



CONDUCTED BY THE COUNTESS OF ABERDEEN, PRESIDENT.

NOTES OF THE COUNCIL.

All members of the National Council will deeply regret the bicycle accident which disabled their ever-earnest secretary, Mrs. Willoughby Cummings. On her way to attend a meeting her wheel got somehow caught in the rails as she was crossing the track in front of a wagon. She was thrown to the ground with much violence, and but narrowly escaped being trampled on by the horses in the wagon. Mercifully, however, the driver was alert, and was able to pull up in time to save Mrs. Cummings from being run over. Even as it was, she was so much bruised and shaken by the fall and her left arm was so much hurt, that she had to resign herself to her physician's care, and was laid up for several days. Her presence was much missed at the Toronto meeting of the Local Council on September 9th, but her fellow-members could only feel thankful at the thought of how mercifully her life had been preserved for future usefulness.

Mrs. Dickson and her colleagues are much to be congratulated at the success of the public meeting and reception they organized during the Industrial Fair week.

The London Local Council followed their example, and we are glad to be able to give our readers a report of the public meeting held by them on Wednesday, the 16th, and which we hope will prove to be very helpful to the movement in that city. We are sure that Judge Elliot's remarks on that occasion will be specially remembered.

On the day following this meeting the London Council arranged for an evening reception in honor of their Excellencies the Governor-General and the Countess of Aberdeen, at the City Hall.

TORONTO LOCAL COUNCIL.

The Toronto Local Council was fortunate in being able to inaugurate the winter's work by a public gathering held on Thursday, September 10th, during the second week of the Industrial Fair. A most successful meeting was held in the Pavilion, and a large number of women visiting the city took advantage of the opportunity to listen to an address delivered by Her Excellency, the President of the National Council, and to gather further information concerning its aims and work.

The afternoon was fine, and the Pavilion presented a pretty sight, filled from floor to upper galleries with fair women in summer gowns of delicate tints, their faces turned interestedly toward the speakers. The platform was effectively decorated with tropical plants, while a bunch of glowing gladiolus upon a small central table, gave an artistic touch of color to the scene.

Upon the platform, in addition to their Excellencies, were Lady Thompson, His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, Hon. Geo. W. Ross, Archbishop Walsh, Rev. Principal Cavan, Mayor Fleming, Mrs. George Dickson, president of the Toronto Local Council; Mrs. Grant Macdonald, Mrs. Mary McDonnell, Mrs. Scales, Dr. Stowe Gullen, Miss Carty, Mrs. James L. Hughes, Miss Fitzgibbon, Mrs. S. G. Wood, Commissioner Eva Booth, and other ladies prominently associated

with the work of the Council, while a large number of members of affiliated societies occupied front seats in the body of the hall.

Her Excellency was met by the president and members of the Council at the conservatory entrance, and conducted to the platform. Two little girls in white trimmed with ribbons of the Council colors, attended her as pages. His Excellency, after attending a meeting of the Boys Brigade, arrived later.

The president of the Local Council, Mrs. George Dickson, opened the meeting by setting forth, in able and attractive speech, a sketch of the aims of the Local Council, its methods of work and achievements. She then called upon His Honor Lieutenant-Governor Kirkpatrick, who heartily greeted Her Excellency, and paid tribute to the work of the National Council. Mayor Fleming added his welcome to Her Excellency and words of approval for the Council aims, after which Lady Aberdeen gave the following address:

"I think it is scarcely necessary for me to say what a pleasure it is to come again and meet the members of the Toronto Local Council, and to remember, too, that Toronto was the birthplace of the National Council, and therefore that every member of that Council coming here always feels especially at home. But it is doubly pleasant to come when one receives such a welcome as has been conveyed to me to-day. I thank His Honor most sincerely for his many very kind words, and for his presence here to-day. I thank the Mayor, too, very much for his welcome to the city, and I assure both these gentlemen that we who belong to the Council are very grateful for such words of encouragement and cheer from those in public positions of trust.

"Of late years the air has been full of rumors of all the wonderful doings and writings and intentions of the New Woman, and when an organization was formed which avowedly had for its object the federation of all the various societies and institutions in Canada connected with women and children, it was not strange that those who did not look into the matter closely should conclude that this was but the preparation for a general domestic revolution, when all the most familiar customs of hearth and home would be swept away. Our Council was in fact identified in the minds of some with a tendency to revolt against home ties and duties, and the desire to be free from all restrictions which have hitherto hedged women's lives—and so it was a theory to beware of. We had no reason to be surprised at this. Rather have we reason to be surprised that the prejudice should have been so soon overcome, and that the great majority of those whose opinion is worth having should have been found to stand by us, and enter into our schemes, regarding even what has already been accomplished, and predicting for us a career of honorable service for God and humanity.

"When fears are expressed to us as to the influence the Council will have upon the women of the country, I think it would be well if we were to ascertain what sort of ideal those who express these fears have for women. We shall all agree that to be a home-maker in the real sense of the word should be the noblest ambition of every woman. But what do we mean by that? What is our ideal of a home? Do we find it in a carefully kept house, where all is dainty and neat, where every comfort is remembered, and where the children are well kept and dressed? All this is good, most excellent and needful, but it is not all, and it does not of itself make a home. Would not the word lodging-house and house-keeper fit better in such case than home and home-maker? What is that indefinable something that makes a home—that reveals itself in the books and the pictures, in the arrangement of the rooms, in the preparation for a guest, in the tones of the children, in the expression of husband and wife? We cannot describe it, but we recognize it at once when it is present, and no house can truly be a home without some measure of

it. And it is homes we want if the nation is to be strong and righteous, and able to take its place in fighting God's battles in the world. We do not need just houses where we can eat and sleep healthfully, but we want homes full of rest and peace and beauty and refreshment; full of power, therefore, to send out men and women inspired with the spirit and devotion to all that is true and beautiful to serve their day and generation.

"And what sort of women do we want, then, to make such homes? The most uneducated and untrained woman can doubtless make a home if her heart be full of love and understanding sympathy with the life about her. The most highly trained and educated woman may fail in the attempt if the divine fire be wanting. But at the same time let us remember at what odds the untrained woman works compared with her who is trained, all other things being equal. Think of the powers, physical, mental and spiritual, which have to be brought into play in the building up of a perfect home—such a home as most of us can call up to mind, such a home as we always carry about with us as a longed-for ideal to strive after.

"There must be practical knowledge first, and it must be gained somehow—either by training or through dearly-bought experience through failures—knowledge which we secure to the inmates of that house of all ages, those essentials of light and air and comfort and good food and healthful surroundings, which are the first requisite for all human life which is to attain its fullest development. But beyond and above this knowledge there must be knowledge of how to make the home pleasing to the eye—knowledge how to make common things and common life beautiful, self-control, power of organization, unselfishness, insight into character, and an ever-ready sympathy with all. If she is to be her husband's companion and helpmate, she must have sufficient knowledge to be able to enter into his interests, and if she is to be her children's guide and friend she must be able to enter with appreciation into their studies and pursuits and recreations, and be sufficiently in touch with the life of the world without to be able to counsel and guard and prepare and equip them for the conflict. (Applause.) Wherever she may be placed, there is a society on which she must be an influence for higher or lower ends, and those who pass through her house must have received some impulse towards the love of all that is lovely and true and of good report, or else be a little more disposed than before to be sceptical as to whether life is worth the living. All these qualities, then, and much more, does the home-maker require.

"Who is sufficient for these things? Who, indeed? And so we desire for this highest, holiest vocation every help, every training, every equipment that can possibly be provided, and the more that it is insisted that home is the woman's kingdom, the more do we claim that she needs the fullest possible preparation for the right occupation of her throne, and not only preparation, but opportunities for self-education, self-culture and development all through her life. These are the rights we claim, and we claim the duties which pertain to those rights, too.

"The National Council of Women of Canada has been formed, and has grown and worked as it has done because everywhere throughout the Dominion it has found women deeply sensible of the high responsibilities belonging to the women who are making the homes, and moulding the thought and shaping the future of this young country. They are conscious of their own unpreparedness, and of the many difficulties which lie before them in the fulfilment of their God-given task. They therefore seek to bind themselves together for mutual help, and strength and counsel, trying together to accomplish the work for themselves, their children, and the poor and helpless around them, which, single-handed, they could not attain. And not only here, but in other countries, in Switzerland, Great Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Finland, the United States, and New Zealand is the movement progressing. It may be but the day of small things with us as yet, but we have good reason for hope and for faith in our Council."

Lady Aberdeen went on to enumerate as some of the achievements of the Council, the introduction of manual education into Public Schools, the appointment of women on School Boards as trustees in two if not three Provinces, hospitals, ambulances, health talks, training schools for servants, home reading circles, the better care of women prisoners, the organization of charity and relief of distress. Steps are also being taken to inquire into the causes which prevent so many women from being what they intended to be in their homes, and the Council is pledged to discountenance excessive hours of work. Lady Aberdeen especially urged her hearers to be considerate by not shopping late and by distributing orders.

"And why," said Her Excellency, "do we believe that we shall prosper in our mission? It was a saying of the Italian patriot, Mazzini, that no movement could succeed which could not inspire the hearts of those who strive for it, with the ever-present consciousness of 'God wills it.' Members of the National Council of Women, can we not echo that cry? Yes, 'God wills it.' Let that be our watchword in all that we undertake, and let that be our strength. In our frailty and infirmity of purpose we may often err and often