

ance owing to the fact that the London School Board had carried through an enquiry into the number of these crippled children in London. The whole paper was of such great interest to the community that we hope to deal with it at some length next week.

#### THE EMPIRE'S CLAIM ON WOMEN.

Speaking on the Work of Women as Government Officials and on Public Boards, Miss Busk, formerly a member of the Vestry of St. George-The-Martyr, Southwark (and one of those splendid municipal workers of whom London has been deprived by the infamous new Borough Councils Bill), spoke most eloquently of "The Public Service which our Country Claims at Woman's Hands."

Miss Busk said that hitherto their thought had been what could they do for their neighbour, but now they were glad to regard that question in a much larger way, one that would lead them out of narrow parochialism into a sphere so wide that they could not at first perhaps grasp all its possibilities. The question they were now glad to ask themselves was what they could do to make this great empire a better one than it was. The public service which their country claimed at women's hands was what she urged them to consider, and she used the word "claims" advisedly because undoubtedly if they were to take even the humblest part in trying to improve the condition of those among whom their lot was cast, they could not afford to neglect any of those openings for public work which had been given them; and the mere fact that there was an opening constituted a claim. It seemed almost a work of supererogation to put forward arguments why women should take their place as managers of elementary schools and as members of School Boards. In the voluntary schools more than half the children were girls, and two-thirds of the teachers were women. Indicating spheres of usefulness for women in public life, Miss Busk urged them to become school managers, and in that capacity to grasp the principles of the various branches of elementary teaching, and cultivate friendly intercourse with teachers and scholars. Teachers had a solitary life, although they lived in a crowd, and, as a body, were very open to the help and sympathy a manager could offer.

#### WORK ON BOARDS OF GUARDIANS.

The value of the co-operation of women on Boards of Guardians was so universally admitted that one hoped the day might not be distant when they would have representatives on every Board. Anything to do with women and children was of course their province, and in schools for destitute children what good they could do. The speaker dealt exhaustively with the work of Parish Councils, and claimed that in such important matters as hospital accommodation, cottage accommodation, and the like, women could do valuable work. Someone had said Parish Councils were the invention of the devil, and surely there was room even there for the peacemaker. Some women had realised the importance of sanitary work: this had been spoken of as preventive, while the work of the Board of Guardians was curative. Commenting on women's work on London Vestries and other bodies in recent years, Miss Busk said that if women did not take up this work before, it was because they failed to recognise that although their work on those bodies might not bring them into personal touch with those they desired to serve, yet the work affected human

needs in a very special manner. The work par excellence for women was that of the Health Committees by which they accomplished work of the highest importance to the community, which no philanthropy had the power to do. Men and women had each their gifts, and it was in the frank recognition of that and the union of their forces that the best work would be done.

Mrs. Boulnois briefly spoke in favour of women sanitary inspectors, declaring that this was a most suitable work for women.

Another speaker voiced the suggestion made some time ago in this paper that it was of the utmost importance that they should have women Commissioners of Lunacy, also women Prison Commissioners, and women as Inspectors of Prisons and Asylums.

On Wednesday, Miss Louisa Stevenson, of Edinburgh, read her most able paper on "The Work of Women on Hospital Boards," which we print in full, and she was followed by Miss Georgiana Hill on the same subject, a very interesting discussion took place on this important question, which we consider of sufficient value to give at length next week.

### THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

#### THE BUSINESS MEETING.

The annual business meeting was held in the Banqueting Hall at the Royal Pavilion in the afternoon, when the Hon. Mrs. A. T. Lyttelton presided over a numerous audience. The first business transacted was the filling up and handing in of the ballot papers for the election of the officers for the ensuing season. The counting of these was not proceeded with at the meeting, and the result will be announced later. After this Miss Janes, Secretary N.U.W.W., read her annual report, which stated that the formation of a Moral Education Sub-Committee of the Preventive and Rescue Society had been sanctioned, and had a prospect of useful work before it. The consideration of the quarterly reports of the Sectional Committees presented had occupied much time and attention. One new branch had been formed, that for Portsmouth and Southsea, which numbered among its members the President, Mother Emma, one of the Vice-Presidents, and Mrs. W. J. Hawksley. The following Societies had joined the Union: The Women's Agricultural and Horticultural International Union, the Dublin Women's Local Government and Women's Suffrage Society, the Bedford College, the Incorporated Society of Trained Masseuses, the Phonographic Union, and the Daughters of the King. They had all but outgrown the offices in Berners Street, the rent of which had been reduced from £65 to £60. While acknowledging the value of the voluntary services which had been rendered, the Report went on to express the opinion that it would be much more satisfactory when they could have a properly organised and dependable staff of their own; but to ensure this was largely a matter of funds. At present the Union paid for one clerk, and it would be impossible to get through the work were it not for these extraneous helpers to whom, and to the ladies who enabled the Union to have their

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)