbed, and may be eventually destroyed by a state of war.

This little book expresses briefly, but clearly, and in a form comprehensible to the child-mind, the principles upon which international relationships should be based, and is therefore eminently suitable for use in schools, and by all who are engaged in the education of the young. For this reason, I commend it to the attention of our Unions, and would suggest that by bringing it to the notice of the schools in their districts, they would be carrying out the spirit of the resolution I have quoted, and helping on the growth of the international ideal amongst us.

In these dark days of strife our main hope for the future lies in the possibility of so training our children in principles of love that a life of love may be the result, making impossible any return to the present methods adopted for the establishment of satisfactory international relationships. There came into my hands some little time ago the following, taken from the "Signs of the Times" for January 22nd, 1917:—"All school teachers in Hungary have received the following notice: 'The Royal Hungarian Minister for Education requests all teachers to pay special attention, in the coming term, to the respect and honour due to our enemies; that no hatred or contempt should enter the minds of the children against the brave men with whom their fathers are in deadly

combat; and that hate or contempt is not to be cultivated in the youthful mind.'" If this example could be universally followed, might, it not help to build up a moral force which would prove far more powerful and effective in the establishment and preservation of peaceful relations than any that have yet been tried?

I may add that I have received from America a limited number of pamphlets published by the Department of Good Citizenship and Peace and Arbitration, and shall be glad to send specimen copies to any Union desiring them, with a view to ordering a larger supply. It is my intention to send a further order shortly, and I shall be glad to include anything which may be required.

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N.Z. Superintendent.

MORAL AND SOCIAL HYGIENE.

The urgent necessity of immediately beginning sex education on right lines is my reason for drawing attention to two works—one for parents, the other for those who desire to study the question more thoroughly. "Education for Life" is a paper by Edith Howes read before the Social Hygiene Society, Christchurch. This paper gives an historical explanation of what has been called the conspiracy of silence, indicates the changing ideals that accompany the evolution of human nature, the injury to parent and child until that conspiracy is broken; then, in the way with which we are familiar in Edith Howes' well-known books, the manner of teaching the facts of life is indicated in a way that all may understand.

"The Teaching of Sex Hygiene" is a reprint of three public lectures given in Sydney, and also of a conference arranged by the Workers' Educational Association. This Conference was attended by representatives of social and philanthropic movements, of the various churches, of educationists from the Kindergarten to the University, of most of the trades, of doctors, nurses, W.E.A. students, and of the Women's Societies. Among the subjects dealt with are:

1. "The Massacre of the Innocents" (Professor Welsh).
2. "Teaching of Sex Hygiene to Children and Teachers" (G. Savill Willis).
3. "Preventive Training for Young Children in Relation to Sex Control" (Zoe Benjamin).