



UNVEILING THE SOLDIERS' MONUMENT

JUST nineteen years ago the foundations of the society known as the National Council of Women of Canada were laid in Toronto by the Countess of Aberdeen at an assemblage composed largely of Toronto ladies. Probably at that time the founder scarcely realized what a factor her newly organized society would become in the lives of Canadian women, or that it would extend beyond a few central cities. Yet, at the recent celebration of the Council's inception by its nineteenth annual session held in the city of London, almost thirty councils, besides many affiliated societies were represented. The local councils of Toronto, Hamilton, Montreal, London, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Kingston, St. John, Halifax, West Algoma, Victoria and Vancouver Island, Vancouver City, Regina, Vernon, Brandon, Nelson, New Westminster, East Pictou, Lindsay, Ingersoll, Edmonton and Strathcona, Brantford, Renfrew, Walkerville, Chapleau, Sudbury, Truro, and Sydney, now exist, and such praiseworthy societies as the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, Victorian Order of Nurses, Women's Art Association, Canadian Women's Press Club, Aberdeen Association, and the women's branch, Independent Order of Foresters, with many others, are affiliated.

A REPRESENTATIVE BODY

When it is considered that these bodies are composed of a host of women, among whom number the leaders in philanthropic, social and civic reforms throughout Canada, it is impressed upon one that this annual gathering is a notable happening. Each woman who is sent as a delegate represents the best feminine thought and opinion of her community, and upon her return home brimming with new ideas, fresh inspiration, and a wider knowledge of the problems relating to humanity, her influence is bound to affect that community and the people in it.

One can gain an excellent comprehension of the work being undertaken by the National Council by following the progress of the annual meetings recently held in the Forest City. When one reviews the many excellent addresses given during the week, and the widespread importance of the several subjects under discussion, it is rather difficult to decide which topics to select for special consideration. The supreme aim of the National Council, however, judging by the expression of the recent sessions, is to stand firmly for the social betterment and improved laws where women and children are concerned.

On Friday evening, May 24th, the convention was formally opened at a public reception tendered the delegates by London local council. Mayor Graham, His Lordship the Bishop of Huron, and Mr. Radcliffe, principal of the Normal School, each made brief addresses of welcome. Mrs. Boomer, the local president, was paid a kindly tribute by each speaker, Bishop Williams' reference to her as the "Grand Old Lady of London" eliciting a hearty round of applause.

AN ENCOURAGING OUTLOOK

The real business sessions were opened on Saturday afternoon, May 25th, by an address from Mrs. Torrington, president of the National Council. Reports received from the various officers, including Mrs. Willoughby Cummings, corresponding secretary, Mrs. Plumptre, recording secretary, and Mrs. Watt, treasurer, were very satisfactory, showing larger numbers in membership, and increased finances during the year. The need of a definite income to properly carry on, and widen the scope of the Council work, was emphasized by Mrs. Torrington. One method by which this annual resource could be assured is the securing by each local Council of a number of annual patrons whose fee might be relied upon each year. Toronto has been especially active along this line, and the addition of such prominent names as Sir Edmund Walker, Sir Edmund Osler, J. Ross Robertson, D. B. Hanna, and Aemilius Jarvis, will, no doubt, add prestige to the National Council standing. Mrs. Timothy Eaton and Lady Gibson have been constituted life patrons, the latter receiving the honor at the hands of Hamilton Council during the annual sessions. In other centres also, several leading citizens and business men have recently become annual patrons, some of them being John Penman, Paris; E. L. Cockshutt and George Watt, Brantford.

Reports of the provincial vice-presidents were very encouraging. In Vancouver the National Council is to have one of its projects materialized by the building of a \$100,000 industrial school for girls. Nova Scotia, away on the other coast of the Dominion,

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN

Report of the London Convention

By MARGARET WALKER

has formed two new councils within the past year, and the council at Halifax has received a substantial legacy by the will of the late George Wright, a victim of the Titanic disaster. And so the good work is advanced throughout Canada.

LEADING PROBLEMS DISCUSSED

But to resume consideration of the addresses and discussions which marked this nineteenth annual session. As stated above, they were all of so much value and interest, that it is hard to discriminate. The evils resulting from the white slave traffic were brought to the attention of Londoners and attending delegates by Mr. W. A. Coote, of London, England. Mr. Coote is a representative of the Social and Moral Reform Association of England, and is endeavoring to secure international legislation which will render the work of white slave traffickers almost impossible. National Council women were urged to be more persistent in their efforts to obtain better protection for girls and women in this respect. Mr. Coote referred to the campaign undertaken by representatives of sixteen countries, including Canada and the United States, at a conference in Paris, 1906. During the discussion upon this subject the opinion was advanced that the question was rather a matter of economics than of morality. Many girls who go astray do so at first, it was said, in order to obtain finer clothing than they can get on their slender wages. Technical training in public and high schools would do much to offset the evil.

A long debate on problems of the feeble minded was held on Monday morning. Figures were given which showed the number of defectives in Ontario to be 2,239, and this number is constantly increasing. That such conditions will soon prove serious, cannot for a moment be doubted. Instances of the great improvement morally, mentally and physically, resulting from special treatment in institutions, were cited, and it was recommended that the Government be urged to take immediate steps to provide shelters and training schools of this description.

It is hard to credit the fact that in Ontario there are well-to-do men and women who allow an aged parent or a delicate child to be provided for at the expense of churches or philanthropic societies. Yet is this only too true, judging by the statements made at one meeting. Dr. Bruce-Smith, provincial inspector of hospitals, has, at the instigation of the National Council, made some investigations recently in Ontario institutions, and found there inmates whose relatives in many cases were well able to support them. It was pointed out that a law passed in 1601 is still in existence, obliging children to support father, mother, and grandparents. The need of better provision for

the care and education of illegitimate children was also emphasized.

Active work for the suppression of objectionable printed matter was shown from several councils. The post-office authorities are aiding, wherever possible, by destroying harmful literature and indecent post-cards. In one Canadian city a ladies' committee supervises the moving picture films, keeps watch over the sale of picture post cards, and endeavors to promote the reading of good literature, especially among the young. Regarding the censorship of picture films in Ontario, it was affirmed that two of the men on the board of censors owned moving picture halls, and so were scarcely in a position to give an unbiased opinion. It was felt that one or two women should also be placed on the board of censors. Several theatres, especially the "men only" variety received a scoring by the National Council. One in Toronto, declared to be among the worst of its kind, was said to be owned by the police department. This statement has not, as yet, been challenged or refuted.

City libraries and librarians throughout the Dominion were commended, London's free library being especially mentioned as an up-to-date progressive institution. It was reported by a delegate that in Westmount Library, Montreal, children were not allowed in the adult department and could not procure an adult book without a written order. Exception was taken to this, however, on the grounds that children would thus be deterred from reading the classics and standard authors.

That Canada cannot be truly great without cultivation of the arts and high ideals, was emphasized at one of the open meetings. Canadians, it was stated, are leaning too much towards materialism, and in order to effect a complete citizenship, artistic and aesthetic elements are necessary. National Council members were advised not to devote their whole time, outside of the domestic sphere, to philanthropic work, but to endeavor to stimulate interest among themselves and others in literature, music, sculpture, and painting.

OPINION DIVIDED ON THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

The attitude of the National Council towards the suffrage question has scarcely been defined as yet. While agitating for improved laws for the protection of women and children, the members do not appear desirous, as an organization, of attempting any radical measures of forcing a new political status for women. One soon discovers, however, after chatting with a number of the leaders in the Council, that there are really two distinct factions where the suffrage movement is concerned. One side advocates standing strongly in favor of equal franchise, while the other is decidedly anti-suffrage. Whether this will prove a ground for serious dissension in the Council has yet

to be shown. Upon the evening of May 31st, the closing meeting of the convention was held, and among other speakers, Dr. Stowe-Gullen, of Toronto, and Miss J. G. Owen, of London, England, each gave forceful addresses upon the suffrage question. Miss Owen dealt with the subject more from the idealistic point of view, and Dr. Stowe-Gullen gave in concise form a history of the movement since 1848, and both speakers urged emphatically the justice of allowing women the use of the ballot. The chairman for the occasion, Rev. J. Gibson Inkster, of London, placed himself on record by coming out strongly not only for suffragism but also for militancy, as demonstrated by Mrs. Pankhurst and her following.

THE "BIG" EVENT

The big event of the National Council meetings was the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught and "Princess Pat." Perhaps there is nothing which creates a more pleasantly patriotic anticipation in the heart of the average citizen than the coming to his or her city of a royal guest. Men and women, to say nothing of hosts of children, gather eagerly with the first beat of the drum, and strain anxious eyes as the royal party approaches. And so it was in the Forest City when their Excellencies arrived on May 29th. Bands shrieked out national airs, hundreds of kodak fiends were "on the spot" and the city officials, accompanied by Mrs. Torrington and Mrs. Boomer as representatives of the National Council, hastened forward to greet the Governor-General of Canada, his wife and daughter.

The National Council, arrayed of course in its very best apparel, had held a somewhat unsettled and expectant session that morning, although nominally the meeting proceeded according to schedule. The Duchess of Connaught and Princess Patricia appeared much interested in the business of the session, the Duchess expressing in a few gracious words the benefit she believed the National Council and its work to be to Canadian women. After luncheon, all the delegates repaired to Victoria Park to witness the ceremony of unveiling the soldiers' monument by the Duke of Connaught. This monument has been erected by Londoners in memory of the "boys" who were left behind in the battles of the Boer war some nine years ago.



LADY GIBSON, A LIFE PATRON OF HAMILTON COUNCIL