

IN this short account of the various activities of the Local Councils, the information has been taken solely from their own annual reports as printed in the Annual Report of the National Council. The task has not been an easy one, inasmuch as there is no very sharp line drawn between National Council work and Local Council work, but an attempt has been made to classify them under the heading of (1) Work undertaken at the request of the National Council, and (2) Work undertaken on the initiative of the Local Councils themselves. Except in special cases the work has been looked at as a whole and has not been credited to each individual Council carrying it out. It has, moreover, often been difficult to define exactly the result of actions taken in hand; the special task of Local Councils appears to be quite as much to initiate movements as to carry them to completion, and in any case the publicity given to any movement through a Local Council and the consequent awakening and educating of public opinion, and sometimes also of legislative and civic bodies, is the main, though oft- intangible, result aimed at in the binding together of societies in one common aim and for one common purpose. The Council prides itself on the care with which it undertakes any new task, and also on the thorough investigation it makes and the exact information it procures before presenting petitions or appealing to any public body.

I. WORK UNDERTAKEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL.—This heading comprises for the most part the points of interest discussed at the Annual Meetings and relegated to Standing Committees or direct to Local Councils for further elaboration; so far as possible the results of the action are given in each case.

In 1894 Local Councils were asked to institute an *Inquiry into the Condition of Women in Prisons* and to recommend the appointment of a sufficient number of *Police Matrons*. This was taken up by Local Councils where the conditions made it necessary for them to do so, and during successive years the following results of their petitions, investigations, or appeals are recorded:—the appointment of Police Matrons in many places, or of an additional one; better conditions in various localities for women prisoners, such as complete separation of the sexes and of the young from the old; the provision of sleeping accommodation in police cells; the securing of covered patrol wagons. Local Councils have also co-operated with the Prisoners' Aid Association in petitioning for the classification of prisoners and the isolation of those awaiting trial for the first time. Earnest efforts towards jail reform have been made by these societies, and petitions sent to the authorities from time to time; while the moulding of public opinion on this subject is still part of their work. In one case a Council was invited by the civic authorities to appoint two of its members to pay periodic visits