

PROSPECT AND RETROSPECT

I.O.D.E.

THE Imperial Order, Daughters of the Empire, may fairly be called a Twentieth Century institution. Founded as the Boer War was closing, it was an outgrowth of the new imperial feeling which had led to the sending of Canadian contingents to South Africa. It will be admitted by all who remember the early years of the Order's history that the patriotic momentum of the first days came from a realization of what the nations within the British Empire had done to defend citizens' rights in a remote and (then) little-known community. After peace was declared it was necessary to find varied tasks for the newly-formed Order, lest the enthusiasm following the years of conflict should be forgotten, or should dwindle into an unavailing flow of words.

To-day the Order faces a situation of great difficulty, for the Boer War was a passing and casual affray in comparison with even one month of the Great Conflict. There is exhaustion, depression and a tendency to fall into a "what's-the-use!" mood, wherever one may look. While this is a condition to be expected after such a struggle as that which kept us strung to our highest endeavour during fifty-one tense months, the state of social and industrial circles is none the less disheartening. If we look back, however, at the way we have come, we shall gain courage for future problems.

Let us consider what the Order was enabled, owing to its Dominion-wide organization, to do during the war. Over five million dollars—a sum raised, in the main, by small contributions—showed the earnestness of the workers in the Order. The value of the supplies sent to the soldiers and to sufferers from the war, can hardly be estimated; but it, also, must be in the millions. There is an expression, "cold cash," to describe a money contribution; but, surely, the millions which the I.O.D.E. sent overseas were warm and throbbing with the love and hope that thousands of Canadian mothers sent with it. With the outbreak of war in August, 1914, there was an intense desire on the part of the women of this country to help the men who were to bear the brutal brunt of the struggle. It was then that the value of national organization was realized, for, in nearly every community, women who wished to help turned to the I.O.D.E. to know what could be sent—and how—and when. It was natural then that new chapters should