



What has been done and what we hope to do.

WE think that we cannot better gather up the results of the annual meeting of the National Council of Women of Canada at Montreal and place before all our members the work that has been specially remitted to them during the coming year, than by printing the following memorandum, which has been addressed by the President to the presidents of Local Councils and national societies.

If our individual members, and, in particular, our members of local Executives, would ponder over the various matters brought before them for consideration during the summer months, making inquiries and reading up the different subjects which interest them in as far as they can, it would greatly conduce to the progress of the work which we have undertaken next winter.

I have much pleasure in reporting to the presidents of the Local Councils and federated national societies, and through them to their Councils, that the third annual meeting of the National Council of Women of Canada has been successful in every way. The delegates will doubtless convey to their respective Councils or Societies their own impressions, but I think that you will all agree that the representatives of our various provinces and organisations have been able to get into touch with one another on this occasion in a way which must make a vast difference to all our future work. I shall not attempt to forestall their account of the details of our annual meetings and conferences, but will merely gather together an epitome of the decisions arrived at and the suggestions made which will affect the work of our Local Councils throughout the country.

I. ELECTION OF NEW VICE-PRESIDENTS.—As you are aware, all the National officers who have served before were re-nominated. Mrs. Taylor, vice-president for Manitoba, did not, however, desire to be re-elected, and as she had signified this to the Winnipeg Local Council, they had nominated in her place Mrs. Bryce, wife of Professor Bryce, of Manitoba College, the well-known author. Mrs. Bryce was therefore unanimously elected.

In the case of the North-west Territories, where no vice-president had been elected before, two ladies were nominated for the post,—Mrs. Loughheed, by Calgary, and Madame Forget, by Regina. In consideration of the great distances which have to be travelled in the North-west, it was decided that a vice-president should be appointed for each territory, and thus Mrs. Loughheed has been elected vice-president for Alberta and Madame Forget for Assiniboia. Just before the meeting of the Council, Mrs. McDonnell, our esteemed vice-president for Ontario, sent in her resignation, thinking that a younger woman might be able to do the necessary organising work better than she could, and as she would not be prevailed upon to reconsider her decision, the Executive consulted the delegates of Ontario present at the Council, and on their unanimous recommendation elected Mrs. Frank Gibbs, Port Arthur, to fill the position for which she is so eminently fitted.

II. REPORTS OF SUB-COMMITTEES.—The three reports from the three sub-committees on (1) Laws for the Better Protection of Women and Children, on (2) Literature, and (3) The Length of Working Hours for Women and Children, of which copies were submitted to the Local Councils and national societies, have all been adopted as they stand, with the exception of one addition to that on the length of working hours. The amendment of the London Local Council to the effect that the Provincial Legislature of Ontario be asked to extend the provisions of the Factory Act to workshops employing under five hands, was carried.

The adoption of these three reports carries with it a considerable amount of responsibility for all who are

connected with our Councils throughout the country, and I wish to point out a few prominent features in each. Copies of the reports themselves can be had from Messrs. Lovell at 25 cents a dozen or at 3 cents each, and it is earnestly hoped that members of the Council will purchase copies for themselves and that Local Councils will circulate them.

(1) The Report on the Laws for the Better Protection of Women and Children

When you receive the verbatim report you will see how earnest was the discussion on this subject. Whilst feeling that an advance had been made in the direction of the changes desired in the law, whilst acknowledging our gratitude to the Minister of Justice for his sympathetic response to our requests and his endeavours to meet our wishes as far as possible, it was felt that we must not cease our efforts to obtain our object, nor allow our vigilance to be relaxed.

The changes that were contemplated in the Criminal Law were not passed in consequence of the circumstances which attended the closing of last Parliamentary session, and the Executive will understand that it is their duty to press the matter on the next Government. Executives of Local Councils are requested to keep a watchful eye upon all cases of women and children in their districts which demand protection and the amendment of the law. They are also reminded of the closing paragraphs of the report in which the importance of a woman of experience and discretion being in court when women offenders are brought up for trial; the need of supporting the good work done by Rescue Homes and Shelters is also strongly urged. Before leaving the subject I must convey the strongly expressed opinion of the Council of the great need of inculcating on every mother throughout the land the duty of seeing that her own children are early taught in the right spirit certain physiological facts, which otherwise they may learn from impure sources. The following books and booklets were recommended for this purpose:

- "A SONG OF LIFE," by Miss Margaret Warner Morley. McClury, Chicago; 40 cents.
- "THE STORY OF THE PLANTS," by Grant Allan. Appleton, New York; 40 cents.
- "A FATHER'S ADVICE," by E. P. Miller, M.D. 41 West 23rd street, New York.
- "A MOTHER'S ADVICE," by Mrs. E. P. Miller. 41 West 23rd street, New York; 10 cents each.
- "TRUE MANHOOD."
- "EVE'S DAUGHTERS," by Marion Harland.
- "HOME LEAFLETS FOR MOTHERS' MEETINGS." W. C. T. U., 180 Arlington street, Cleveland, Ohio; 25 cents per 100.

It might well be of advantage, if private meetings of mothers could be arranged for in connection with the Local Councils, when a paper which was written for our conference on "How Mothers Can Best Teach Their Children the Necessary Elements of Physiology" can be re-read, and when some quiet, helpful discussion might ensue. The little books—"A Father's Advice" and "A Mother's Advice," by E. P. Miller, were given to each member of the Executive attending the meeting on Saturday, May 16th. These booklets, which, of course, must be used carefully, are very wisely worded and guard against a form of temptation which seems not to be sufficiently realised by parents.

(2) The Report on the Spread of Impure Literature.

I trust that this report will be very widely read and remembered and acted upon. The Executive will, of course, again bring before the Government the necessity of amending the law regarding the sale, manufacture and circulation of the deteriorating literature complained of; but the Local Councils have it in their power to do far more in regard to the whole subject than any Legislature; they must, as they value the welfare of their country, make it clear to the parents within the scope of their influence, that the warning given concerning the effects of circulating deteriorating literature and papers is not a needless one, and that it is constantly reappearing in new forms. They must ask that whenever there are traces of this literature it

should be sent to the local president; and for the present I will ask the local presidents to send on such matter to me in sealed envelopes, in order that the fact of their circulation may be brought before the proper authorities and steps taken for its suppression in such a way as His Excellency may deem best. But the great matter which Local Councils have to consider is how they can promote the sale of good, healthy literature and help to develop a taste for the same.

In a former letter it has been suggested that each Local Council should form a Standing Committee to take charge of the whole of this subject, acting at the same time as a Press Committee for the Local Council. We are hoping that many of our Local Councils may be able to aid in the formation of local libraries, home reading circles, or in any other efforts which will attain our object.

I append an abstract from a memorandum kindly sent me by the Minister of Education for Ontario on the facilities for establishing public libraries in that province, and pointing out certain amendments to the Act lately passed which bear on this question, and which will make it comparatively easy to have a library in every locality.

The series of penny poets, penny novels and penny children's books, now being issued by the "Review of Reviews" offices, was brought before the Executive. Sample copies can be obtained if desired, and it will be a good thing if each Local Council would persuade the local booksellers to keep a supply of these books. If reading circles were formed which took some of these as their books, it would promote their sale. On all points bearing on this subject I shall be glad to give any information in my power; the report itself can be obtained for distribution at 25 cents a dozen copies, and I hope you may be able to order some for circulation amongst your members. In any case, I trust that the local newspapers may be persuaded to publish the report.

(3) The Report of the Sub-Committee on Length of Working Hours.

This report involves the re-formation of the sub-committees on this subject by all Local Councils situated in districts where women and children are employed in factories, workshops and stores. The committee to be appointed should not be a large one, and should be composed of women who have some interest in the subject and who will be able to work at it as thoroughly as possible. All facts should be sifted, and no statements should be made which cannot absolutely be verified, and the personal opinions and experiences of both employers and employed should be sought, as well as those of the representatives of Trades Councils where any such exist. Again let me say that I shall be most ready to give any assistance in my power to the sub-committee of any Local Council desiring it on this subject.

In addition, however, to those inquiries, I trust that the recommendations in the report will not be lost sight of, and that social, improvement and benefit clubs for working girls and women will be formed wherever possible by members of our Councils who are ready to come into touch with the workers as sisters, and who desire to work out with them some solution of the difficulties which at present surround the conditions of their lives.

An effort to obtain earlier closing of shops and weekly half-holidays for assistants in stores should not be lost sight of, nor the personal consideration for working women which is urged on every member of our Council and which can be carried out in so many different ways. I am sure that Miss Derick, Montreal, will gladly give any information regarding the working of a successful Girls' Club and Lunch Room in Montreal. The following publications regarding the work carried out in New York are most useful:

Annual Reports of the various Associations of Working Girls.

Circulars of information used by the clubs.

Also the following leaflets:

- No. 1. How to Start a Working Girl's Club.
- No. 2. Forms of By-laws.
- No. 3. Suggestions for Club Workers.
- No. 4. Responsibilities of Membership in a Society.
- No. 5. Responsibilities and Opportunities of a Society.
- No. 6. Reasons for Advancing the Principle of Self-Support.
- No. 7. Arguments for Self-Government.
- No. 8. Small Clubs.

The above can be obtained by addressing Miss Grace Dodge, first director, 262 Madison avenue, New York City, or Miss Virginia Potter, secretary, 134 Lexington avenue, New York.

Miss Maude Stanley has also written on the same subject from practical experience in England, and the records of the work of the Women's Industrial Council in England, of the Council of Trades in Scotland, and of the Recreative Evening Rooms, etc., might be helpful. Dr. Stanley Coit's book on "Neighbourhood Guilds" is also full of suggestions. Although there may be difficulties attending the formation of such clubs, particularly in the smaller cities, there is no doubt that they can be made a most important factor on the well-being and protection of the lives of our working women.