

past President of the National Council. No Governor-General's wife ever took a keener interest in our philanthropies than she did. She is still interested. The Victorian Order of Nurses alone entitles her to rank among our pioneers in social betterment. Her words at the Convention were words of wisdom.

Among such a plethora of vital subjects let us give a high place to the talk on mental degeneracy introduced on the programme by Prof. Carrie Derick, of McGill University. Prof. Derick is a woman with a purpose. She is a scholar, a scientist and a social worker. Her studies in plants are real contributions to science. She has found time for much outside of science; has carried the scientific quest for truth into the part of the world most needing it—and what she says as recording secretary of the National Council on heredity and mental defects is important for every woman and man to remember.

There is not a single case on record showing that feeble-mindedness arises from abnormal environment. It is hereditary. It is incurable. It is accompanied by crime, alcoholism and prostitution, and the only way it can be arrested is by compulsory institutional care, for the feeble-minded multiply far more rapidly than the normal.

THANKS to the directness of the scientific method this discussion did not stop with a few pathetic platitudes and little shrugs of concern in the audience. It was no mere occasion for lorgnettes and smelling salts when other speakers—notably Mrs. Adam Shortt, of Ottawa, wife of the Civil Service Commissioner, and Prof. Ritchie England, of Montreal—plunged without hesitation into the question which only the last year or two has been considered a fit matter for open discussion among the

sexes. We quote from the open report of the Manitoba Free Press on this:

To summarize—the practical measures debated in this parliament of women were:

Granting of health certificates to applicants for marriage licenses as a safeguard against venereal diseases—on the principle that no man marrieth to himself alone;

Government bureaus for vocational training, operating by Provinces;

Removal of duties on food stuffs. This resolution came nearly going through without challenge till given the senty-go by Prof. Dr. Ritchie England, of Montreal, who cautioned going slow.

Conservation of food and of child life—a third plank in the Council's platform; including prohibition of veal and lamb, also the use of grains for the manufacture of alcoholic beverages. Considerable light was reflected back on this from subsequent figures quoted from Royal Commission findings by Mrs. Adam Shortt, of Ottawa, who stated that in four years exports of Canadian eggs had increased from 800,000 to 5,000,000 dozen; also that four-fifths of the cheese made in Canada is export cheese. On this head Mrs. A. A. Perry, of Winnipeg, objected that the reason for high-price eggs is not the export demand, but the open months of cold storage plants; the hens were absolutely normal in production, against an abnormal demand of the cold-storage reservoir packing eggs away for high prices next winter. This seemed to be hitting a large nail on the head.

All in a lot, several important measures were dumped on the Congress by Mrs. Adam Shortt, supported and opposed by Prof. Derick, Mrs. L. A. Ham-

ilton of Toronto, Mrs. E. M. Murray of Halifax, Mrs. John Dick, Mrs. A. A. Perry and Mrs. R. F. McWilliams of Winnipeg. The first of these was:

Nationalization of coal fields. Women know a little more about where fuel goes to than men whose main business is to pay for it. We are not informed as to whether Mrs. Shortt would extend the nationalization to all countries. The second was—a National Controllorship of Food. The Council lent considerable support to the dictatorship idea. In a recent issue of the Courier we outlined what this would involve.

OTHER items in this resolution of conservation were:

Public Ownership of Cold Storage Plants—on the supposition that the Government will regulate the difference between the prices at which food goes into and the price at which it comes out of storage to the consumer;

Municipally Operated Coal and Wood Yards; on the theory that a municipality can prevent hoarding, undue consumption, and waste, as well as manage to keep down profits in handling;

Government supervision of the milling industries to regulate as far as possible the price of flour.

One of the most inspiring addresses during the Congress was that of Mrs. Canon Plumptre, of Toronto, on "Our New Outlook," delivered to 400 members of the Women's Canadian Clubs; a big study of woman's work and her position in the modern world.

At the closing session of the Congress Mrs. Torrington was unanimously re-elected President on the withdrawal of her only opponent, Mrs. W. E. Sanford, of Hamilton.

CONSIDER THE FARMER'S WIFE

WE hear a great deal about the women who are engaged in making the munitions of death, but little of the others, that is the farm women. These latter are unhonoured and unsung. Neither do their pictures decorate the pages of magazines nor newspapers, yet if their efforts should cease, the food shortage would be even greater than it is.

All pinching economy goes straight to the woman. Judging from the prices of butter and eggs you would naturally expect the farm woman's purse to be bulging with money. It is not. In fact, it could hardly be leaner. We read a great deal about the farm problem, but the trouble is, nearly all such writing is done by outsiders, who consequently lack an intimate understanding of the situation. Those who are in the thick of the fight, striving to produce food in spite of adverse conditions, have neither time nor ability to supply the public with inside information by writing.

The public press would lead us to believe that the crying need of the farmer is for help. This may be true of the man with many acres and a fat bank account, but there's no fear of him. He'll get all the help he has a mind to pay for. There is another class of farmers who have a still more difficult problem to solve, that is the renter class, and the ones who are struggling under a mortgage. Their vital problem is to get money with which to buy seeds, and feed to tide them along till after harvest. Hired help doesn't enter into their plans at all, for the simple reason that no money is in sight for wages. In fact, to board a man would severely tax the resources of many a farmer's wife. Under these conditions the farm woman has imperative work cut out for her. A few cases typify the many.

A young farmer had bought a 50-acre farm in 1915. As the season of 1916 advanced, it became plain that the crop wouldn't be sufficient to feed the live stock, with almost nothing to sell for cash. Yet cash must be gotten from some source to meet taxes and interest on the mortgage, besides other demands which would be cropping up. What was to be done?

"Get off the farm, and come to the city," advised a city friend, "you can get \$6 a day with your team, instead of working here for nothing."

The offer looked tempting. To follow the lure of big wages and let the farm lie idle, seemed a wise business proposition to the man, but the woman

By ELIZABETH POLLARD

would have none of it. She realized that there might be a time ahead, when money would be more plentiful than food. The result was, the wife—a girl little more than out of her teens—agreed to stay alone on the farm with her two babies and keep things going while her husband went to the city to earn the needed money. So one September morning, before day break, she saw her husband drive out of the yard, and stood listening while the wagon went creaking down the dark road cityward, then turned to face her responsibility. Only a woman can fully understand her feelings, the fear of sickness or mishap, while burdened with two helpless little ones. But whenever she felt her heart weakening, she used to think how safe she was, compared to the women in war-swept Europe. This young woman fed pigs, calves, poultry, and milked cows, besides saving the late crop, even getting in a field of wheat. She bravely held down the job till one happy night when the wagon came creaking back into the yard, well laden with needed supplies.

Mainly through the pluck of a woman that farm is now producing the munitions of life, instead of lying idle.

Then there is the case of a couple no longer young. They had been dairying on a 50-acre farm, depending on day help. But making the munitions of death is the more profitable field, so the hired man hired him to the city, leaving his employer in the lurch. It was decided to go into beef-raising, as requiring less labour than any other kind of farming. The woman was delighted. After years of slavish dairy work she would take a year off, and entertain some long-wished for visitors. She began by making her house pretty, in anticipation of the pleasure in store.

"I wouldn't make the change if I could get help," remarked the man one day, "prospects are none too bright, and food shortage is a terrible thing. Still, first-class help is beyond us, and poor help is of little use."

At first the woman was unresponsive. Gradually, however, her viewpoint began to change. "This is no time for ease and pleasure," she finally decided.

Instead of taking a year off, the woman decided to help in the field. Then they began rearranging their plans. The woman drew the blinds and closed her pretty rooms for the summer, all but one bed-

room, which was entered through a window from the back porch. To save housework, they cooked and ate on the back porch, and spent what little leisure they had on the front one. Instead of keeping beef cattle, from which no returns could be expected for two or three years, they built a silo, and added to the dairy herd, so as to produce tons of cheese, and make the production of hogs possible.

Many struggling farmers were hard hit by the partial crop failure of 1916. When winter came, one farmer on a 150-acre farm could see no way out of the difficulty but to let his eldest son go to the city to earn the money which the farm failed to yield. As this was also a dairy farm, the women had to milk and help with other chores. The original plan had been for the young man to return in time for spring seeding. But meantime, prices for feed and seeds had reached famine proportions and the money shortage was still present.

"There's no use talking," asserted the mother, "the only thing we can do is to cut down our housework to the limit, so as to help put in the crop. Jimmy must keep on at his work till harvest, or there'll be none for us."

Aside from the big wages, there is a certain glamour and romance about the munition factory that is attractive to young womanhood. None of these elements are present to stimulate the efforts of the country woman. The work is hard, sordid, and little appreciated, yet when the true woman thinks of the starving millions in Europe, and realizes that there might come a time when our own lads in the trenches, and their comrades, our gallant allies may lack cheese, bacon, or other food, she sets a swifter pace for herself to avert such a calamity.

The question is often asked, what can women do to save man's time on the farm? On no account should a woman be permitted to do heavy lifting, loading, pitching, nor anything beyond her strength, lest the delicate organs of her makeup be injured. In the first rush of spring seeding, she can milk, feed pigs, cows, and calves, thus leaving the men free to get an early start in the field. Only an exceptionally strong woman can plow, but any one capable of driving a team can disc, harrow, or roll, even run the seed drill.

A woman can run the mower, rake, and reaper, besides doing all kinds of errands. Many a farmer would hesitate to exchange the services of a capable daughter or wife for that of the ordinary man.