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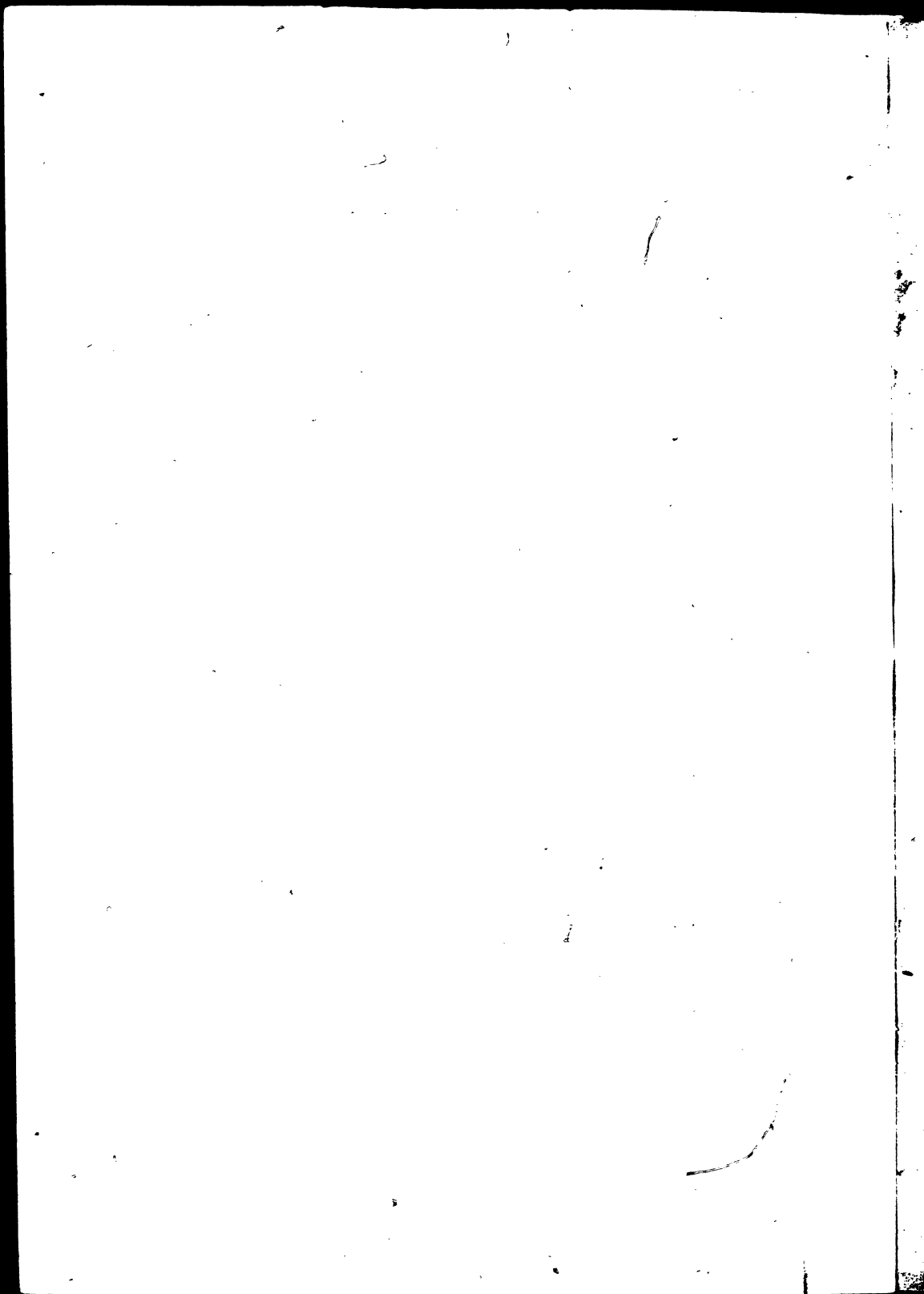
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PRESIDENT'S CLOSING ADDRESS

—AT THE—

FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF
CANADA.

YOUR EXCELLENCY, MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—

In old days in Scotland when it was the custom to have the half-yearly preachings, as they were called, including services from Thursday morning to Monday evening, almost without intermission, it was the duty of the minister who preached last on Monday evening to "perlicue." It is a strange word and its derivation is uncertain, but is said to be a corruption of the French words "par la queue," and what it meant was that the minister had to gather up the principal thoughts dwelt upon by the several preachers and to weave all into a connected whole.

Now, I suppose that is the ideal for the closing address of such a conference as that which this meeting brings to an end. And I suppose that on this occasion I might be expected to go further and to give a résumé of the history of the Council for the past five years of its existence.

I feel the mere suggestion is inspiring terror into the hearts of my audience, but do not be afraid. I am not going to carry it out, it would, however, be a useful piece of work to have such a history written, and as I like to get my work done for me, I am going to offer two prizes for the two best essays

on the history and work of the Council since its institution, and two other prizes for the two best essays on the aims and future ideals for the Council. These prizes are open to all who care to compete for them, but, of course, are especially offered to the members of the Council, who have the best opportunity of understanding the subject. I should like these essays to be sent in to me at Government House by October first, and I am hopeful that the successful papers may prove of great assistance to our Councils and to our workers generally.

They will have plenty of material to deal with in the past achievements of the Council, both from National and Local points of view.

Let me give a rough outline of these for the benefit of those here who are unacquainted with our work and who have an idea that we only meet together to talk.

*Manual
Training in
Schools.*

1. It obtained the introduction of Manual Training and the instruction in Domestic Science in the public schools of Ontario, and the training of teachers so that they may be able to give instruction in these arts. It has also given an emphasis to the same movement in other provinces.

*Women Fac-
tory Inspectors.*

2. It has obtained the appointment of Women Factory Inspectors for factories and workshops where women are employed, in the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario.

*Amendment to
Ontario Shop
Act.*

3. It has obtained the extension of the provisions of the Factory Act to the Shop Act in Ontario as regards the supervision of women workers.

*Women School
Trustees.*

4. It has obtained the appointment of women on the Boards of School Trustees in New Brunswick, and the amendment of the School Act so that they may be elected in British Columbia.

*Women
Prisoners.*

5. It has brought about very desirable changes in the arrangements for women prisoners in various places, notably in the City of Quebec, where matrons are now in charge of

the women, and young girls are now sent to a separate institution.

6. It has organised in various centres Boards of Associated Charities or other systems of co operation in the relief of distress, and is still working in this direction wherever it has opportunity so to do, and is this year circulating a valuable paper or study on the problem of the unemployed.

7. It has established Hospitals in some of its smaller centres.

8. It originated the Victorian Order of Nurses, and has taken a leading part in its establishment in different centres.

9. It has organised Cooking Schools, Cooking Classes, and at Quebec is helping in the formation of a Training School for Domestic Servants.

10. It has spread sanitary knowledge, especially by means of Health Talks for mothers, given by physicians in Montreal. This has been specially successful both amongst the French and English mothers.

11. It has held an inquiry all over the country into the circulation of Impure Literature and has been able to do something to lessen it already, as well as to warn parents and teachers as to the very great danger that exists in this direction. It hopes to be able to do more both by legislation and by the circulation of healthy and interesting literature. It also inaugurated the Home Reading Union to promote habits of good and systematic reading.

12. It instituted enquiries into the conditions surrounding Working Women in various centres and urges on its members various methods whereby they may work for their amelioration.

13. It conducted an inquiry into the Laws for the Protection of Women and Children and has laid certain recommendations before the Minister of Justice which it earnestly hopes he will adopt when amending the Criminal Law.

*Care of Aged
Poor.*

14. It is at the present moment earnestly concerning itself in the care and treatment of the Aged Poor, so many of whom now find their only refuge in the jails for want of any other provision for them. On the authority of the Chief Inspector of Prisons for Ontario, some 60 per cent. of the jail population of that province belong to the infirm, aged, destitute or feeble-minded class.

*Protection of
Animal and
Bird Life.*

15. It is now calling on all its members to unite in efforts for the Protection of Animal and Bird life from useless destruction in the interests of fashion.

*Women
Immigrants.*

16. Through one of its affiliated Societies it is endeavoring to plan for the better care and wiser distribution of Women Immigrants than has hitherto been possible.

*Check of
spread of
Consumption.*

17. It is pledged to co-operate with Dr. Bryce and other medical authorities in urging immediate measures to be taken to check the ever increasing ravages of consumptive diseases in this country, to spread knowledge on the subject and keep responsibility home on individuals.

*Art Design
for Industrial
Purposes.*

18. It will endeavor to promote the systematic instruction in Art Design adaptable to Industries and Manufactures as opening up a field full of opportunities for women. I might increase this list if I were to describe various other useful efforts instituted by our Local Councils, but I forbear.

Perhaps you think that "these are mere deeds on paper," but I assure you that this is not the case, and that all this has been brought about by earnest devoted work which must bear fruit apart from its immediate results.

*Increase of
Unity, and
Mutual
Understanding.*

The results which we can thus report are a surprise to ourselves. I know, as we see them gathered together and they rebuke us for our want of faith. It is a constant source of delight and astonishment to see how elastic and adaptable our Constitution has shown itself and how it can develop just to suit the needs of each place but possessing everywhere *one*

great distinguishing characteristic—that it brings together and blends for common work the most earnest women of every place irrespective of creed, class, political party or race That is the great achievement of the Council. This place and this room ever recall the words with which Sir John Thompson dwelt on this feature of the movement which he, from the very outset, understood and appreciated as few have done. Let me quote them to you :

“ Let me say that no class in this country could appreciate more than public men the benefits that are aimed at in this movement. One other great and inevitable result will be that besides helping forward all the charitable institutions in the country, it will bind together in sympathy and closer citizenship those who are interested in charitable work—it will take them out of the influence of the thousand and one influences which divide our people. Any movement which tends to bring together the people of the various provinces, of different opinions, politics and beliefs, will be patriotic in its aim and in its work, and divinely blessed in its results.”

I tender all the congratulations which it is in my power to express, in regard to the patriotic tendency of the deliberations of the Conference, as shown in two or three of the resolutions which I have glanced over, which declare for the consolidation of the Canadian people, and for teaching the young the value of their country and training them to love and serve their country as they ought to do.

For these reasons I have the greatest pleasure in seconding this resolution ; and on behalf of the public men and private citizens of this country, I extend to you, the women of this Council, our heartiest congratulation and our determination to co-operate in this good and noble work.”

Members of the Council, we have been so pressed with work that I have not had time to lay before you a few suggestions which perhaps you may be willing to consider for adoption in your future work, and I hope the present is not an unsuitable time for alluding to them. And first (1) I wish we could plan some scheme whereby we could interest and secure the co-operation of our young girls in Council work. Many of them do help splendidly already, and this week we are under deep obligation to many of the young ladies who have worked for us in a hundred and one ways—both as attendants at the meeting, in helping in the luncheon arrangements, and so on. But what I mean is that we have

*Rt. Hon. Sir
John Thompson
on Council*

*Co-operation
of Young
Girls.*

not specially brought planned subjects with the object of interesting and helping girl workers.

The Young Ladies' Meeting held in connection with the English National Council have always been a special feature of interest. Here, for instance, are a few subjects on which they have had papers and discussions :

Self Development.

Ethics of Home Life.

What Girls living at home and in Society can do for others.

The Morals of Money Spending.

The Student Life of Women.

Women's University Settlements.

Girls have an exceptional influence in this country, and any national movement of this description should make especial efforts to enlist their sympathy and active co-operation whilst they are still girls. We older women look to the young, earnest, eager life and thought of the girls who have enjoyed such far greater advantages than ourselves in education and training than ever fell to our lot with hope and confidence. They have it in their power to carry on this work, which is but in its infancy, to a grand future of national usefulness, and we can even now help to prepare them for their mission. But if we are to have them we must win them, must make provision for them, make them feel that they are considered, that their assistance will be valued, and that they will find a place for the development of their aspirations.

Underlying Principles.

(2) Again, we have always been so busy with discussing actual work that we have never had time to set aside for talking over the deep principles which underlie all work and make it fruitful. Again, let me take a few headings of papers read before the English Council on these topics :

Serenity.

Possible deterioration of the worker.

How best to conduct the work of Philanthropic Committees and the sphere in which such work should be done.

The Pain of the world—and how to face it.

Power in work.

Might we not introduce some such subject in the programmes of both our National and Local Councils with profit and thus deepen and spiritualize both our work and our relation to each other.

(3) Again, can we not do something to induce systematic reading on various subjects connected with our work amongst our members—education in its various branches, Sanitation, Art, Poor Relief, and so on, so that we may have an ever increasing number of those who can speak with authority. I think that we may thankfully note an advance in our methods in this direction, and that our members are beginning to understand that the mere passing of a law does not mean its necessary enforcement, and that our legislators can only really make effectual what the people want.

In all the reforms we desire our first care then should be to work for the quickening of the public and the individual conscience, to make it fulfil all the obligations imposed upon it and take advantage of all the privileges granted by the present law, and then when this is done and the law is still found lacking, be sure that you will speedily obtain the legislation desired, for it will be demanded by people who feel the need for it and who mean to see it carried out. What we need above all is to build on broad and strong foundations and to develop in our workers *thoroughness*, so that they may always be able to give a reason for the faith that is in them, that they may be able to see both sides of a question, and that they should be anxious to bring about reforms more by ripening public opinion in the right direction, and by the

increase of personal responsibility, than by urging for legislation on all sorts of subjects about which there is no popular sense of need.

*Information
Bureau.*

(4) I trust that before long you may have established amongst you an Information Bureau on all matters connected with Women in Canada--their education, position, opportunities, achievements--an Information Bureau such as our Council has recommended the International Council of Women to initiate in all other countries. Having made ourselves responsible for the suggestion, we are, of course, bound to carry it out ourselves, and I think it would be comparatively easy if you would decide to maintain a Central Office, and the efficient paid Secretary; whom I venture to strongly urge you to consider a necessity, for the right carrying on of your work. Such a Secretary should not only be able to carry on the routine work of the Council, which is very heavy at some times of the year, but would collect statistics on the various phases of life with which we have to deal, and would be prepared to help in the organization of new Councils and the development of old ones.

*Necessity for
Paid
Secretary*

*Co-operation
of Working
Women.*

(5) Again, let me urge upon you the importance of obtaining some actual representatives of women engaged in business and of the Working Women on our Council--representatives from working girls' Clubs, Unions, and so on. This would be an immense benefit to us and would greatly increase the reality of our national character. It has not been so much our fault as our misfortune that we have not had such representative working women with us. There would seem at present to be practically no organizations or Clubs or Benefit Societies amongst them, and as our Council is a Federation of Societies, we cannot include them otherwise. I trust, however, that this may soon be remedied, as their accession would be a great strength to us, and they would teach us so much on various subjects which hitherto we have had to discuss very much in the dark for lack of their help and counsel and friendship.

(6) We have already discussed the paramount necessity of *Interes Federater Societien* securing and retaining the interest of the Federated Societies. They must not be allowed to look upon the Local Council to which they belong as something outside themselves, and with whose business they have little or nothing to do; they must be brought to feel that to be in touch with it is a necessity to them, that through it they can bring their own needs before a large public and promote their own work, and that at the same time its enlarging influence on their workers is helpful to a larger conception of their work. What is needed in all these directions is not only earnestness and enthusiasm, but good organization and good leadership. And the fact that our Local Councils have flourished as they have done point to the possession of these qualities by Canadian women, to a very high degree.

Sometimes people are foolish enough to suggest that this *Readiness for Emergency.* Council will not continue to flourish as it has done. Such remarks show that those who make them know but little of either the history or the constitution of the Council. One of the reasons why the Council has grown and developed as it has done is because it has met the desire which exists everywhere for Leadership—wise Leadership. It has proved a centre in every place round which workers can rally for common work—everything is ready for the emergency when it arises.

Take one instance—last year Canada was shocked one Monday by hearing that the town of Windsor, in Nova Scotia, had been totally destroyed by fire and that thousands of its inhabitants were homeless. Next day it learnt that in addition to the measures being taken by Provincial and other authorities for the relief of the sufferers, that a number of ladies from New Brunswick were already on the spot with supplies of food and clothing. Why were they there? Just because the President of the Local Council of St. John, Lady Tilley, whom we rejoice to see amongst us, summoned the Local Council immediately she heard the sad news. The Local

Council, representing, as it does, every class and all sections of society, were ready for the emergency, knew at once where to turn for help, and by the cooperation of the railway authorities were able to be on the spot with assistance within a few hours. They were joined within a day by the Halifax Council, who were able to take like prompt measures and to whom was entrusted a ~~sum~~ of public money by the Municipal authorities for purposes of relief.

I think that illustration gives a very fair example of the position that the Council should hold towards various public bodies. It does not seek to identify itself with any controversial propaganda. By its central principle it is forbidden so to do, inasmuch as it seeks to unite all who are seeking, according to the light given them, to work for the welfare of the world in whatsoever direction, and it may often unite those who think they are working for exactly opposite ends—for Women Suffrage and against it—for Prohibition and against it—it, therefore, cannot be sectional or denominational and cannot be looked upon with suspicion.

*Co-operation
of Public Men*

If, therefore, our public men, whether in the Dominion Parliament or Provincial Legislature, or on Municipal or other Boards, have to make enquiries and take up a policy which affects women and children, will they remember that there is an organised body of voluntary women workers who are ready to give their loyal and ready help to any object which will help forward the common good, and from whom the opinion of the women of the country, not of one section only but of all, can be ascertained.

I go back, however, to that question of the need of Leadership. Let us recognize this and let our leaders lead—There must be *definite* plans, and *definite* organization, but then comes in the beauty of our *organization*—The leaders and the led have every opportunity for the fullest possible mutual understanding of the plans of campaign to be adopted.

1. Definite leadership.
2. Constitutional methods, and approval and cooperation of all obtained.

In an organization such as ours where the component sections are so scattered and able to meet but rarely—where there are so many different ideas and objects and methods of work represented, there must of necessity be some on whom must devolve the duties of initiating a policy and of laying down the lines necessary for common action. There must be some to sit on our watch towers and who, commanding a wide outlook, can warn us of danger ahead and of work to be done. And our generals and headquarters staff must then show themselves leaders who have realized their responsibilities, who have mastered the features of the country to be occupied, who know what resources they have at their command, and who are able to put them to the best advantage, and who from their own earnestness, thoroughness and enthusiasm, are able to inspire our whole army, and every regiment of it with confidence.

*Necessity for
Leadership.*

But unlike most military commanders, our officers have the great advantage of being able to take all their soldiers into their confidence, and to have the advantage of advice and criticism from all. Every course of action adopted by our National Council has previously been twice subjected to the consideration of our Local Councils and National Societies, who can suggest any amendment or alteration they desire, and who should be able to send delegates thoroughly conversant with our work.

*Essentially
Womanly*

Thus we are most democratic in our constitution, giving an opening to the humblest and youngest member of Council to take her share in the moulding of our policy. But like all democracies the Will of our Council can only become truly effective for the best good of the country through wise and inspired Leadership. And that we have ample material for leaders every Local Council bears eloquent testimony. Taking our work as a whole we have been extraordinarily blessed in the choice of our first leaders. They have mostly been women of the world, not strongly attached to any one form of work

but in sympathy with the whole onward movement—wise, tolerant and tactful, but able to take a strong stand when required. I can assure the Presidents and Officers of the Local Councils and National Societies that the President of the National Council feels very deeply the obligations under which she and the whole Council are to these pioneers.

But I would also take this opportunity of urging very strongly on all our Local Officers the duty and necessity of *leading*. Professor Henry Drummond and to say that nine hundred and ninety-nine people out of every thousand could not put themselves to work—the thousandth must do it for them. And that is one of the duties of our leaders—they must allow no waste of work or of workers which can be avoided. Every community, however small, looks for its leader, and is effective and happy only when it finds him or her. And I am sure that one of the greatest reasons for the success and the growth of our Council is that our women workers in our various centres have found their leaders and are realizing their mission.

This means, then, a considerable amount of steady work and self-sacrifice on the part of those who join our Committees, and become their Officers. Yes, it does, if it is to be well done; but when once the patriotic and far-reaching effects of the Council are understood, and also its power for good on all the Local Councils and the members who federate with it, is it too much to hope that there will be found women who will be willing to give up their own particular society or institution for a year or two in turn to devote themselves to this even larger service.

Farewell.

And now I come to a word which I would fain avoid—for to many of you I must say "Farewell." To say farewell at any time, without emotion, one must be more or less than human. But you, my friends, have meant so much in my life in Canada, and not only to mine but to His Excellency, too, if I may whisper a secret. I have often told you of the difference it has made to us that we should through you be able to be in

constant touch with every part of the Dominion, with the feelings, aspirations and best efforts of the various Committees from East to West. This has enormously added to the interest and to the many sidedness of our life here, and also to our ability from time to time to try to be of some use in these various places.

But apart from this, how can I ever express to you my gratitude for the confidence, the loyalty, the friendship, which you have showered upon me, and which must ever fill the memories of my Canadian life with richness and beauty. Our common aim, our common work, has forged strong links, and to realize that from henceforth our life's work must lie in different spheres, remote one from the other, gives a wrench which should not come too often in life.

But hard as that wrench may be, it cannot burst the bonds which unite us. For what has been the basis of our association and friendship? May we not feel that it has been simply the service of God through the service of our fellows. Has it not been that according to our means and opportunity we have desired to strive after the highest ideal for ourselves, our homes and our country.

If this be so, nothing can separate us.

Unity of Aim is the basis of all Unity, and may we not pledge ourselves, one to the other, that we may never cease to strive after the glorious aim which has united us—and so nothing in the world can ever separate us, and maybe the separation of space may but serve to increase the unity of spirit, which is the only thing that matters.

May I leave a new motto with you to night in token of the unspoken compact which we will make, not to fail one another. It is contained in one word—

ALTIOR.