

OUTSIDE THE GATES.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

At its annual meeting held at Harrogate last week, the National Union of Women Workers adopted as its title "The National Council of Women," as suggested a quarter-of-a-century ago, when Mrs. Mary Wright Sewell, the founder of the International Council of Women, proposed to Mrs. Eva Maclaren that such a council should be founded in the United Kingdom. Another "long, long trail"!

Much time was given to the revision of the Constitution, the most important innovation adopted being to eliminate sex, from Object 3 of the Council, which ran: "To co-ordinate women's organizations nationally and locally" The word "women's" has been eliminated in the new Constitution, so that for the future, societies governed by men, although having women members, are eligible for affiliation. Women alone can be delegates and members of committees, but as delegates are instructed how to vote, men-managed societies will have real power in the National Council of Women. Self-governing women's societies, at least, those composed of wage-earners, will certainly object to this innovation, and, we think, to be accurate, the new title should make it clear that it affiliates both sexes as provided under No. 3 of Article IV, in defining membership.

The President, Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, suggested that messages of congratulation should be sent to General Foch and to Sir Douglas Haig. The proposal was enthusiastically endorsed, with a further suggestion that the services of the Navy and Air Force should be likewise recognised.

Many resolutions in support of useful reforms were agreed to.

WOMEN AND LABOUR.

The National Conference on Women's Civic and Political Rights and Responsibilities, organised by the Labour Party, at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on the 15th and 16th inst., brought together some remarkable women. Amongst chairs and speakers, Dr. Ethel Bentham, Miss Susan Lawrence, L.C.C., Mrs. Sidney Webb, Miss Mary Macarthur, Dr. Marion Phillips, Mrs. Salter and Miss Margaret Bondfield were prominent. They discussed with eloquence and feeling "The Civic Rights of Women," "Ministry of Health and Maternity and Child Welfare Act," "Housing," "The Political Organisation of Women," "The Prevention of Venereal Disease," and "Food Problems after the War."

Many women's societies did not accept the invitation to send delegates owing to the participation of pronounced pacifists in the Conference.

WELCOME TO "ROBERTA."

The Home Office has decided to recognise a force of Women Police in London. We wish "Roberta" every success.

BOOK OF THE WEEK.

"THE SOUL OF SUSAN YELLAM."*

War from the point of view of a country village is the theme that Mr. Vachell has chosen for his latest book, and war more especially from the point of view of Susan Yellam.

"Sunday after Sunday Susan Yellam sat bolt upright in her pew. Her son, Alfred, sat beside her. Mother and son were never guilty of missing a response or of looking behind them, or of failing to contribute something in copper to the offertory plate. If a stranger happened to be conducting the service, and if he was so lost to decency as to display an unseemly haste, Mrs. Yellam's voice might be heard loud and clear setting the proper pace. At the end of every prayer her 'Amen' came to be accepted even by the young and thoughtless as a grace and benediction."

Always she wore decent black, as became a woman who has buried, in the churchyard outside, a husband and three children.

Her clothes were not the least part of her personality.

Authority exuded from every pore in her skin.

She possessed the British cocksureness which so endears us to foreigners. The parson, Mr. Hamlin, observed of her that she was temperamentally incapable of detecting the defects of her great qualities.

Alfred was what the French term "*un celibataire endurci*." And he was made extremely comfortable at home.

But he had passed his thirtieth year, and of late his mother had hinted discreetly that her cottage, larger than most, could accommodate three persons or more.

Alfred, who was the village carrier, met his fate when he brought Fancy Broomfield to her first place at the vicarage in his cart. He left her and her modest box at the door. She thanked him demurely, and asked him how much she owed him. Alfred was tempted to demand a kiss in payment, but a glance at the virginal face restrained him. He said instead, "One shilling, please, Miss." When he found himself alone he transferred the shilling to another pocket, wondering furtively if he were making a fool of himself.

But with the engagement came the other problem, for it took place at the outbreak of the war.

The slow working of Alfred's bucolic mind is well described, but the wrestling with his love for his mother and Fancy and his duty to his country do not tempt Mr. Vachell to stray from the path of sober realism.

"He said heavily—

"I ain't one for argument. I only know this, dear, if I go, others go too. And the men are wanted, Captain Lionel says. And if he says so, 'tis so. I feel I ought to go if you approve. When

* By Horace Annesley Vachell. Cassell & Co., London.

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