

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT.

In introducing his report, Mr. Putnam remarked that he had been wondering, when the preceding speakers were referring to the growth in numbers of the Institute, whether it might grow to make a "splash." The Institute must guard against putting too much emphasis on mere numbers. Growth was good, but work was better.

The past year had seen great growth, both in numbers and in avenues of effort. He believed that the Women's Institute stands for mutual helpfulness, better than any organization in existence to-day, yet he recognized that its responsibilities are ever widening. Upon the women depends greatly the future of the nation. Strength of body and of mind have always characterized the rural districts, yet the tendency has been for too many to be drawn from it to the cities. The Women's Institute might be a great counteracting influence by exercising to the full their power for making rural life better and brighter. We must keep the best of the young people in the country if the country is to be the backbone of our Dominion. This is a matter of concern to the city as well. Only on the preceding day the Board of Trade in Toronto had been considering the high cost of living, and looking to the country for a solution of the problem.

The Women's Institute has shown remarkable powers of initiative. Every year has brought a new scope of work. Other organizations and forces are recognizing its influence and asking for co-operation, for example, in bringing about better conditions for public health, and other forms of public work. He looked forward to great things when both men and women should co-operate, working together for the accomplishment of improvements necessary to the country.

Women working in their homes (90 per cent. of them do their own work) are acquiring a world-wide outlook. Efficiency as a woman always appeals to a worth-while man, and it is the woman who has shown ability in her own home, and with her own family, who will be most influential in settling the problems in regard to women everywhere.

In our Institute we must be practical. The real mother is more interested in dietetics and hygiene than in trying to be a good painter, and would rather have her daughters directors of household work than expert musicians. The speaker considered it strange that so little attention has been paid, in our educational system, to the duties of later life; to encourage instruction along vocational lines might, then, be one of the duties of the Women's Institute. It might help in introducing into the various communities the study of home economics. In this connection, the training courses recently established in connection with the Women's Institute, are of value. Cooking, sewing, and home-nursing courses, have been provided for, but it was rather remarkable that no branch had as yet asked for the nursing course. Fifty branches have obtained the services of the demonstrators for the coming year, but the speaker believed, that with little assistance from the Government, it would be possible to send demonstrators to all of the 700 branches. To do the most efficient work in the meetings of the Institute, it would be necessary to combine the mutual exchange of ideas and suggestions with definite scientific instruction.

Someone had suggested, in regard to general Institute work, that it was advisable to have some special work. He agreed with this; each individual branch should have some definite aim in addition to generalities.

In the past, much money has been spent on the education of men. He was convinced that as much, if not more, should be spent on the training of women and girls. If the women of the country desired it, there could be a great readjustment of the educational system in the near future.

During the past year, some of the lines along which the Institute had accomplished something were: Questions of public health; medical inspection of schools; the formation of committees for neighborhood service, in case of the sick or needy; civic improvement work; the introduction of labor-saving devices; establishment of libraries; encouragement of the school-gardening movement,

and of school fairs; local demonstrations in cooking, sewing, etc., and publication of cook-books. In many places, by membership campaigns, the membership has been doubled. In closing, he warned the Association against letting the branches become so many savings banks. Money obtained through the Association should be spent, and spent wisely.

DISTRICT AND BRANCH INSTITUTES.

Mrs. Watts, of British Columbia, opened the giving of reports from the various branches by conveying greetings from her far-away Province. She was followed by Miss Anna Coutts, of Thamesville, and delegates from North Grey and other districts, telling of libraries established, a tuberculosis hospital, covered drink fountains for schools, prizes given at school fairs for collections of weed-seeds, insects, flowers, etc., wards in hospitals furnished, skating rinks built, medical inspection of schools introduced and many other improvements.

AFTERNOON SESSION, NOV. 14.

(Mrs. Parsons, Forest, presiding.)

The first afternoon session opened with a report given by Mrs. McNeilly, Stony Creek, of the unveiling of the portrait of Mrs. Hoodless, at the Macdonald Institute, Guelph. Following was a report given by Miss M. Hotson, of Parkhill, convener of the "Child Welfare" Committee appointed at the last Convention. This committee met on the 29th of August in the Parliament Buildings, and outlined the work done and to be done. It was recommended that a book, "The Child," by Dr. Tanner, be studied by mothers. The Chataqua reading course, consisting of four books, would also be found of value. . . Much had been done of late years in regard to child-welfare work, especially in the United States; exhibits had been held, and in the United States a Children's Bureau established to investigate and report on all questions relating to children. "Why is it," asked Miss Hotson pointedly, "that we have no department in the Dominion Government for the welfare of children?" "The strength of the nation rests in the child."

The feeble-minded are a menace, and questions regarding them should not be shelved. It is the problem of the Women's Institute to make better homes; to stock the country with efficient and healthy men and women; and thinking men and women should not rest until every child is well fed, well clothed, and well trained. A happy, active childhood is the foundation for the efficient adult.

Miss Hotson then brought in a motion asking, in substance, that the women of the Convention request the Government to consider the providing of institutions in the municipalities, for the feeble-minded, the municipalities to provide for wards up to the age of twenty-one, said wards afterwards to become the charge of the Government.

The motion was seconded by Mrs. Graham, Brampton.

Mrs. Parsons, in putting the motion to the Convention, dwelt strongly on the need of such institutions. No feeble-minded girl or woman, she pointed out, should be permitted to become a mother, hence the great need of places for the segregation of these unfortunates. The motion was carried.

In referring to the books mentioned by Miss Hotson, Mrs. Parsons recommended four more, "The Training of the Twins," "The Unfolding of Personality," "The Dawn of Character," and "The Girl in Her Teens." We will secure at once the addresses of the publishers of these books from Mrs. Parsons, so that it will be possible to give this information to anyone who may desire it.

ADDRESS BY DR. McMURCHY.

Dr. Helen McMurchy emphasized the necessity for immediate action in regard to the feeble-minded, and expressed the hope that, now that the Women's Institute had taken the question up, something definite would soon be accomplished. She appealed to the audience to take steps before the next meeting of the Legislature. Very few families in Ontario, she pointed out, carry a strain of feeble-mindedness; feeble-mindedness is distinctly hereditary; hence by taking

care for a generation, it can be easily stamped out. This had been worked out in other countries,—why not here? As an interesting, perhaps suggestive fact, she referred to an investigation carried out in England: One hundred normal families were noted, also one hundred in which was one (or more) feeble-minded child. The average number of children in the wholly-normal families was four,—that in the others seven.

Dr. McMurchy then explained some facts in regard to the Child-welfare exhibit recently brought to Montreal from the United States, showing the movement for better conditions in regard to children.

This learning the necessities to ensure the health of children is a subject in which all mothers should be interested. "Three thousand five hundred and fifty-five babies died last year in Montreal alone," said Dr. McMurchy, "two-thirds of the number from preventable causes. What will you do to prevent such sacrifice?"

Again, in factories are working boys and girls too young for such work and confinement,—thousands of girls who receive only from \$4 to \$6 per week, not counting deductions for sickness, an amount entirely too low to permit those receiving such wages to live at a standard high enough to preserve health. Such life wrecks the constitution of these future mothers, and lays the foundation for an inefficient posterity.

[Before closing this synopsis, one may surely venture to say that, were it only for the sake of what the women are doing in regard to this question of the feeble-minded, the "Woman's Movement" will have proved worth while.—Ed.]

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD.

The afternoon of November 14th was especially devoted, as will be noted, to problems concerning children, and in the course of the programme the very important question of the physical development of the child—doubly important because of the distinct dependence of mental upon physical well-being—was taken up by Dr. Annie Backus, of Aylmer.

There is something about perfect physical development in either lower or higher life, noted the speaker, that is a delight. The first question the mother asks when a child comes into the world is, "Is it all right?" Perhaps she understands the close relationship between mind and body, and that, as a rule, if the body is well formed, the chances are that the mind will be all right.

The first consideration, then, in the physical development of the child is the health of its parents and grand-parents, and so well is this now being understood that the time will come when it will be felt as a disgrace to have a deformed or delicate child. . . We hear much of race suicide—as though the only business of humans were to bear children. The fact should not be overlooked that men and women suffering from certain diseases commit a crime when they have children. Another thing we must remember is that the feeble-minded must be so protected that they will become extinct. . . The physical development, then, must begin before birth, and the mind must be considered as well as the body.

In the second place, the child should be fed by nature's method, and the mother should be well taken care of. The first few weeks should be spent in sleeping and eating.—"Perhaps that is why we speak of 'Happy childhood days.'" (Laughter.) A good rule is to make the hours of feeding as far apart as possible with comfort to the child. Let the stomach be emptied before putting more food into it.—And above all things, do not poke into the poor little mouth that abomination, a "comfort," and don't give the child the habit of being bounced about. A healthy child, left to its own devices, will be happy.

In regard to exercise: Sir William Jenner says that a child in health delights in movements of all kinds. Do not swathe the child in clothes. Let it be free to kick up its feet for a while every morning in fresh, warm air and sunshine. Like the flower, the child must have sunshine and light.

Each coming tooth tells that the child

must have extra nourishment, so add a little oatmeal, egg—after a little, and bread and butter. This must be done with judgment. Teach the child to stand erect and to breathe deeply from the lungs. This is necessary to make a well-formed body. The country is the best place for children; there ought to be a law providing that every child should spend the first twelve years of its life there.

When it comes time for the child to start to school, one is up against the real problem; the condition of the school must be considered—ventilation, light, seating—all affect the physical development of the child. The seating is usually devised more for a punishment than for use. Have the seats graded in height.

All the way along, it must be remembered that the well-being of the child depends upon proper feeding, cleanliness, and normal exercise. Every mother should make it her business to be informed in regard to proper foods. The time is coming when every woman will be trained in regard to these things. Let the child go into every sport there is. Let it learn target-shooting to train the use of the eye for long distances, but see that practice is not exercised upon the little birds. Let the girls have the same plays and exercises as boys; the physical weakness of women to-day is largely the result of stupidity and stubbornness that limits the amusements of girls to a rag doll and a skipping-rope. A sound mind in a sound body is the result of conformity to certain laws, and these are exactly the same for a girl as for a boy.

Pictures were then shown to illustrate wrong seating in schools, the results of defective eyesight, and the appearance of children with adenoids—growths in the back part of the nose. Dr. Backus dwelt at some length on this very common trouble, pointing out its disastrous results. The cause, she said, was due to the lodging of secretions in the nose. Children should be taught to blow out all such from the nose, keeping the passages clean constantly.

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHILD.

After a short address, commending the work of the Women's Institute, by Hon. James Duff, Provincial Minister of Agriculture, Chancellor McCrimmon, of McMaster University, Toronto, took up the question of the Mental Development of the Child.

Chancellor McCrimmon began by a graceful reference to the address given by Dr. Backus. Voltaire, he said, after reading Rousseau's "Emile," had said, "After reading the book one longs to go on all-fours." After listening to Dr. Backus, he himself had almost longed to be all body. However, the mental alone must be considered also; the greatest thing in man is mind.

There is a law of existence that belongs especially to mental development: everything in regard to the child's mental development must come naturally through self-activity. There can be no proxy in education. The mind of the child must assimilate, and through self-activity, and we must realize that he should think, and will for himself. The great problem is to get him in rapport with the beautiful and the good.

The child comes with a certain constitution of body and mind, and heredity, plus constitution, must be taken into account in dealing with his development. Women can never rise to any higher occupation than that which home brings. Here they can exercise their influence, for without proper nourishment, refinement and other conditions, the child is bound to be cramped in development of mind.

The movements of the child are the first thing to be considered in its mental development. At first, these are instinctive and impulsive, then they are voluntary, and it becomes very soon necessary to watch these instinctive reactions and impulsive movements in order that they may be brought out or turned in the right directions. But this must be done judiciously. To a great extent, the child should be free physically and mentally. Spontaneity should be encouraged.

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