

## NEW ZEALAND WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

(Incorporated)

Organised 1885

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"For God, and Home, and Humanity"

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## Official Organ:

"THE WHITE RIBBON"

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should be in the hands of the Editor by the  
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the Business Manager, to whom all payments  
for Advertisements, Beacons, Y.P. Supple-  
ments and subscriptions must be made.

## The White Ribbon.

"For God, and Home, and Humanity"

WELLINGTON, NOVEMBER 1, 1947.

## ADDRESS

GIVEN BY MRS. F. W. MOUNTJOY  
AT AUCKLAND DISTRICT  
CONVENTION

Emphases these days on the attainment of health, cults of various sorts teaching how to live to be fit, physical culture, diet, better conditions for workers, sport, etc., all stress the need for healthy living. Governments as well as private people are inculcating the art of health. National Fitness Councils have trained officers, and in every school more stress is on the physical fitness than was the case a generation or two ago; yet some health-destroying habits are left severely alone. The same Governments that frame laws to protect the health of babies, shop assistants, factory workers, miners, etc., allow vast fortunes to be made from the manufacture and sale of intoxicants. Children are encouraged at school to form health-giving habits, and at the same time advertisements appear in public places drawing their attention to and inducing them to believe that alcoholic drinks are strengthening and nourishing, and will be good for them when they are older.

This is an extraordinary state of affairs.

The subject of the effect of alcohol on the human body is one of absorbing in-

terest, and would appeal to children because it relates the science they learn at school, whether physiology, chemistry, biology, or hygiene, to practical daily living.

America is realising the great need for education among her young people. "During the past year in South Dakota a two weeks' credit course in narcotics education was given to teachers in training, in three colleges. All teachers in the rural schools of 23 counties were reached with from one to four demonstrations and lessons on alcohol. Demonstrations were given to 8,500 town school children and their teachers. Two colleges have already asked for the course in 1947. The teachers in at least ten additional counties are being reached this month."

The care we give our children is the measure of our civilization. The standards we set before our children largely decide their future. We would have security for them, but security through knowledge. Those of our members who have been through the L.T.L. and the "Y's" will remember the experiments of the action of alcohol on bread, brains, growing plants, etc. They have been fortified by knowledge and truth. If we could only get this subject of the evil effects of beverage alcohol on to the school curriculum it would go a long way to defeating the liquor traffic.

Some of our organisers have managed, through the courtesy of headmasters, to gain entry into some of the schools, and the children show keen interest. However, unless the lessons are given regularly, they are often forgotten.

The cinema plays an important part in the life of the community today. Experiments show that a very large proportion of our children attend picture shows, many at least once a week. It is reasonable to assume that the same applies to adolescents, whose plastic minds are so receptive to the false values of the cinema which aims at entertainment alone, but the ultimate result of which is mass impression and incidental education. Drinking in the home is made to appear attractive and regarded as a normal social habit. But perhaps that which has been degraded most is the sanctity of marriage. Nearly always drinking is at the back of this latter degradation. One learns most quickly through the eyes and familiarity with these things creates a desire to be a "big man" or a "glamorous woman." The adolescent mind is a very receptive mind. So many of the crimes dealt with in our law courts are attributed to what was first learned

at the pictures. Films "Recommended by Censor for Adults" and those "Approved for Universal Exhibition" are still very often shown on the same programme. If children were prohibited from attending unless the whole programme were advertised as "Suitable for Universal Exhibition," and if, because all patrons do not read the advertisements, theatres were compelled to hang a sign or show a particular coloured light over their entrance proclaiming this, much harm to those of tender years might be avoided. The children's programme shown on a Saturday morning is a step forward, but a great deal more needs to be done.

The broadcasting of "mystery thrillers" over the radio is another thing that has a decided bearing on the health of children. I have had rings over the 'phone repeatedly asking if something could not be done to stop this sort of thing. Children want to wait up to listen in, with the result that their nerves are affected and they cannot get the refreshing sleep that is so necessary for a growing child. The reply received to protests, is that "a parent can tune in to a different station." That does not solve the problem in a great many homes. Mr. Algie drew the attention of the House of Representatives to the fact that the National Broadcasting Corporation of the United States and 160 of its affiliates, had agreed that as from January next they would not broadcast any series of detective, crime or mystery programmes before 9.30 p.m. Mr. Algie gave notice that he would ask the Minister of Broadcasting—Mr. Jones—what his views were with regard to the adoption of a similar course by the National Broadcasting Service in this Dominion. I am sure we wish him success in his efforts on behalf of the children.

From a lecture delivered by Dr. Fairlie, M.D., Ch.B., O.P.H., at the Royal Society of Arts, London, on April 10, 1946—Dr. Fairlie was Divisional Surgeon, Metropolitan Police (1913-1936), I have culled the following:

"In 12 years, nearly 80,000 persons were killed on the roads of England, and nearly 2,500,000 injured. In the 26 years up to the end of 1945 no less than 33,000 children under the age of 15 were killed and nearly 1,000,000 injured."

Such figures bring to light a state of affairs which has been truly described as "monstrous, wrong and appalling." It is not consistent with our present-day civilisation, to which so many of us