

them; and I sincerely trust that the future of this society may prove of the greatest benefit to the women of our country, and that we shall be able to draw together the organizations that already exist, and consolidate women's work in all directions. It is my greatest hope that this may be accomplished in such a manner as to militate in no way with existing societies, but rather that when the scheme is matured it may be found that the excellent work already begun will only be strengthened by the formation of an organization whose hospitality of thought and purpose should be greater than that of any other these islands have yet seen.

The Women's Council of Great Britain and Ireland must know no sect or section, no colour, creed or class, no Conservative or Liberal; but must open friendly doors to all women representing the societies that are to build up the betterment of the world; and in these difficult days perhaps not the least excellent feature in the scheme that will be placed before you to-night is the fact that it is International.

There is not a force on earth so much like spiritual dynamite as that *esprit de corps* which comes of touching elbows in a great movement for the exaltation of the race. If one woman's soul is inspired by a great purpose it transforms not only herself, but those who stand next to her; but if one thousand, or one million women, thus transformed, will stand together, they form a battery of power through which the spirit of God can send immeasurable blessings to all women everywhere, which means to all homes, which means to everything that lives and moves and has its being.

There can be no wider evolution of womanhood's organized and systematic efforts for women than these National Councils, federated to the International Council, will afford, and the concentration of power that may be sent out along lines of beneficent action is its *raison d'être*. For the plan contemplates the gathering into a local Council of all the women's associations in any city, town or village, these local Councils being represented by a delegate at the annual meeting of the National Council, and this again by delegates to the International. The Board of Control of the Local Council consists of the Presidents of the Federated societies, and by this plan they are all able more efficiently to unite their forces for any single object they have in view. For instance, to ameliorate the local ordinances in the interest of the least influential and intelligent classes, to minimise drinking on the part of women, and the power of the public house, the gambling house, the house of infamy; to place women on the School Board, the Parish Council, to secure the admission of women to institutions of honour or profit from which they are now shut out. It must be carefully noted that the Women's Council does not commit itself to a detailed programme, but only to a broad statement of principles, leaving each local, provincial and National Council to work out its own plan of education and campaign.

I desire to emphasise the fact that the plans for the formation of the National Women's Council are not mature. It may be considered advisable to take further counsel with existing organizations, for the greatest desire of those who advocate this scheme is to

strengthen women's work rather than attempt to engage in any effort that might weaken and divide any existing organized scheme. I personally have only accepted the Presidency for a time, in order to meet the wishes of the provisional committee; but I am sure that those who direct the movement desire the best interests of the women workers of this country.

Yours faithfully,

ISABEL SOMERSET.

The CHAIRMAN remarked that the proposed Council was not a society for doing the work of other societies; it was a body for the concentration of the powers of organisations already existing. Its idea was rather to stop the unnecessary diffusion of energy and to bring together fellow-workers who were working on the same lines. It was true that there already existed a society called the Union of Women Workers, which, he believed, was doing very useful work, but it was a body for consultation only, while the proposed National Council was essentially a body for co-operation and for joint work. It was an executive body, and not merely a consultative organisation.

Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK delivered an address, setting forth in detail the objects of the new Council, and declared that unless women learnt to co-operate with one another, they would never gain the benefits which they ought to have, and which they saw acquired by male organisations every day.

Professor ROBERTS-AUSTEN spoke from the scientific point of view as to the value of women's work.

Mrs. ALEC TWEEDIE said: "I feel almost ashamed, knowing my incapacity, to address you on such an enormous and important subject as agriculture, or rather a branch of it—dairying. It is in consequence of my pamphlet 'Danish *versus* English Butter Making' that I am here, and I speak to you because the subject appeals directly to women. Few of us realise that nearly fourteen million pounds sterling is paid out of this country every year for butter alone, and that this import is yearly increasing. Twenty or thirty years ago agricultural Denmark was in much the same position of distress that agricultural England is to-day; but the Danes saw the advisability of combining together, that is to say, making butter factories, keeping to one standard, and aiming at excellence of quality; it is by this means they have become rich and prosperous, and there are now some 1,200 factories in working order in Denmark alone. Co-operation means uniformity, and uniformity means an ever increasing and extending market. It is this co-operation that has done so much for Denmark, France, Australia, &c., and as we have forgotten how to make butter on the old principles in our farms, would it not be better to co-operate also and learn to make it on the new?"

Let us look at our breakfast table alone; we have eggs from Russia or Italy (we import half a million eggs a day), milk comes from Holland frozen in cans, our bacon from Denmark, and our butter from Brittany and Normandy. Every one of these four things we can make equally well for ourselves if we choose, and by doing so we shall keep our trade in our own country and we shall be assured of fresh provisions. Let us women of the Grand Council co-operate and form a *Woman's British Produce League* for the improvement and encouragement of British produce in such a way as to regain for it the command of the

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