

NEW ZEALAND WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

(Incorporated)

Organised 1885

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"Fairlight," Tauranga.All matter for publication, reports, etc.,
should be in the hands of the Editor by the
15th of the month.**Business Manager:**Mrs. J. H. GRIGG,
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Telephone 26-903.All Union advertisements must be sent to
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, OCTOBER 1, 1948.

CONVENTIONS—ARE THEY WORTH WHILE?

At the time of writing, the Convention season is just getting into its swing. Auckland has begun, South Auckland is on its heels, and by the time this is in the hands of our readers, many of them will be over for this year.

As part of our regular programme, they are anticipated with considerable eagerness for many reasons. The pleasure of reunion with so many who are of our own mind is always great, and the common aims of those who assemble produce a deep and real harmony of intercourse which is very precious. Then there is, of course, the expectation of a spiritual uplift, and it is not often that this is absent from Convention. Strength and encouragement are the results of this and we are right to hope for all that it can give. Devotional Periods stand out in the memory often when business sessions have become hazy, and they are a very important part of Conventions.

In regard to our W.C.T.U. life, the District Convention has a definite function to carry out. It is a kind of half-way house in the year when we must glance back to see how, and how far, we have travelled; and also a girding up of our loins for the things that still remain for us to do. The compiling of Departmental Reports for

some, of Union Reports for others, and of Financial Reports for Treasurers, is an interesting business. There is nothing like it for bringing home to one the needs of the work, the large amount of work accomplished and the weaknesses of our half-year's activities. For the last, it is always some consolation that it is not too late to make up for some of the deficiencies which seem so glaring in the light of the searching questionnaires from Departmental Superintendents. And so we assess our resources, see what can be done, and if possible, do it, and get off to Convention wishing we had a little more time to put things in order.

At Convention, there is much pleasure in hearing of the many different ways adopted for carrying out our tasks. The Union Reports are very valuable in giving this information and many a good piece of work has become general through being mentioned thus. But, from every Convention held, it would seem to be a good thing if at least one outstanding idea should be carried away by the delegates to be translated into action in their Unions later. There may be several such; but too often the general impression remaining is confused, partly because of insufficient time being available for all that is to be done, and, more often, because of a lack of discrimination as to the relative importance of matters on the Agenda. There should be a concentration on those things which make for our success in the actual prosecution of our principal aims. Methods of working, and the selection of them, are to be considered; and the circumstances of each Union, with the needs of its particular district, call for vision and initiative. Union difficulties in carrying out such work as may be recommended are sometimes very real, and it is at Convention that help should be forthcoming for those in specially handicapped places. And this may be one of the most important things to be done, even though it may seem to be inconsiderable.

The constructive element in the District Convention should be prominent. The small Unions need the suggestions and the widened outlook that can be given by the larger ones of the towns and cities, though it can never be said that the latter have a monopoly of originality and initiative. Country Unions can give lessons to town ones quite often; but the easier contact with the people who are "in" work such as ours, and the more

frequent opportunities of meeting in cities, give an advantage which can be shared through the Convention avenue.

Then there is the attitude of the Delegate to the task given her by her Union when they appoint her to represent them. It is most necessary for her to understand that, pleased as her Union may be to make it possible for her to attend Convention, they have every right to expect a proper return. She should be very sure that she is prepared to bring back as full a report of the actual doings of the Convention as she possibly can. This does not mean that every word spoken is to be recounted, or even that every piece of business done is to be told; but it does mean that everything which involves the Union, and the members, should be conscientiously passed on to them. Memory is not to be trusted for the proper compilation of a Delegate's report. She should remember Frances Willard's slogan: "At the point of the pencil," and WRITE, WRITE, WRITE what she needs to take back. It soon becomes easy, but practice is sometimes needed.

And, when you go to Convention, do spare a thought for your District Officers. In a way, theirs may be a lonely task. Their work is done under difficulties generally. All the difficulties of Unions are theirs also. If the Secretary of a Union is ill, that makes difficulty for the District Secretary, and her work depends very largely on the way in which you do yours. So back them up all you can and try to feel that they need our help and sympathetic understanding in their work for us and our Unions.

TEMPERANCE FACTS

Given at Brooklyn: "The great cause of social crime is drink: the greatest cause of poverty is drink. When I hear of a family broken up, I ask the cause—drink. When I visit the prisons and ask why the inmates are there, the answer is drink. Then I ask myself in perfect wonderment, 'Why do not men put a stop to this evil?'"—Archbishop Ireland.

Given at Papanui: "Even small quantities of alcohol impair the efficiency of factory workers by one-seventh of their output."—Philip Snowden.