



Edited by THE COUNTESS OF ABERDEEN.

NOTES OF THE COUNCIL.

We are right glad to be able to report steady improvement on the part of Mrs. Willoughby Cummings, our secretary, although she is unable as yet to use the injured arm. We hope that ere long she will be quite in her usual health.

The ladies of Peterborough and of Brantford, Ont., both arranged for meetings of women, on the occasion of the recent visits of the Governor-General and the Countess of Aberdeen to these cities, with a view of hearing some account of the work of the National Council of Women. There was a large attendance in each case, and much interest was evinced, which may ultimately lead to the formation of local councils. At Lindsay, Ont., a meeting was also held in the Opera House in order to present Her Excellency with two addresses, and the subject of the Council was brought before the numerous ladies who were present, who expressed much sympathy with its objects.

We hope that our Local Councils will be able to commence this month the work of enquiring into the various subjects delegated to them by the National Council, such as the immigration of children, the reasons for the increase of insanity and what can be done to diminish this evil, how medical aid and nursing can be made more available for settlers in the lonely parts of Canada. We hope, too, to hear of the formation of many Home Reading Circles.

The accompanying account of the formation of a National Council of Women in New South Wales will be welcomed with much pleasure by our members:

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF N. S. W.

On Friday, June 20th, a public meeting was held in the Town Hall, Sydney, to consider the formation of the National Council of Women of New South Wales. The meeting was largely attended, and representatives of many societies and committees were present. Lady Hampden took the chair. She expressed her interest in the movement, but said that like many others she wished to hear more concerning the idea of the National Council, and would ask Miss M. Windeyer to explain the object of the meeting.

Miss M. Windeyer said that as the meeting had assembled to consider the formation of the National Council of New South Wales, it would be of interest to hear of the time and place where the first National Council of Women was formed. In March, 1888, there assembled at Washington an International Convention of Women, at which the fifty-three different organizations were represented by delegates from England, France, Norway, Denmark, Finland, India, Canada, and the United States. Mrs. May Wright Sewall brought forward a plan for the formation of two permanent organizations - one, the National Council of Women of the United States, the other, the International Council of Women, the former to be composed of organizations, associations, and societies of women, the work of which is of national character or of national value, the latter, namely, the International Council of Women, to be composed of representatives of National Councils of Women. For work to be of national character would imply that it

is organized in such a way and so widely extended that it enters into the life of the nation; for work to be of national value would also imply that the work is of value to the life of the nation, though perhaps it may not have largely entered into the life of the nation.

On lines similar to those laid down by the International Council of Women at Washington in 1888, National Councils of Women have been formed in Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, New Zealand, and the United States. In considering the formation of a National Council of Women it must be remembered that whole organizations would have membership in the Council, those who would vote in meetings of the Council would be delegates from the entire body to which they belong, chosen to represent the principle for which their special organization exists, but any individual woman member of any organization federating in the National Council would be eligible to take part in the proceedings of the Council, though she may not vote.

The words of one speaker at the first meeting of the International Council express the opinion of many - congresses stimulate the desire to do better; they instruct by exchange of ideas; they throw light on points hitherto obscure.

The principle of the Council may be rendered available for local use through the federation of the societies in any community in a local council of women, which would do for the district what it is hoped the National Council will do for the country at large, that is give to every cause represented by a district society the increased moral force which would result through the federation of that society with others.

All organizations would reap the same advantage from membership in the National Council that individuals reap from membership in any organization, and the Council would tend to establish solidarity of sentiment and purpose among women, now working in every direction in the hope that they may leave the world a little better than they found it.

The formation of a National Council of Women would increase the interest of individual women in associated work. To see the value and importance of organization we need only turn to the examples of Lord Shaftesbury and Baroness Burdett Coutts. Their philanthropic endeavors have resulted in such organizations as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, they have not merely relieved individual cases of suffering, but they have put in motion machinery which will work with an incalculable power for good. To combine with others for noble ends must increase our efficiency and teach us "the value of organized as against isolated efforts for human betterment."

"While friendship is a love between individuals, philanthropy is the love of the race - the stooping of the higher down to the lower, the stretching out of the hand and opening of the heart to all less fortunate than ourselves," and of what great advantage it would be that each group of women which exists for some philanthropic object should have the sympathy and moral support of others whose methods may be different, but who are all working to the same end - the uplifting of the race.

From the National Council many would learn that the work of those that come after them will be lessened if generous support be given to those societies which make for the moral development of children, which show them their duty towards animals, which teach them the value of temperance, which lead them to a habit of self-denial in order that they may minister to others less fortunate than themselves. Much overlapping in work would be prevented if repre-

sentatives of different organizations and committees met in conference at stated periods. The meetings of the Council would secure for each organization having membership in it a wider hearing and a larger interest on the part of the public than it could command alone. The annual reports of many of our charities, prepared as they are with much patient care, do not reach many persons other than those who are known to be supporters of this or that movement, but if the information contained in these reports were more widely known, many charities would find supporters among those who, when their sympathies were evoked, would find it in their power to assist in the work of alleviation or cure.

The National Council would serve as a means of prosecuting any work of common interest, it would put the wisdom and experience of each at the service all, it would unite all societies of women, that with a mighty aggregate of power they might move in directions upon which all could agree.

From the formation of the Council the sense of public and private responsibility which induces women to join associations and societies, such as are represented here to-day, would grow in an increased degree, and their sympathies quickened and impulses stirred by a knowledge of the good work that others are doing, the energy of women social workers would be intensified.

In the absence of Lady Renwick, who was prevented by illness from attending the meeting, Miss Macdonald moved the first resolution, - "That a National Council of Women of New South Wales be now formed," and spoke as follows. The national characteristics of Australia may probably in such a scheme alter and modify in detail the arrangements of the American original, but there can be few Australian women concerned, as most of us are in one or more societies for helping their neighbors, who would not be glad to see a similar Council established and at work among us. No one who has attempted work outside her own home, whether it be social, charitable, or political, can fail to be struck with two apparently contradictory facts - on the one hand that everything depends on individual effort and influence, on the other, by the extreme helplessness of the individual when alone or when in unsuitable surroundings. The whole problem indeed of social organization lies here, to arrange that each individual shall have fullest opportunity and inducement to put forth his personal effort, while at the same time preventing independence becoming isolation or ending in failure, or the effort being at the expense and to the detriment of the weaker neighbor. The more or less conscious attempt to solve this problem has called into existence the numberless societies, clubs, and associations of every shade of purpose which abound in every country. But in the very multiplication of societies there is a certain danger. As the number of societies increases the work to be done by any one is continually and rightly more and more restricted to a special sphere, and the more devoted the workers the more tendency there is that their horizon of interest and even sympathy grows limited. Most of us, it may be, belong to several societies at once, but there is always one whose claims are paramount. The formation of such a National Council as is advocated to-day would do away with this possible narrowness, even in the case of those whose time, or principles, or inclination confined them to a special interest. At the meetings of the Council a view would be given of each and every Society represented on it. The women to whom education and culture seem the first needs of humanity might receive much subject for thought from the consideration of work to be done in supplying the primary necessities of food and clothing to the helpless; while those again to whom the thought of feeding the hungry and clothing the naked was all-absorbing might meet for mutual instruction with the workers for political and economic ends.

But a National Council of Women will do more than this. All these things might be accomplished by the conventions of women workers of which we hear so much in England. But the National Council will be in fact a permanent body of advice and guidance in all that pertains to woman's work. The constant change of members, by election of delegates and retirement of Vice-Presidents would ensure that there would be no stagnation of its thought and counsels. And everyone who considers for a moment the labor, the thought, the experience, the faith and patience that has gone into work done by women, and women's societies in this colony, must feel stirred by the possibilities that lie before a Council formed by the heads and representatives of them all.

The motion was seconded by Miss Edwards, and carried.

Mrs. D. E. Armitage, secretary of the Typewriters' Association, moved the second resolution,