

CONVENTION MOMENTS



Miss M. B. Lovell-Smith,
Retiring Dominion Treasurer.

As at all Conventions, some happenings stand out from the rest in our memories. Little things, some of them; big, important happenings, sometimes; sometimes just little cameos, clear-cut on the plain background. Of these, at our 1948 Convention, the retiring from her position of Dominion Treasurer, held for 21 years, of Miss M. B. Lovell-Smith, is a very memorable one. Mrs. Hiatt's tribute to the work and influence of this dear friend and comrade ran thus:—

Wellington,
March 8, 1948.

It is with deep regret that we say farewell to Miss M. B. Lovell-Smith as our New Zealand Treasurer. For 21 years she has served the New Zealand Union with great fidelity and with painstaking accuracy. Her warm, genial personality has been a source of cheer to her fellow officers and to the whole membership.

Not only is she a wizard at book-keeping but in all of the problems which confront the Officers of such a large and important organisation as the W.C.T.U., her unfailing goodwill and her thoughtful consideration have helped her fellow members on many occasions to come to a right decision.

It is a joy to know that we are not farewelling her from the Union, but desire her to accept Life Membership.

A little love-gift, and a spray of flowers were presented as tokens of the deep, affectionate esteem in which Miss Lovell-Smith is held. "For she's an excellent lady" was sung, and three cheers rang out. The response was characteristic; just a few words smilingly and naturally spoken, with the little something which has always made us feel and know that here was one who pretended nothing but who knew so much about human life and understood so well the things that puzzle and upset. Calm and serene always, but warm and genial too, she will be very greatly missed. But a little rest and freedom from responsibility are due to her, and so we let her

go from arduous duty and waved her our good wishes as she went.

Another little picture stands out with quite delightful charm. When it was known that the dear little child "Mary," whose truly wonderful patience and self-control had been the admiration of everyone for so many days was to be given a doll, there was not a woman in the hall who was not delighted. The years dropped away, and everyone became a child again and felt the ecstasy, long forgotten, when the little girl took the doll into her own keeping. A glow seemed to shine over everything that morning, and Mary's happiness was good to see. Mary's mother's words of thanks were beautifully spoken and all felt that the happy thought thus made action had been really inspired.

One other must be mentioned. This was the period of silent prayer that followed the story of the brave woman in England, fighting a lone battle against the forces of evil in her town. That day she was to plead the cause of temperance in a Court of Law, opposing those who wished the closing hours to be 10.30 p.m. instead of 10 p.m. Very fervent and sincere were the unspoken prayers on her behalf, and at the mercy-seat, the distance across the world was bridged.

Many other bright lights shine out in memory, but they can only be kept there, unless delegates in their Reports can make them real again.

MISS C. HENDERSON, B.A.

Perhaps one of the most poignant moments of Convention was that in which the announcement of Miss Henderson's resignation from the position of Legal and Parliamentary Superintendent was made. It was as though a prop had been removed from a building; and a risk of collapse had suddenly been recognised. Her 36 years of service in this highly important department has meant so much to our work; and the feeling of security given by her great familiarity with this side of it has been like a safety zone in the midst of our many activities. "Miss Henderson says . . ." is one of the commonest phrases on our lips when matters pertaining to this department are being considered. And now, the time has come for her to lay down this work. Small wonder that we feel lost and bewildered. Mrs. Hiatt moves that a Minute of Appreciation be recorded in these terms:

"Wellington.

"It is with a sense of great loss that we accept Miss C. Henderson's retirement from the Superintendency of the Legal and Parliamentary Department of the N.Z.W.C.T.U. For 23 years Miss Henderson gave outstanding service as N.Z. Corresponding Secretary and she combined with that the Legal and Parliamentary Department. She continued as Superintendent of the latter for a further 13 years. 36 years as

N.Z. Officer is proof of her ability. Her sound judgment, her quick perception and her straightforward conclusions were a source of strength to her fellow officers. At Conventions her decisions gave solidity to the work undertaken.

"Miss Henderson never spared herself when Union business required her time and energy. She gladly sacrificed time and strength to promote and extend the work of the W.C.T.U. She was full of encouragement to new and timid members. Because of her keen brain, her sound commonsense and her steadfast faith in God, she made a wonderful contribution to the stability and good standing of the N.Z.W.C.T.U. We wish for our friend and co-worker the fulfilment of the promise—'In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.'"

And the motion is passed. Then another motion is proposed, seconded, and carried with great enthusiasm: "That Miss Henderson be made a Life Member of the N.Z.W.C.T.U."

And so the moment passes. But the personality, the edifice of carefully selected material built up through the years, and the self-effacing earnestness on behalf of the cause of righteousness will remain in the hearts and memories of all who have been privileged to work with her through the years. And, her work will remain. It is imperishable!

SPECIAL REPORT

MRS. HIETT AT TIMARU,

MARCH 18

At a special meeting of the Timaru Union, to which other women's organisations had been invited along with Youth Workers, the speaker was Mrs. Hiatt, who was on her way home after Dominion Convention. Tracing the growth of the W.C.T.U. from 1885, when it was first started in New Zealand, she emphasised the various reforms it had successfully achieved. The clause in the Lord's Prayer, "Deliver us from evil," is what we are working for when we work for Abolition. The sad experience of many falling away from God is through drink. We need the co-operation of the Churches. God needs us as co-workers. What a challenge to us! The chief work of our organisation was to bring about an end to the liquor traffic; and this ideal could be accomplished if mothers trained their children to understand the destructive powers of alcoholic liquor. If the rationing of food can be worked successfully so can the prohibition of drink. We do not ask for Moderation or State Control, but the complete abolition of alcohol, and we must continue to fight till we have gained complete victory.