



Opening Session of the Quinquennial Congress, University of Toronto, Lady Aberdeen Presiding.

Photograph by Galbraith, Toronto

THE QUINQUENNIAL CONGRESS

By KATHARINE REID

WITH the opening of the Quinquennial Congress in Convocation Hall on Thursday morning last, life in the vicinity of the University of Toronto assumed a different aspect. The business of the International Council was finished; the air was permeated with the spirit of expectancy, and the invisible force of thought and imminent discussion. The signs were auspicious. Nature was at her loveliest and the audience bore the impress of culture and of intellectual, moral and spiritual vigour.

Upon the platform were their Excellencies, Lady Grey and Lady Aberdeen; Lady Edgar, Mrs. (Hon. J. M.) Gibson, Lady Evelyn Grey, and a number of delegates. The words of welcome extended by Lady Grey, as Vice-President of the Council of Canada, were most kind; and very appreciative were her remarks upon the work of the Council. Especially valuable would the Congress be to Canada at this time when the lines of her national life were being drawn, for the people had heart enough to apply the knowledge gained by international experience and wisdom. Her Excellency hoped the visitors would carry away with them a bright picture of this favoured land. Lady Aberdeen's words were few, appropriate and hopeful, and the brief ceremony was soon over. Then came dispersion. The campus was brilliant and animated for the moment, only to be deserted for the nine separate halls in which the work of the Congress was to be carried on.

"Who is the lady in grey?" some one was asking as a person of distinguished appearance in a soft, pale grey gown and trimmed hat with plumes passed through the entrance. "The President of the Council of Great Britain, Mrs. Edwin Grey," came the reply. Mrs. Grey has not only a personality of exceptional charm, but she is thoroughly awake to the importance of the work, and has been studying conditions in Toronto. In the overcrowding of certain portions of this city Mrs. Grey sees an alarming situation which ought to receive attention before it produces results which have caused England so much suffering.

One of the chief topics of the day was Public Health, and much interest was aroused over the struggle with tuberculosis. The Hon. Sydney Fisher, Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa, whose department deals with quarantine, cases of leprosy, the provision of hospitals, medical attention and proper measures of sanitation on works of a public character, recognised the close connection between the health of the animal and that of the human being; but he believed it was an entirely erroneous idea that the majority of tuberculosis cases was due to polluted milk. Per-

haps five per cent. of the cases might be traced to tubercle bacilli in milk, but the great majority was due to infection from one person to another. Mr. Fisher, however, strongly advocated the tuberculin test, and believed that no milk that reacted to the test should be used for food.

Sir William Thompson thought it would be difficult to fix the percentage of tuberculosis cases arising from diseased milk, but it was believed now to be greater than was supposed a few years ago. The disease contracted in this way was slow in developing. Lady Aberdeen stated that the possibility of infection between cattle and human beings was undoubted, and the prevailing opinion now was in favour of a rigid inspection of farms, dairies and persons engaged in the milk trade. The pasteurisation of milk has been followed in Dublin and elsewhere by a decrease in the death rate. The measures advocated for extirpating the plague are compulsory notification, sanatoria for cases in early stages of the disease, hospitals for advanced cases, dispensaries and the teaching of hygiene.

Mr. Fisher spoke also of the pollution of the water supply, and thought women could do an excellent work in educating public opinion, without the support of which the restrictive measures of the Government were largely ineffective. The purity of food supplies was emphasised as a preventive. The fly, mosquito and rat were condemned as disease carriers, and the accumulation of refuse doubly denounced. But the greatest of all preventive measures was the education of the mass of people, and the instruction of the young in practising the laws of health. Dr. Montizambert, Director General of Public Health, Canada, urged upon mothers the responsibility of training their daughters to protect the upper part of the chest, not to squeeze the waist, to have nothing tight below the knee, wear thick soled shoes and short skirts. Indiscriminate kissing was absurd, and the knowledge should be spread that tuberculosis is not heredity, but that it is infectious, preventable and curable.

For mentally defective children all hope is centered in prevention, not in cure. Canada is undoubtedly right in rejecting immigrants of the weak-minded class, and she has still the opportunity of protecting herself against the unfortunate conditions which have entailed so much misery in old lands. This could be made the sanest country in the world if it is undertaken in time. But upon inquiry it was found that Canada has more cause for alarm than was supposed.

Valuable suggestions were given in the Art section for providing organised employment as a

means of utilising energy that otherwise would be wasted. There are numbers of people who hunger for more than mere, hard, unremitting toil, said Mrs. Helen Albee's paper, people who long for some employment that will bring into play the mind, and the spirit and the beauty of the soul. In isolated districts where opportunities for education are very restricted, and where people touch the very depth of that loneliness that helps to fill insane asylums, Arts and Crafts Industries could be started, qualified teachers employed and small salesrooms established in places where the products could be sold. This would maintain agricultural conditions and keep the people in the country, prevent that great rush to the cities, where already the supply of labour is greater than the demand, and supply remunerative employment which would be an expression of the soul, which would not be a deadening routine, but would produce joy and contentment. Idleness, not leisure, was never meant to thrive in a world where "nature" works continuously and mere manual labour without the co-operation of head and spirit must lead to ultimate degradation. As an evidence of the commercial value of such an undertaking it might be stated that the products of a newly developed territory along this line in Hungary amounted at the end of ten years to \$9,000,000 annually. The women workers outnumbered the men nine to one, and the principal work undertaken was hand spinning and weaving, basketry, various utensils in wood and metal required for domestic purposes, embroidery, leather and bead work, pottery and furniture. In Great Britain and Ireland the industries include in addition art needlework, dressmaking and designing, wood carving, book-binding, lithographing and lace making. Italy, the cradle of art, has brought the handicraft to great perfection, and when the subject was finished one felt as Mrs. Albee expressed that "this touches the very heart of the most perplexing economic question of our time in all countries."

We are living in an age of unrest among men and also women. Even the women of the East are awakening to the need of being something and of doing something. Women want to vote, and their divine gifts of insight and intuition eminently fit them to rule in large ways. Woman suffrage is one of the advance movements most earnestly advocated by the Council, not as an end, not as the outcome of mere vanity, but as the only means by which most of the great reforms advocated by the Council can be accomplished. There is no disposition to act in opposition to men, but encouraged and supported by their co-operation, the desire is to work with them for the betterment of the race.

The Congress is over, but everyone that has come in any degree under its influence will henceforth be broader in mind, greater in spirit and better equipped for both the duties and the enjoyments of life.