

## OUTSIDE THE GATES.

### THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN IN CONFERENCE AT ABERDEEN.

Report presented by Miss E. Brodie, Councillor, to the  
British College of Nurses.

The Conference of the National Council of Women of Great Britain held at Aberdeen from June 15th-20th, opened with an informal reception to the delegates on Monday evening, but the real business began on Tuesday.

On Tuesday morning a service was held in the Cathedral of St. Machar, when Sir George Adam Smith extended a welcome in the name of the Church and Universities, and said how much the work of the National Council of Women was appreciated by these bodies, and although the tasks which confronted these women were more formidable than the pioneers had to face, they had to remember that many were equipped with a wider experience and more powerful impetus than launched their forerunners on their course.

Beautiful music was rendered.

The meeting in the Music Hall opened with a welcome from Lord Provost Rust on behalf of the citizens of Aberdeen, and from the Marchioness of Aberdeen on behalf of the County, and the Aberdeen Branch of the N.C.W., of which she is president. Mrs. Keynes presided.

The Lord Provost said that while public bodies might not be able to go as far in the matter of reform as the National Council of Women would like, he assured them that they would greatly value the advice, suggestions, and opinions they expected to be expressed during the next few days.

Lady Aberdeen recalled that this was the fourth time that she had had the honour to welcome the N.C.W. in Conference to Aberdeen. The first time was in 1888.

Mrs. Keynes in her presidential address said that Scotland had been very hospitable to the N.C.W. She enumerated the honours conferred on three of its Scottish Vice-Presidents, and also made sympathetic reference to the death of Lady Frances Balfour. Mrs. Keynes pointed out that although much had been done, there was still work for the N.C.W. to do.

The first item on the Agenda was the consideration of a resolution requesting the Home Office to appoint a woman Prison Commissioner, to have supervision over all prisons where women are confined, and to urge upon the Government the necessity for reform of the method dealing with women prisoners. This was passed without amendment.

The next item was the resolution calling upon the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Scotland to draft regulations for policewomen, to be submitted to a Police Council called and selected for that purpose. Passed with the amendment "that women shall have a fair representation."

The resolution that a woman, married or unmarried, should have the same right as a man to retain her nationality, was proposed by Lady Emmott, and seconded by Madame Lorisignol.

There was a keen debate on the question of cinema reform, when an amendment to ask for a Government inquiry, rather than that a Consultative Committee should be set up, was put forward by Mrs. Barnes, of Birmingham.

The Birmingham amendment was lost, and the resolution was carried by a large majority.

On Tuesday evening papers were read by Miss Evelyn Fox and Dr. Hamilton Marr on "Mental Deficiency," and by Miss Musson on "Opportunities offered by the Nursing Profession."

Dr. Marr in an interesting paper said that in his opinion the mental defect should always remain on a special register, that while he might be able to support himself,

he would never be able to assume the responsibilities of citizenship.

On Wednesday morning the meeting opened with a short religious service conducted by the Rev. A. W. Scudamore Forbes, D.D., Minister of the West Church of St. Nicholas.

There was a heated discussion on a resolution dealing with the disarmament question, when an amendment was moved in relation to the phrase "that the expenditure on armaments in those countries upon whom reductions were not imposed by the Peace Treaties shall be substantially reduced," that in place of "shall be substantially reduced," the words "shall be reduced by 25 per cent." should be inserted. This amendment was moved by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.

A further amendment that Great Britain be excluded from further reduction in naval armaments until other countries had reduced theirs in the same proportion moved by Miss Paterson, East Dorset, was lost.

The resolution was carried.

No. 6 on the Agenda, "The Examination of Juvenile Offenders," was then dealt with.

An amendment was moved that the words "who need such examination" be deleted and that all offenders be examined, but an amendment moved by Dr. Jane Walker that the words "necessary expert examination" be used instead was carried.

The resolution that the Government should be urged to provide remand homes for all persons up to 21 years of age awaiting trial was carried.

The Wills and Intestacies Bills resolution, urging that legislation be provided requiring a testator to provide for his wife and children, was adopted.

On Wednesday a reception was held in the Art Gallery by the Lord Provost and Councillors. The assemblage was a gay one. A band provided beautiful music, and the Aberdeen Fisher Girls' Choir rendered songs under the guidance of Baillie Allenby.

The devotional service on Thursday morning was conducted by Bishop Deane.

The resolution "That a Royal Commission be appointed to make full inquiries into the causation of Mental Deficiency, into its relationship to other abnormal conditions and social problems, and into any measures including both segregation and sterilisation by which it might be prevented," was proposed by Miss Evelyn Fox. Mrs. Bond, Leicester, proposed an amendment that voluntary sterilisation in the case of persons liable to transmit physical or mental disease be legalised and was seconded by Mrs. Hodson, London. This amendment was defeated and the resolution carried.

The resolution that "In view of the large increase in the floating population due to unemployment, the N.C.W. urges its branches to enquire in their respective areas as to the accommodation open to women, other than on premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquor, and to consider the advisability of providing suitable lodgings for women," was sympathetically received and passed.

The resolution that the "Government disregard party divisions and unite in seeking a solution to the unemployment and agricultural difficulties" was carried by a two-thirds majority.

A resolution urging compulsory day or evening classes for unemployed persons between 14 and 16 years of age was carried by general acclamation.

The suggestion that the N.C.W. should bring pressure to bear on Local Authorities to employ women house property managers was freely discussed. It was generally agreed that such an officer would be more helpful to the woman of the house, who is usually the one to pay the rent, than a male official.

Dr. Jane Walker gave an illuminating paper on "The right use of Leisure." She reviewed the changes that had

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)