

ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

FIFTEENTH SESSION



BANGALORE :
December 27 to 31, 1941.

ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

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Rameshwari Nehru
President, All India Women's Conference
Bangalore, Dec. 1940,

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Bangalore Session—December, 1940.

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Srimati Yegonni Venkataratnam

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Mrs. S. Pradhan,
Mrs. Amina Tyabji
Mrs. Dina Irani

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Mrs. Sudha Mazumdar

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Miss Renu Roy
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Shree V. K. Draupathi
Amma
Dr. Mrs. T. Francis
Miss Ammu Amma
Shri M. Lakshmikutty Amm
Mrs. T. M. Varkey
Shri Vidwan Karthiyani
Amma
Mrs. V. Menon.

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Mrs. Rohna Ghatge
Mrs. Nirmolini Halder
Mrs. Kitty Shiva Rao
Dr. Mrs. M. B. Kagal

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Mrs. Mehra N. Ginwala
Dr. Gangubai Hadkar
Miss Nalini Dalal

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Mrs. Premlata Gupta
Mrs. Husain Ali Khan
Mrs. Amir Hasan
Mrs. Rahmatullah

Hyderabad (Deccan)—(cont.)

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Mrs. Yusuf Mirza
Mrs. Mujtab Husain Naqvi
Mrs. Afzaluddin Lukmani
Beshirunissa Begum Bashir
Mrs. Abdul Hamid
Miss Leilamani Naidu

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Mrs. Bhagirathi Datar
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Miss Premalabai Bhandarkar
Mrs. Kundarani Gandhey
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Miss Barret
Mrs. Shantabai Harishchandra

KOLHAPUR—

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Mrs. Ramabai Kelkar
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Shrimati Ammu Swaminadhan
Miss Faith Parmalee
Mrs. Nazir Husain

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Mrs. Vimalabai Jog

MALABAR—

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Miss Revathi

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Dr. P. Isaac
Shrimati S. Nanjamma
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Mrs. Wagendran
Mrs. T. Ramaiah
Mrs. Mandeman
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Mrs. K. Veramma
Mrs. Kamalamma Dasappa
Mrs. B. Menon

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Mrs. Kamalabai Karnik
Mrs. Janakibai Godbole
Mrs. Ramabai Kanade
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Mrs. Maltibai Uplekar

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Miss P. Bhagat
Mrs. Majid
Miss Vidya Bhandari
Shrimati P. K. Singh
Mrs. N. D. Puri
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Mrs. Gooneratnam Cooke
Miss Avabai Mehta
Mrs. Pirojbai Mehta

THE FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE.

For the second time during the fifteen years of its existence the A. I. W. C. met in a State, in Mysore. Fifteen years have seen changes not only in the work of the Conference, in the broadening of its aims and policy, but also in the growth of its influence as the leading women's organisation of India. At Bangalore, in 1940, the Conference was hardly the small band of educational enthusiasts who met in Poona at its first session. The scope of the Conference has widened to include all aspects of national life; it has further developed an international outlook, the inevitable consequence of the realisation of the unity and sisterhood of women.

The length of the session was cut down as an experimental measure. One often heard the comment that while the most important political organisation of the country only took a couple of days to arrive at momentous decisions, the A. I. W. C. took at least a week to reiterate their demands! The relative shortness of the session this year did take away some of the leisureliness of discussion. But it was just as well to learn to do the necessary work within the minimum time.

The Bangalore Reception Committee did not spare itself. The opening of the Exhibition, usually a prefatory function of the annual session became an affair of separate importance. Then there was the visiting delegation from Ceylon, a heartening feature in these days of mutual distrust between the two neighbours. Then there were visits to factories and institutions, that pleasant afternoon function at the Mahila Seva Samaj when the portrait of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi was unveiled by Begum Hamid Ali, the civic reception to the delegates, the various At Homes and last but not the least, the public meeting when the men demurely listened to all that the women had to say, a mutual exchange of courtesies no doubt, as the men were allowed to speak freely on the women's movement on the opening day.

The procedure also had slightly changed. The separate group system was tried for the first time. Although it is too early to gauge its success it was a time-saving device as it did away with the Findings Committee and gave more opportunities for discussion at the plenary sessions.

We thank the Bangalore Reception Committee and the Government of Mysore for the facilities afforded to the delegates to visit places of interest and the liberal hospitality provided for all the delegates to the Conference. We hope that the delegates have carried the message of the annual session to their various districts and would give additional impetus to the Conference work.

ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE.

Programme of the opening session.

December 27th, 1940 : at 5-15 p.m.

1. Welcome Song.
2. Election of the President :—
Proposed by : Begum Hamid Ali.
Seconded by : Mrs. Rustomji Faridoonji.
3. Reading of the Messages.
4. Welcome Address.
Lady Mirza M. Ismail, Chairwoman of the Reception Committee.
5. Annual Report.
Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon, Hon. General Secretary, A.I.W.C.
6. Presidential Address.
Srimathi Rameshwari Nehru.
7. Other Addresses.
 - (i) Amin-ul-Mulk Sir Mirza Ismail, (Read by Rajamantrapravina N. Madhava Rao, B.A., B.L.)
 - (ii) Rajamantrapravina K. V. Anantaraman.
 - (iii) Dr. J. H. Cousins.
 - (iv) Mr. D. V. Gundappa.
 - (v) Miss Cissy Cooray, Leader of Ceylon Delegation.
 - (vi) Rajacharithavisarada Rao Sahib C. Hayavadana Rao.
8. Vote of thanks.

The proceedings began at 5-15 p.m. with a welcome song after which Mrs. Mandyam requested Begum Hamid Ali to open the Conference. **Begum Hamid Ali** in opening the Conference spoke as follows :—

Lady Mirza Ismail, Members of the Reception Committee, Sister Delegates, and Brothers,

It is a great privilege conferred on me, to declare this Conference open today. Before doing so I would like to give a very brief history of the All-India Women's Conference. I have no doubt that all our friends here to-day have some sort of an idea as to when the Conference was started and what it had been able to do for the past fifteen years. We are greatly privileged to have with us the mother of our Conference—Mrs. Cousins, amidst us today. (Applause).

We also have two of the active members on this dais and more than two patrons who are called the foundation members and quite a good number of standing committee members, who came to the first Conference at Poona, and some of the oldest and best workers who joined later on and among them, I should like to mention Rajkumari Amritkaur, and Mrs. Rustomji Faridoonji, the old friends of the Conference, who, with Mrs. Cousins first took very great trouble in attending these Conferences. With the blessings of the people around us, who started the Conference, I am sure that we shall carry this Session to a successful end. Although the work of the Conference began with educational reform only, gradually we included social reform. Then we found how necessary it was to take up political questions. In 1932 when the question of the New Constitution was on the anvil we took up the very large question of Franchise for women and other matters which dealt directly with civic life and well-being of the nation. Now the Conference has spread itself into all walks of life. We deal with questions, not only of educational and social reform purely, but with other things. Now we have a large number of committees which deal with every aspect of national life. With these few words I declare this Conference open. (Applause.)

In proposing Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru to be President of the Conference, **Begum Hamid Ali** again spoke as follows :—

I have very great pleasure in proposing you to the chair today. You have been a very staunch supporter and worker of the All-India Women's

Conference. We know the great work you have done in other spheres not only for women but for the uplift of the *Harijans*. We are honouring ourselves by honouring you. Now I request you to take the chair. (Cheers.)

Mrs. Rustomji Faridoonji in seconding the proposal said :—

Members of the Reception Committee, and Sister Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me extreme pleasure to second Mrs. Hamid Ali.

Mrs. Brijlal Nehru has been one of our silent workers from the second year of our Conference, and as most of you know she has made the cause of the *Harijans* her own, for the last few years and has devoted herself to it. She has never spared herself and few of us can realize what tiring work her long long journeys from North to South and East to West in India must have been. She was able to convince many with her sincerity and in the justice of the cause she has undertaken. We also hope that her intimate contact with them will bring more *Harijan* delegates to our Conference. We in this Conference who stand for freedom of the right kind, freedom from injustice, freedom to work, freedom to expand our activities, feel that Mrs. Nehru has done a great piece of constructive work for this Conference and that she has helped to get that freedom for some of our unfortunates is a matter of great gratification for the Conference. Her intense industry as she never spares herself, her great sympathy and her spiritual nature well befit her as a leader among Indian women. Her simplicity, geniality, and above all her sincerity has endeared her to all of us. We feel that at this critical time her advanced yet balanced views will be of a great help to our cause. We, the old guard, now on the point of retiring have faith that our baby growing up to adolescence, and having so many of our young, enthusiastic workers ready to carry on, *shall* and *will* thrive as years go by. I for one firmly believe that the regeneration of India will come through her women and our Conference is but the educative process for our women. (Cheers).

Dear friend, may God give you health and strength for the work that lies before you, and may you have the best of luck through 1941.

Srimati K. D. Rukmini Ammal then garlanded Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru amidst cheers.

Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon, the General Secretary of the All-India Women's Conference, next read out the messages* received from those interested in the work of the Women's Conference, distinguished men and women, friends and others.

Message of

His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore.

Mysore is proud today that in its turn it welcomes the All-India Women's Conference. It gives me great pleasure to join in this welcome and wish the Conference and its deliberations every success. I can do nothing better on this occasion than pass on to the Conference the saying of a Great man, Shakespeare, "Women are the books, the arts, the academies, that show, contain and nourish all the world."

Message of

Mahatma Gandhi.

I hope that the A.I.W.C. will stand up for unadulterated non-violence at this critical period of world's history.—M. K. GANDHI.

WELCOME ADDRESS

by

Lady Mirza M. Ismail

(Chairwoman of the Reception Committee).

Sister Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my most pleasant duty as Chairwoman of the Reception Committee of the Mysore State Women's Conference which is a constituent of the All-India Women's Conference, to offer a hearty welcome to you, the Office-bearers of the All-India Women's Conference and the Delegates from its constituencies, to this its fifteenth annual session.

We have long hoped that the time would come when it would be possible to have the inspiration of such a Conference in our midst. We know from delegates of our State to previous sessions in other parts of India, that such gatherings of earnest and capable women are fruitful in the interchange of experience and in stimulus to extended activity for the betterment of the lives of the women and children of the country. Yet, while we would have desired an earlier session of the Conference in Mysore

*See Appendix I for full list of messages.



Lady Mirza Ismail,
Chairwoman, Reception Committee, Bangalore.

State, we accept as compensation the fact that the enthusiasm of the Conference for its ideals remains fresh, also that the scope of its interest has widened from education only to the inclusion of everything that concerns women's affairs and the experience of the members has deepened not only in passing necessary resolutions but in organizing their application in life according to the needs and traditions of the different groups that make up the vast human unity of India.

Here, in Mysore, we have done what we could to put into practice the ideals of the All-India Women's Conference regarding the welfare of women and children of all grades of society and all shades of belief. Branches of the Mysore State Women's Conference in various parts of the country work for the spread of the spirit of service among their sisters and for the modification of circumstances that stand in the way of such service. They work also for the education of girls along lines that will help them to become both useful and happy human beings. The success of our work in this respect will be evident from the free intelligence of the women of Mysore, with whom the delegates will come in contact. I am happy to say that our work for the general advancement of women has had the sympathy and help of those in authority, and that substantial grants have been made by Government for the education of girls.

We look forward to a large accession of interest in our work and assistance in carrying it out, as a result of your session in Mysore State. We trust also that your presence in this ancient land, with its venerable tradition of high culture and responsiveness to the growing needs of human expression and organization, will afford enrichment to the knowledge of the Conference as a whole. From such interchange between the Conference and its constituencies there will arise clearer vision and more stable and continuous purpose in clearing the way for the bringing of the influence of women more fully into the general life of the country. In this way our work will become associated with the work of women all over the world for the fundamentals of human prosperity, happiness and peace. Today the world is threatened with ruin by circumstances that have been created outside the influence of women. Our deepest hope is that the deliberations and activities of this Conference may be guided towards the attainment of peace both in India and the world at large.

Again, I offer you our most cordial welcome to our State for your fifteenth annual Conference, and that you will carry away with you happy memories of your visit.

The Welcome Address of Lady Mirza Ismail was read by Srimati K. D. Rukmini Ammal. Srimati K. D. Rukmani Ammal before reading the address, spoke as follows:—

Madam, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lady Mirza Ismail, the Distinguished President of our Reception Committee, is *Purdah*, and so on her behalf I am to read out this Welcome Address. Gladdened and honoured I feel for this great honour done to me.

Srimati K. D. Rukmini Ammal supplemented the Welcome Address with the following words:—

One last word I am asked to say. Human efforts are not at all very complete, at any time. And so our efforts in making the stay of the delegates and the Reception Committee members in Bangalore, may have some shortcomings. Therefore I shall not apologise.

Mrs. Mandyam announced at this stage that Mrs. Nanjamma would be translating the Welcome Address for the benefit of the Kannada-speaking gathering present. Mrs. S. Nanjamma read the Kanarese translation of the Welcome Address.

ANNUAL REPORT 1940.

by

The Hon. General Secretary, Lakshmi N. Menon.

The year under report, notwithstanding the serious international outlook, has been for the Conference remarkably uneventful. The 115 Branches and Sub-Bran^{ch}es with a registered membership of 5,200, scattered all over this Continent, carried on their constructive programme unimpeded. The aid to war efforts, where such work has been included on the programme, has been an additional activity and not done in detriment to the normal activities of the Branch Committees. Almost every Branch has adopted the liquidation of illiteracy especially among adult women and girls as the main plank of its platform. The quiet determination with which the Conference units pursue this self-imposed task is the



Lakshmi N. Menon
Hon. General Secretary,
All-India Women's Conference, 1940.

most encouraging feature of our current activities. Its numerous other interests, such as conducting hostels for girls, maternity and child welfare centres, nursery schools especially for children of women employed in trades and industries, swadeshi exhibitions and popularising indigenous industries, continue with increasing keenness.

In the sphere of legislation a further attempt to ameliorate the condition of Hindu women is seen in the introduction of two Bills by Dr. Deshmukh in the Central Legislative Assembly, one to provide for judicial separation and divorce and the other to give Hindu married women a right to separate maintenance and residence under certain circumstances. The agitation carried on by the Conference during the last few years to get a committee appointed to enquire into the legal disabilities of Indian women has not yet resulted in anything tangible. The Home Member's recent announcement that the Government proposed to appoint a committee of eminent lawyers for advising it how the existing Hindu Law should be amended for removing certain hardships caused to daughters with regard to inheritance does not give us any hope, as even the idea of appointing a committee under Sir N. N. Sircar with such limited terms of reference as the consideration of separate residence for Hindu women had to be postponed because the Central Government could not spare the funds.

The Lady Irwin College has kept up its record of usefulness and efficiency. The examination results and inspection reports of the two committees are very encouraging. Additional accommodation has been built which has enabled the College to register over 100 girls as resident students this year. But the College stands in need of financial aid for further necessary expansion, in the matter of staff, accommodation and a Handicrafts and Arts Department.

The quarterly bulletin of the Conference, now edited by Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon, is gaining in popularity and has been received with approbation by the general public for its informative and interesting contents.

The idea of sending a Goodwill Delegation of Women to China on behalf of the Conference had unfortunately to be postponed for various reasons. We are glad, however, to welcome among us our Sister Delegates from Ceylon. We hope that they would contribute to our deliberations and help us to stabilise the friendly relations between the two neighbours.

We regret to note the absence of some of our office-bearers and active workers who are away in jail. The absence of our greatest Leader and Patron, Mrs. Naidu, owing to reasons of health is a source of anxiety to all of us. We hope that they will be able to rejoin us soon.

Although the Conference is a non-political organisation, it has among its members, we are proud to say, some of the leading political workers of the country. This only emphasises the non-sectarian and resilient nature of our organisation.

The general policy of the Conference is to work for the welfare of this country, especially of its women and children. It has consistently worked for communal harmony, national unity and national self-respect. Its aims and objects, its ideals and dreams are for the establishment of a free, happy and united India. In order to achieve this it has willingly co-operated with Governments and political parties in their constructive programmes and would do the same in the future as well. More than any other group in India, we feel that our aim should be not only to explain social facts but completely change the social, economic and political outlook of this country. We, therefore, agitate for compulsory education, provision of opportunities for women in all the services and professions, a uniform civil code for all persons living in India and abolition of personal laws which emphasise communal differences. While we remember with pride the ideals of the past, we dare not ignore the hard realities of the present or forget our responsibilities to the future. It was one of Thomas Henry Huxley's aphorisms "that the great end of life is not knowledge but action". We who belong to a less scientifically minded nation may, however, be allowed to insist that the great aim of life is knowledge leading to decisive action.

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

Sister Delegates and Friends,

I wish I could address you in Hindustani to-day. We have been advocating a common language for the country and our organisation has recognised the claims of Hindustani as the *lingua franca* for India. In a women's assembly of an all-India character, Hindustani is the only and the most suitable medium of expression. But, unfortunately, the time for its usage on an occasion like the present has not yet come. I still have to labour through a foreign language to make myself understood. I

beseech your forgiveness for the flaws in my language and hope that before long, we shall be relieved of this handicap and Hindustani will be generally understood and spoken even in the South.

We are meeting at a particularly critical time when gloom envelops the world and our hearts are heavy. Vice has taken hold of men's minds and the demon of violence has assumed a form which is threatening to engulf the whole human race. But the work of the world must go on and we have to be at our post of duty as ordained by Almighty Providence which knows best. And so you find me here before you in response to your call as your elected President for this year. I am deeply grateful for the honour you have done me and appreciate the love and confidence shown to me. My association with the Conference has been close and long. I have had the privilege of serving it in various capacities during the fifteen years of its existence. And though during these years there have been times when other objects claimed my attention more, my love for and interest in the Conference never flagged. At this time, when you have chosen to give me the highest office in your organisation, I feel a little diffident; for the responsibility of the President of a big All-India Organisation is great and it is greater when momentous events of far-reaching significance are happening. The consciousness that there are old and experienced co-workers who will be sharing the burden of responsibility with me gives me courage. I regret, however, that I am denied the privilege of the wise counsel of some of the old and trusted officers of the Conference. They are not present here today because they are serving India elsewhere. I am sorry for this personal loss, but I rejoice that these brave comrades have responded to the country's call and by their sacrifices have brought India a step nearer to its cherished goal. They are the soldiers of peace and we are truly proud of them. The cause of India's freedom is theirs as well as ours and it is a just and righteous cause which sooner or later is bound to succeed.

At this time, my thoughts go to sisters in the West as well as in the East who are facing the greatest misfortunes ever known in history. Had it not been for this terrible calamity which has overtaken the world, some of them would have been here with us today. I cannot help missing them and regret the circumstances which have caused their absence. I can assure them on behalf of myself and of the Conference that we share their

sorrow. The picture of the little children, of the men and women, old and young, who are constantly living under the threat of bombs, whose hearths and homes are broken, whose limbs are mutilated, whose lands are devastated, is ever present before our minds and fills us with grief. We cannot forget that those kindred peoples are living with death constantly hovering over their heads. Under the continuous rain of bombs, they know no sleep, no rest, no peace. I can tell them as long as these conditions last, there is no peace and rest for us either. We cannot sit quiet at homes when this terrible fire is raging around us.

Conditions at home are not less gloomy. They affect us as much, if not more. We are pledged not to take part in party politics, but as Indians and women, we cannot remain indifferent to matters of vital importance to our country. We may or may not agree with civil disobedience, but we cannot be indifferent to the principle of the freedom of pen and speech, for which brave sons and daughters of the nation are being sent behind the prison bars. Our hearts are sore at the imprisonment of these brave men and women of whom any country would be proud. (Applause.) The monstrous sentence of four years' rigorous imprisonment passed on Jawaharlal cannot but wring our hearts with pain. We as women struggling for our own freedom cannot help raising our voices against suppression or oppression in all spheres. I pray that wiser counsels may prevail and the impasse may soon be ended.

Our sympathies also go to those small nations of the world who are losing their independence one after another and are being trodden under the iron heel of despotism. Some of them put up brave fights against the onslaught of aggression. They counted no cost too great for the protection of their integrity and independence. They sacrificed freely their lives and money, but nothing availed them and they had to bow down before the superior force of violence. This fact fills us with horror and pain. More than horror and pain, it makes us think and cogitate. It is evident from these happenings that the methods of violence have become obsolete in defence of rightcousness. They have lost their potency. They cannot protect small nations against bigger ones possessing superior physical force. Some other means, therefore, must be found to save the smaller peoples from the tyranny of the bigger ones. But to this subject, I shall refer later on.

Before proceeding further, it is my pleasant duty to offer felicitations to our sisters from Ceylon. Their presence here amongst us on a mission of goodwill, at this particular time of struggle and strife, is most welcome. Ceylon and India are not strangers. They are very close neighbours. Their contacts go back to pre-historic times. Their culture and traditions are common and there has always been between them a free exchange of goods, and of peoples and of ideas. From the earliest times, a spirit of friendship has existed between the two and both have learnt a great deal from each other. We appreciate, sisters, the trouble you have taken in coming all the way from home as special delegates to our Conference to take part in our deliberations, to cultivate our friendship and to understand our problems. We fully reciprocate your feelings and hope that, as a result of this visit, the friendship between the two countries will strengthen and the little misunderstanding which crept into our relationship will vanish. We are most grateful to you for coming to our land. (Cheers.)

I cannot help remarking at this moment that had times been normal, we might have had the good fortune of welcoming today Madame Chiang Kai Shek amongst us. In answer to our invitation of last year, she was good enough to say that when she got a little leisure from her pre-occupations in her own country, she would come to us. In the meantime, at our last session at Allahabad, we had decided to send a deputation of women from the All-India Women's Conference to China. Madame Chiang Kai Shek had very kindly sent us an invitation and had made all arrangements for our visit in last October. We were looking forward to paying our homage to that ancient land of great culture and to express in person our sympathy for the trials through which that great nation is passing and to say how genuinely we admire her for the brave stand her men and women have put up against the aggression of Japan. But uncertain political conditions in our own land made it impossible for us to leave the country at this juncture and we had to postpone the honour and pleasure of visiting China to a later date. We hope that we shall be able to exchange the proposed mutual visits before long under freer and happier conditions in both lands.

The All-India Women's Conference to-day completes fourteen years of its life. Much cannot be expected during fourteen years as, after all, it is a very short time in the life of a people. But in these abnormal times,

when scientific inventions have so accelerated speed that it defies all human calculations, living organisms are keeping pace with the machine. And so the progress of Indian women during this period, even measured according to the present standards, is not disappointing. I remember those days of the late twenties. We had just started agitation on various social problems concerning women. Till then, the work of women's educational and social advancement was mainly carried on either by men or under their direction. Women generally were unfamiliar with these problems and their Conferences on an all-India basis were a novelty. Women's participation in public work was rare and although there existed hundreds of women's societies in different parts of the country, there was no co-ordination or co-operation between them. The picture today is different. Amongst the well-to-do classes, the number of highly educated women has grown enormously. *Purdah* is fast disappearing, the age of marriage has been considerably raised, there is more freedom of movement and larger contacts all round. The number of women interested in public affairs is much larger. The women's movement is directed and guided solely by themselves. They are found working in all spheres of life. In the district boards, municipalities, education committees, legislatures, in the Government cabinets, in the national movements, though still in small numbers, they are making their contributions creditably. I am not vain enough to attribute all this progress to the Women's Conference. Various forces have been at work. Religious and social reform agencies, political and constructive work of the Congress, contact with the outside world, the spread of education and last but not least the spirit of the times have all contributed towards this emancipation. And now we see a new life pulsating through women who are thinking and planning and agitating for the removal of their wrongs. The desire for change, which was so far more or less confined to the educated sections of society, has gone beyond them and is affecting the comparatively backward classes of women also. The success of the Marwari Women's Anti-Purdah Conference, held in Calcutta the other day, initiated and organised by themselves, is an instance in point. The spirit of defiance shown by the *zanana* women who came out to organise their procession leading it on horse-back, was something to be marvelled at. It is a sign of the times and shows how imperceptibly the women's movement is penetrating into and transforming the various strata of society.

The special contribution of our Conference to the women's movement is the definite shape and colour that it has given to it. It has focussed public attention on women's problems. It has created a machinery for the formulation of authentic views on such questions, it has consolidated and presented women's demands to the public and the various authorities. It has decidedly succeeded in bringing under its banner a larger number of women than any other all-India women's organisation. (Cheers.) Its annual sessions bring into contact women workers from all parts of India. It has certainly established a spiritual family relationship between them which in itself is an invaluable gain. It has inculcated in women the habit of toleration of differences of opinion, of appreciating each other's good points of working together. It has given them their first lessons in democracy which, from the success achieved, seems to me more suited to the feminine temperament than to the masculine. (Applause). The annual conferences held in different branches and sub-branches, particularly in small towns, create a stir amongst women, draw them together, make them think and form opinions on different subjects. This has created a great awakening amongst women. (Cheers.)

The expansion of the scope of the Conference from merely women's problems to wider questions of human relationships has given it a new life. It is not possible for any organisation, even though it be of women, to live only on making demands for feminine rights. A living organization needs growth and no narrow limits for its self-expression are possible. It was, therefore, a natural evolution of the growing life of our organisation. And the wisdom of the decision taken at Delhi is proved by the dignity, self-restraint and the breadth of view of the various war and other topical resolutions passed by our branches and half-yearly and yearly sessions. The war resolutions show how deeply the war has touched the innermost recesses of our hearts. How grieved we are at the ravages perpetrated on humanity in which our people, though not on the front line of suffering, are none the less very much included. Indeed, it would have been tragic if at this juncture we were not allowed to give expression to the agony of our hearts. And something very good and glorious has come out of it. We have unanimously, with one voice, proclaimed our faith in non-violence and declared to the world that we consider it to be the only solution of the world's ills. May God grant that these resolutions, backed by

the strength of true determination, become a living force for the reformation of ourselves and the world. (Continued Cheers.)

You have already learnt, friends, about the details of our work from the report of the Secretary, which will soon be presented to you. I need not point out that our main field of work is social and educational and in our resolutions we have dealt with these questions exhaustively. It is evident that all the reforms advocated by us were not capable of being achieved in a short space of time by any agency, government or private. They are much too numerous to bear mention here. I shall mention only a few by way of example.

In the sphere of education, we have laid great emphasis on free and compulsory education both for boys and girls and we have advocated more expenditure on women's education. We have demanded better sanitary conditions, trained teachers and various other reforms for schools. Some of our suggestions have been taken up and acted upon. Fine arts, advanced domestic science, provincial languages are included as optional subjects for college courses by some of the Universities. Women's hostels have been started by others. These matters repeatedly formed the subject-matter of our resolutions. Some of our branches enthusiastically took up the work of the removal of illiteracy and achieved good results. Others are running Hindustani, English, Sewing, Music classes, of which hundreds of women are taking advantage.

The Lady Irwin College of New Delhi stands as an outstanding example of our efforts for giving domestic science a respectable place in the curriculum of women's education.

In the social sphere, we have made an humble contribution towards the removal of evil customs and the obliteration of unjust laws. Amongst the many reforms that we have urged are the removal of *Purdah*, of early marriage, widow remarriage, abolition of the dowry system, equal moral standard for men and women and economic independence of women. Our methods of work have been propaganda by means of meetings and conferences, but some of us have urged the necessity of legal enactments for the removal of these practices. I personally feel that conversion is a surer and better method of reform than compulsion. Compulsion even with the best of motives leads to bad results. In the matter of reforms, the law can be used only as an aid, helping the reformers to press in their

points where unnecessary obstinacy is displayed. Had the Child Marriage Restraint Act been backed by intensive and widespread propaganda, its success, in spite of all other drawbacks, would have been ensured.

We have advocated radical changes in the personal laws particularly of the Hindus, and have demanded that the law with regard to inheritance, marriage, guardianship of the children and other matters should deal equitably with the rights of women. We want that polygamy should be interdicted by law and divorce on specific conditions should be introduced amongst the Hindus. Bills embodying these reforms have become a normal feature of our legislatures but few have been destined to bear the test of the anvil and become the law of the land. A more drastic method of dealing with these unjust laws is indicated. I agree with the suggestion made by some of our members that an equitable comprehensive law based on the equality of the sexes should be enacted even though it is adopted by individuals in place of the present divergent laws of the community may be voluntary.

Acts for the suppression of immoral traffic, for the protection of children, for the abolition of the Devadasi system and for various other purposes of a similar nature have been demanded by us and are now on our statute books. We have tried to do some investigation and organization work amongst working women and have embodied their demands of better housing, ante-natal and pre-natal maternity benefits, creches, nursery schools, etc., in our resolutions.

From what I have mentioned merely by way of example of the nature of our work, it is evident that the scope of our work has become as extensive as life itself. Necessarily, therefore, practical work was done only in a very few instances. Most of the work consisted of preliminary investigations and consolidation and focussing of opinion on these subjects. This has exposed us to criticism from many quarters, which we must determine to live down by devoting ourselves afresh to the task before us.

Amongst the subjects chosen for discussion at the present session and for work during the coming year, I would like to offer a few remarks on untouchability and communal unity from the social group and cottage industries and housing from the economic group.

Removal of untouchability is my own subject and I can say from experience that work in that sphere is most elevating. It brings us nearer

to the realization of *Ahimsa*, it helps us to see ourselves in the true perspective as perpetrators of terrible injustices on a vast community for which each one of us is individually and collectively responsible. Harijan service, like the worship of God, lifts one morally to a higher plane. It is like the redemption of a crushing debt which relieves the soul of its heavy burden. A little contribution made towards the removal of untouchability, a little effort made to bring light and cheer into the dismal life of these victims of our oppression will lift us as individuals and as a nation to a higher level. (Applause). I invite all sister delegates present here and through them the women of the whole country to make the experiment and test the truth of my assertion. This is not the place for me to give practical suggestions for work. I have been making suggestions throughout the last many years. Not much direction is needed when the heart is given. It knows how to make its own way. I, therefore, make a general appeal for women to take up this work as their very own. Some of our branches are doing a little in that connection, and I am grateful to them. But much greater effort is needed and I am sorry to observe that women's contribution to the work is not anything to be proud of. We may not forget that the achievement of our freedom is impossible till we have rectified this great wrong. The awakening amongst the Harijans is growing very fast with the education they are receiving, but the prejudices of the caste Hindus are not dying out with the same rapidity. This breeds a resentful attitude amongst the Harijans which weakens the growth of the whole nation. Even from the point of view of national freedom, untouchability must go.

Communal unity is another allied chosen subject of the year. Its achievement for our national advance is as fundamental as the removal of untouchability. The nature of this problem bears affinity to the problem of untouchability. If anything it perhaps is more acute and requires more delicate handling. It is a mixture of political, economic and religious elements made complex and difficult of solution by the presence of a third and interested party. But we may not put the blame on the third party and seek absolution of responsibility for ourselves (Hear, hear). The very fact that the third party succeeds in creating or augmenting schisms amongst us shows our weakness. For the removal of that weakness ways and means must be found. The Women's Conference has done a considerable amount to bring the women of all com-

munities on a common platform. I can vouch for the fact that amongst us there are no distinctions of caste or creed. We do not even remember which religion or community we belong to. On the platform of the Conference we are just women serving the cause of women and the motherland (Applause). But we have not yet been able to take this amity and good-will further than the boundaries of our Conference. We ought to make an effort to do this. One point which I would like to bring to the notice of the delegates is that the number of our Muslim members and delegates is small. Great attention should be paid to increase their number and I request my Muslim sister delegates to make it their special concern for the next year. Without their earnest co-operation this work cannot be accomplished. The end of the year must show a large increase of Muslim members on our registers. That in itself will bring the two sister communities a step nearer (Applause).

From the economic group one of the subjects that I have chosen for comment is "Cottage Industries". We may not lose ourselves in academical discussions on the comparative merits and demerits of cottage versus large scale industries. We may only remember that under the present conditions, cottage industries in India are a necessity. It is through them alone that the starving millions can get their daily bread. Our time should, therefore, be spent in devising means for their promotion. The starting of training centres, of sales depôts, propaganda and several other ways are open to us; but the most effective way is personal patronage. *Khadi* of course is the centre of all village industries. There are not many *khadi* wearers amongst our members. I appeal for a respectable place for *khadi* in the wardrobes of our members (continued Cheers). *Khadi* is an acquired taste and its beauties can be perceived by cultivation. Even its roughness has a charm. It is life-giving to the poor and peace-giving to the rich (Cheers). An assembly of women, dressed in pure white *khadi* is a feast to the eye. *Khadi* is a symbol of our love for suppressed humanity, (Loud applause), it is an expression of our will to be free. Members of a nationalist organisation like ours should consider themselves morally bound to wear *khadi* (Hear, hear). And closely connected with *khadi* is spinning. Sacrificial spinning is as ennobling as Harijan *seva* (Hear, hear). Every turn of the wheel and every thread that is spun brings one nearer

to the masses. It breeds a mentality which smarts under the injustices of the current social and economic system and strengthens the determination to change it by non-violent means. I, therefore, appeal to our members to take to daily sacrificial spinning which will automatically make them supporters of *khadi* and of village industries (Cheers).

Now I come to the last subject, that of "housing". The paucity of houses in India is astounding. In a country of nearly four hundred million inhabitants, the poor have hardly any houses to live in. Only those who have travelled widely in the interior of the country and have closely studied the question can have an adequate idea of the sufferings caused to men and women on account of lack of houses. Over-crowding in cities is particularly deplorable. Hundreds of thousands of people spend their lives cramped up in hovels called houses by courtesy. It is not within our scope or within our power to make up for this deficiency. But we can do something in arousing social conscience against this evil. We can remind the governments and local authorities, the rich and the educated classes that it is their responsibility to take the dumb toiling millions out of this veritable hell. Lack of money should make no excuse. The need is so imminent that if no other means are available, money should be borrowed for building purposes by governments and local boards. Co-operative Housing Societies should be promoted by the people themselves and moneyed people should be persuaded to invest their money in housing schemes. House rents should be regulated by law to prevent the worst type of exploitation. I have seen landlords taking enormous rents ranging from Rs. 4 to 8 for tiny little dingy one-room tenements without any amenities. This sort of exploitation must be stopped forthwith. Owners of agricultural lands should be compelled by law to give decent houses to their tenants. The duty of our Conference is to bring these facts before the public and to persuade them to rectify these.

I must now say a few words about non-violence in which we have repeatedly declared our unflinching faith. An Indian women's organisation could do nothing less. Non-violence is inbred in an Indian woman. She carries its impress on her soul. The traditions in which she is brought up, the deprivations she has to go through in life, the *sanskars* with which she is born or her inherited genius all make her a suitable medium for the

expression of non-violence. But that which has been so far latent, has to be made patent. At present an Indian woman's non-violence savours of the non-violence of the weak and the helpless. As such it is worthless. It requires a conscious training to turn it into the non-violence of the strong, without which it cannot acquire the power to resist vice and violence. In the practice of non-violence in life Mahatma Gandhi expects more from women than from men. Let us by constant effort at self-purification make ourselves worthy of this trust. The best training centres for non-violence are our own homes. But a search-light has to be turned ever inwards and a constant watch kept on ourselves to make sure that from day to day the boundaries of our family are extending and the mother's heart is constantly getting bigger to bring within its compass the whole of humanity. (Cheers).

Our responsibility is great. We should never forget that lip service to a cause is worse than no service at all (Hear, hear). It weakens us as well as the cause. Truth and honesty demand that we practise what we preach. I, therefore, commend it to our members to give serious thought to the ways and means of realizing non-violence in their individual lives. I would suggest a serious study of Gandhian literature. The extension of non-violence from the individual to the group, its application to national and international matters is a new experiment with a technique evolved by Gandhiji in the laboratory of his life in which all through he has experimented with truth. It is a glory and a privilege to be born in his time and be his contemporary. We must do all in our power to deserve that privilege.

In the end I must say how happy I am to be here with you this afternoon. South India and particularly the State of Mysore is like a second home to me, where I spent several happy months a few years ago. I am grateful for the hospitality offered to the Conference by the women of Mysore amongst whom I have several old and beloved friends and whom I am so happy to meet again. I feel grieved that His late Highness the Maharaja Saheb whom I had the privilege of knowing, is no more in this world. But I know that he is still alive in the hearts of his subjects where he has made an abiding place for himself (Applause).

One last word and I have finished. To those of my brothers who do not agree with the policy of the Women's Conference, who see danger in our demand for freedom and sex equality, I say cast off these fears and have trust in us. We shall not fail you nor lose our balance (Hear, hear). And even if we do momentarily, I say, to err in freedom is better than to keep straight in slavery (Hear, hear, applause). The spectres of disintegration, of disorder, of sex war that haunt some of you occasionally are phantoms of the imagination (Laughter). There can be no war between the mother and son, between the father and daughter, brother and sister, husband and wife. And if there can be no war between them, there can be none between man and woman. We have no bitterness in our movement (Hear, hear). None is likely to come in. All that we want is to establish equity and fairplay between the relations of man and woman as well as man and man (Laughter). That is the only foundation on which a stable structure of civilized society can be built (Applause).

To my co-workers and sister delegates, I want to say this last word that more service is demanded of us, more dedication is called for. Work from where you stand, where destiny has placed you. Do your best to finish with the old world of tyranny and exploitation and lend your helping hand to bring in the new era of peace and goodwill (Prolonged Cheers).

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Mrs. S. Nanjamma mentioned that she was requested to translate the Presidential Address into Kannada. Mrs. Nanjamma informed the audience that as the translation was voluminous, and as only five minutes were given to her to speak on the salient points in the Presidential Address she requested the audience to go through the entire speech in Kannada, published in the local dailies. And Mrs. Nanjamma for her part gave in a nutshell the important things mentioned in the Presidential Address.

Other Addresses.

The President mentioned that the written address of Sir Mirza M. Ismail would be read by Rajamantrapravina N. Madhava Rao, B.A., B.L., First Member of Council.

Rajamantrapravina N. Madhava Rao before reading the Address of Sir Mirza M. Ismail said :—

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am sure you miss Sir Mirza M. Ismail who was to have read the Address at this Conference. He has been unable to come, but he has tried to mitigate the disappointment that this would cause by committing to writing the thoughts he wanted to communicate to this Conference and he has asked me to read his address at this Conference.

After expressing these few words he read the Address of Sir Mirza Ismail :—

Ladies,

I am not using the language of conventionality and formality when I say that I am deeply gratified at having the privilege of addressing this Conference. This is your first meeting in the Mysore State. Most heartily do I bid you welcome, both as the official head of the Administration and as an individual interested in the welfare and advancement of humanity.

You have chosen Mysore as the venue of your Meeting. That is an event of moment. Your Conference consists of a large and influential gathering of the most intelligent, alert and cultured women. Nothing crosses your attention without that most valuable aid to human progress, criticism, balanced criticism. But just as you are capable of balanced criticism, so you are capable of something which, in this imperfect world, is rarer and perhaps more valuable, appreciation. Women are ever ready to recognize and appreciate any advance, however small. And they are ready to render thanks for such advance.

Now since we know that you can appreciate, we are anxious that you should appreciate Mysore. You have put us on our best behaviour! Especially we want you to appreciate the things in Mysore State, in which you are particularly interested, for example, our hospitals and provision for medical aid for women and children.

My opinion and yours might not always tally in regard to the question as to what subjects it would be necessary and expedient to discuss. But apart from these occasional differences of opinion there is one thing about which there can be no possible difference of opinion at all. And that is the value of the work that you have done and are doing by these conferences. The value of that work is threefold. It is work on behalf of women. It is work for Indian women and it is work for the benefit of men and women conjointly.

Apart from the general value of your work, your Conference arose at a most critical time. The womanhood of India required leadership and guidance; the experience, the sagacity of highminded Indian women were required to guide their vast sisterhood through the maze of ideas, doctrines, policies and ideologies of the modern world. Guidance and sometimes restraint were needed in the case of those who felt the impulse to carry a new-found freedom to extremes. And you had to preach the sobering doctrine of service, in education, social life and public activities. In this sphere you have earned the garland of success. Since the advent of the parent organization, the Women's Indian Association, twenty-five years ago, the position of women, particularly in social and legislative activities, has undergone a revolution. The same may be said of the general attitude to the place of women in life. In your work you have had before you the inspiring examples of both Hindu and Muslim women whose names are renowned in the history of India, and to come nearer to our own times, you have been stimulated by the shining example of a number of your contemporaries, whose names will be carried with the passing of time into the lasting annals of high disinterested service.

What seems to me one of the most important features of your work is what I may call its cosmopolitan character. The purpose which the All-India Women's Conference has steadfastly kept before it is to become and to be the forum of all ranks of society and shades of opinion. Here are no air-tight compartments, no barriers of caste, creed, opinion or rank. Your view-point is the All-India view-point. Your fundamental principle of unity in this matter is close to my own conviction. For this adherence to an All-India view of women's work I offer you my cordial congratulations. Your assemblage today includes women of different

faiths, some born into that ancient faith held by the larger part of the people of India, others adherents of the faith into which I myself was born, and still others of different faiths from these. But here you meet on the basis of your essential sisterhood. As long as you retain this sense of fundamental human unity, whatever criticism you may meet, you cannot go far wrong. At a time when the infection of communal disunity is being carried into the remotest villages of India, yours is a great opportunity, I should say also a high duty, to carry far and wide the disinfecting gospel of the unity of womanhood. (Cheers).

In the complicated organisation of life today it may be that women will be more concerned with one department of life and men with others. But at the centre, at the centre of life itself, there can be no dividing line between man and woman. We must not confuse the unessential with the essential.

Now the centre of life is, has been, and ever will be the home. At that centre, the home, is woman. Man, by reason of the many necessities and complications of his life, often is impelled towards the outer circumference. But he also feels and responds to the inward pull of home. Woman, however, is at the centre all the time. Her pre-occupations are more with living beings and their essential needs than with the manipulation of useful and important but inanimate properties and interests. Woman is more concerned with life than with stock-markets and red tape.

We are all looking forward hopefully, anxiously, to the new world when the noise of battle shall have ceased and the din of political dissension shall have quietened. In the work of reconstructing that new world you and your sisters all over the world will be required. Your influence will be needed to help in the establishment of a world order based not on the flimsy pretexts of social or religious affinities or economic interest but on the unshakable foundation of common needs and experiences and aspirations. This is the field in which women can play an important and appropriate part.

Much of the credit for the entry of women into the public life of the country is due to the All-India Women's Conference, and I look forward with confidence to even greater efforts by it in the strenuous and testing years on which India, with the rest of the world, has entered.

I learn from Resolutions of former sessions of the Conference that it has expressed itself as against war. In doing so it is at one with all decent human beings whose ideal of their race is higher than that of predatory and man-slaying animals. We are all against war and in favour of peace, just as all doctors and all patients are against disease and in favour of health. But when disease comes we have got to meet it with all available means or perish, and it is not in the nature of the mass of human beings to connive at their own annihilation.

With your Conference, Ladies, rests the important work of seeking out the causes of the disease of war, and not merely neutralizing those causes by palliatives, but abolishing them by creating conditions of thought and feeling that will make their reappearance impossible.

In regard to the work which lies before you the value of this Conference is evident. Your thoughts are clarified and enriched by the interplay of sincere and well-furnished minds. The will is directed by thought and from will there comes action. So we may regard these proceedings as the main-spring of prime motive of those activities of yours which, I am confident, will have very beneficial results.

Ladies, to this session of the All-India Women's Conference, which meets not only for the first time in Mysore, but also at the happy beginning of the reign of His Highness Sri Jaya Chamaraja Wadhiyar Bahadur, to whom I know you offer your congratulations and blessing, I tender a most hearty welcome and every wish for the success of its deliberations.

Rajamantrapravina N. Madhava Rao was then garlanded.

(2)

Rajamantrapravina K.V. Anantraman, Second Member of Council, made these preliminary remarks before reading the address:—

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am not in the programme, but I am demanded to speak. I really feel that after the excellent addresses that have been delivered to you

today it is rather superfluous for me to attempt to address you. But still as, "OBEY" is the order of the future regime, I have readily accepted the invitation.

I have been asked by the organizers of this Conference to address a few words to you. I am deeply conscious of the honour they have done me but I must say that I feel very diffident about my competency to undertake the task. I am also apprehensive lest my temerity to lecture to you should be interpreted as a trace of that alleged original sin of man to keep women in a position of inferiority and subjection. Our distinguished countrywoman who presided over last year's All-India Women's Conference, and whom we have the pleasure of having with us here to-day, described us as selfish and greedy, and anxious to get away with the whole cake. We were dubbed as "Hitlers of the home". In the presence of such scathing critics, you will realise how embarrassing it is for a mere man to face such a distinguished concourse of ladies who have gathered together from all parts of India to advance the cause of women in every department of life.

I have been watching the growth of the women's movement in our State and outside. The remarkable success that the movement has achieved in a comparatively short space of time augurs well for its future. You have received unstinted support from all sides. You have not had to resort to force to enforce your rights and obtain your demands as your sisters in England had to do. When your bugles were sounded the gates of the fortress have been thrown open. Women in our country have always occupied an honoured and respected position. Our sisters in ancient times were great votaries of the fine arts and learning. Women had a position equal in importance, dignity and influence to that of men. Saraswati is the Goddess of Vidya. In many parts of India, to millions of people the tutelary deity is a Goddess, whether she is called Chamundeswari or Durga, or Bhagavati or Kali. A man may not perform any *samskara* of importance without his wife by his side. This is not to say that women's position at present is ideal and that there is nothing more to be done. Historical causes, economical disturbances, obscurantist religious movements, conflicts between caste and caste and community and com-

munity have given rise to practices and customs which have gradually deteriorated the position of women. The deterioration has varied in intensity from place to place. May I assure you that in your examination of your difficulties and in your decisions regarding the methods you should adopt for removing them, you have our sincerest sympathy and that you have our whole-hearted co-operation?

If you will forgive me, may I point out that your propaganda is more efficient than even that of Hitler's Goebbels. With your fifth columnist in every home, your success will be as complete as it will be speedy.

Dr. J. H. Cousins, addressing the delegates, said:—

You have assembled here to hold the fifteenth session of the All-India Women's Conference. Fifteen years is a considerable time from the birth of an organization, and as I happen to have been an observer, even in some respects a helper, at the birth of the Conference, I should like to remind those of you who may not be aware of the fact, that its ancestry is a much more complicated matter than the simple name of the Conference would seem to indicate. It began when an English educational official in Bengal asked for a statement of what the women of India wanted in education, so that he and others engaged in the administration of education might be guided in their work. The request was heard by an elderly gentleman of French extraction who had accidentally attended the meeting at which it was made, because his daughter, then married to a Dutchman in Sind, has been Principal of the Women's College in Calcutta in which the meeting was held. He carried the request across the Continent to his daughter who transmitted it to the joint secretaries of the Women's Indian Association at Adyar, Madras. One of these was a Scottish Englishwoman married to a Cingalese. The other was an Irishwoman who was married to an Irishman. She has been referred to by a previous speaker as the mother of the Conference. Although the detailed preparations for the birth of the organization were concocted in my home, I do not aspire to the title of the father of the Conference. I should be satisfied with the humble designation of member-in-law.

Out of this French-Dutch-Scottish-English-Cingalese-Irish and Indian ancestry came the first All-India Women's Conference. It was intended to be the only one, and to present an authoritative statement

regarding women's education in India based on common needs and local variations. But the inspiration and happiness that the delegates discovered in their coming together in the service of an ideal led to the establishment of an annual Conference and to the development of activities into all that concerned the welfare of women and children, indeed of the whole humanity of India. And now the first experimental Conference has grown into this great gathering of women from all parts of India intent on the highest service of their vast sisterhood. You are now, as an organization fourteen years old, and there are no signs observable that you are approaching a termination. Like Tennyson's Brook you may say:—

We chatter, chatter as we flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But we go on for ever.

I am sure you all wish Sir Mirza Ismail to know how much we miss his presence this evening. We all wish him a speedy recovery from the accident that overtook him. Like all creators of good and beautiful things for the service of the people, Sir Mirza shares in a large measure the characteristics of constructiveness and human feeling that specially belong to womanhood. We are all, we men, an amalgam of manhood and womanhood, but only a very small percentage of us make any effort like Sir Mirza Ismail to live up to our hereditary maternity. We concern ourselves less with the essentials of life than with its accessories, and because of this, the world is in its present parlous condition. We need more men of the Mirza stamp, and we need more women fired with the same enthusiasm and work for the service of the people, if the world is to be changed from the domination of separating ideologies to the freedom of human unity and mutual service, from the destructiveness that is unhappily a monopoly at present of manhood, to the creativeness that is happily preserved by womanhood, and that, let us hope in the near future, will become common to man and woman.

I am very happy to have had the opportunity of saying these few words to you, and I wish your session every blessing and usefulness not only to the women of India but to the women of all countries who need your idealism and selfless service.

Woman's Role in Reconstructing our National Life.**Speech by Mr. D. V. Gundappa at the All-India Women's Conference, Bangalore, 27th December, 1940.**

I have been invited to make a speech and I greatly value this opportunity of speaking to you. I shall submit my points without much explanation or argument.

First of all, I regard your Conference movement as a vital part of our national movement, and therefore as one that ought to be supported and strengthened by every one—man or woman—who wishes India well. This Conference is an invaluable limb of the agency necessary to plan and prepare for the reconstruction of the whole of our National life. Your Conference has already won recognition as such an institution.

Secondly, I wish to offer my tribute of admiration for the wisdom and patriotism of your leaders in having kept the movement clear of all influences and tendencies that narrow down patriotism into spheres smaller than our common motherland and introduce divisions into the citizen-body. We men find among ourselves not a few who are unable to see their country outside a group or sect or caste or race smaller than the Indian nation; and to whom the part is greater than the whole. You as mothers are familiar with the quarrels of children. When half a dozen of them raise a howl over their claims for a toy or a packet of sweets, you know by instinct how to quell the riot, whom to befriend and whom to neglect, whom to coax and whom to admonish. I think there is sore need for the exercise of similar motherly offices of tact and sense of equity and all-round goodwill towards our men politicians. If Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah would refer their differences for arbitration to the All-India Women's Conference, I have every hope they will be enabled to see some way out of their present difficulties. I say this in all seriousness; for there is nothing abstruse or recondite in the Hindu-Moslem question. What its solution needs, above all other things, is common sense brought to the service of a large-hearted love for the motherland; and our sisters are surely not poor in these qualities. I pray and trust nothing will be allowed to happen which can interfere with the unity and integrity of patriotism among our womanhood or can lessen

the efficacy of the lesson in the sense of civic community and national fellow-citizenship which they are now happily in a position to teach us.

Thirdly, I should like to invite attention to the necessity for our making clear to our own minds what is meant by *modern progress* and thinking fearlessly about its implications. Too frequently, a formula is prescribed to us that in our progress we must combine the best of our country's past with the best of what the West has to offer. But this formula, beautiful as it looks at first sight, is not easy to understand in a definite and precise manner with reference to any concrete problem of life or conduct. Our women too should delve into the *Dharma Sastras*. Without a critical revaluation of our inherited social code and customs, there can be no sound and healthy adjustment between our past and our future. Let us remember that modern progress means, among other things, the growing industrialisation of the country's economic structure, the growing urbanization of towns and villages, and the growing complexity of social relationships. Women will have to take their place by the side of men as fellow-workers in factories and workshops, in warehouses and offices, as well as in educational institutions and public assemblies. With such increased occasions of companionship and proximity are bound to arise all sorts of complications; and the traditional ideal of a woman expressed in the Sanskrit phrase—“*a-suryampasya*”—“One who never looked on even the sun”—is simply and absolutely impossible for all except a microscopic minority who are the favourites of fortune. Life is the sovereign factor for our consideration; and its demands must not be ignored or suppressed even in the honoured name of tradition and religion. Not to adjust ourselves to changing environment is to enfeeble and impoverish life; and that is neither a fair nor a grateful way of dealing with the first of God's gifts. I would therefore appeal to you that you should participate with men in the work of thinking about our social problems and offer your own independent solutions for their consideration. Not only in questions pertaining to the civil and political rights of women like those of inheritance and franchise, but also in regard to legislation affecting marriage, welfare measures like workmen's compensation and maternity benefit, matter of social hygiene, divorce laws and so forth, I wish your Conference would insist on its being given special

opportunities to study and offer its opinion and also to assist in the work of the committees of the legislature.

But what our national progress requires is not the enunciation of new or profound ideas so much as the intelligent and steadfast practice of certain well-ascertained and widely endorsed principles. If this Conference should prove to be more than an annual show and a pastime, its members should make it a point to translate the principles and ideals it adopts into acts of daily observance. I give my sincere good wishes for the practical and realistic success of the Conference.

* * *

Miss Cissy Cooray, Leader of the Ceylon Delegation, said :—

Sisters,

On behalf of the Ceylon Delegation I beg to convey our thanks to you for your kind invitation to attend the Conference and make your acquaintance and maintain friendly relations with our sisters of India.

I am voicing the sentiments of my colleagues and myself in stating that we are honoured to be here in your midst as representatives of our country.

These friendly discussions between the representatives of different countries embody the high ideals of internationalism whose essentials are co-operation and understanding the other's points of view. I need hardly state how far the value of those ideals are stressed by the present trend of world affairs.

The years that are to come will also mark the growing importance of woman's place in the life of the country. We who have been entrusted with the care and attention of the rising citizens during very important stages of their development feel that our interest, and where required, active participation in matters of national and international importance augur well for the future of the world.

As I stand here among you, my sisters of India, my thoughts retrace their steps far back along the passages of history, over 2000 years, when the great Emperor Dharmasoka's children, Prince Mahinda and Princess Sanghamitta, both members of the noble order of the Sangha, carried to Ceylon the Buddha Dharma, the message of India's greatest son, which



Delegation from Ceylon

Mrs. Gooneratnam Cooke, Mrs. Marjorie de Mel, Miss Cissy Cooray, Dr. Miss Ratnam,
Miss Avarbai Mehta

Left to Right

shines with untarnished radiance there up to this very date. This is neither the first nor the last of our associations with Mother India but it occupies a place significant in the glorious cavalcade of contacts which dates back to prehistoric times in that it strengthened the fabric of our national unity and uplifted the spiritual and cultural standard of our people.

On these stable foundations has been built a civilisation which has been further developed by our subsequent contact not only with India but also with an ever-increasing range of countries and cultures. From the different lands and peoples with whom we have been associated, from the Northern Indians from whom we claim descent, from the Chola and Tamil hosts who invaded us, from the Portuguese, Dutch and English occupations during the last 300 years, we have imbibed influences that have helped us to form a culture that is peculiarly our own.

Buddhism gave us the background to our ideals and formed the very fabric of our national life. The later South Indian invasions brought in their train Hindu customs and the system of caste. This institution assumed a far milder form among the Singhalese than in India as it received no sanction from Buddhism. The Portuguese introduced Christianity and a new mode of thought by converting large numbers of the population. The Dutch largely influenced our architecture, furniture, language and above all our laws. The Roman Dutch law still remains the general law of the Island. And the English in their turn have also influenced our manners and ways of life. The coming of these various peoples have given Ceylon a population of diverse races and creeds who live in perfect amity and accord. The culture that has thus been evolved had given us many rights and liberties denied to many other nations. The Singhalese of Ceylon have never imposed upon their women purdah. Monogamous marriage has been the general practice. Divorce has been made easy for men and women and there has been no prejudice whatsoever to the re-marriage of widows. Sons and daughters inherit property in equal shares if the parent dies intestate. The Married Women's Property Act gives woman full control over their own property. For the last decade full and equal political rights with men have been enjoyed by women. Such is our heritage and culture; we come to you bringing a message of good-will and hoping by contact with you all and by an exchange of views

to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cultural unity between our two countries.

I would like to close with a message of good-will in Pali from the Buddhist scriptures.

Rajacharitavisarada Rao Sahib C. Hayavadana Rao :—

Madam President, Delegates of the All-India Women's Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen,

While I am thankful to you for this opportunity to address an audience, exclusively made up of women delegates, and called under women's auspices, I am not sure whether the time is not come for this organisation to stop this courtesy to more men speakers at women's meetings. I am more free to say this, as the one lady speaker who was to have come after me has spoken earlier and has left the field free for me.

Men are by nature, let me say with your kind permission, courteous especially to audiences of this kind. But in their trepidation, nay, in their desire to be kind, and indeed in their anxiety to be polite make mistakes, for which, of course, they are held liable. Think of a mere man facing the whole sea of faces made up of women! Even the most sedate and stately man could possibly go wrong, and say much, he never intended. It was some such feeling or foreboding of possible trepidation, I think, that made Mr. Bernard Shaw, not long ago refuse an invitation to speak at a women's meeting. Returning thanks courteously for good-will thus shown, he gently, but firmly, refused the privilege extended to him, saying that he was quite sure that women could look after themselves very well, and though he had every sympathy with their cause he had no desire to make a fool of himself on their platform. (Laughter.)

Speaking however, I should like to refer to certain recent admonitions to women generally. Addressing the women audience at a recent meeting at Delhi, Sir Maurice Gwyer, the distinguished Chief Justice of India, suggested that as women had not any large share of responsibility for the evils that now threaten to engulf the world, they might be expected to restore sanity and good-will to it. But curiously enough, he said that

they could do this only by keeping their movement—the women's movement—out of politics. The logic of this suggestion is not quite clear to my mind at any rate. The women ought to restore sanity. They can do so, only by taking full part in the determination of political and economic questions, no less than social and educational. If women have kept a level head so far, there is no reason why they should keep their movement out of politics. Sir Maurice, it is to be feared, has different standards of measures to judge men and women. Yet, he ardently pleaded for common standard for the purpose—which shows that he is on the road to conversion. Another speaker at the same Conference, Sir Mahomed Zafrullah Khan, Legal Member of Council, stressed the spiritual identity of man and woman and justly ridiculed the suggestion that one was superior to the other. But it is remarkable that he naively added that it is the purpose of God that man has to-day harder work and the woman the more gentler. Theology is dangerous ground to tread and I should like to avoid it. The more we keep away from theology the better it would be for all parties concerned.

A third speaker, our good friend, Mr. S. Satyamurthi, speaking at the same meeting, made certain extraordinary suggestions which coming from him, seemed really of a kind which require consideration. While we conceded equality under the law, he suggested that none could abolish God-made distinctions. Are women so represented by this Conference asking for these? Grant equality, but stress difference! That is a new way to deal, I should say, with the women's questions in this country. But the worst suggestion offered by him was that women should do outside their homes what they are accustomed to in the home. That is just to call up the confusion, clatter, quarrel that men create around themselves inside or outside their homes. He suggested for work outside the house the following departments for women: Sanitation, public health, eradication of communalism, removal of suffering, ignorance and superstition, and soothing in a general way all the absurdities created by men, mostly in public life. The lesson in De'Tocqueville or Mill may not be amiss. I am not too delighted in suggestions such as these.

The fact of the matter is that men are still thinking of women in a manner, that is not justified by the age we live in. The movement in

favour of the juster few towards women began in 1869 when Mill issued his famous "Subjection of Women". He based his plea for their emancipation partly on the broad ground that modern conditions require a modern reorientation of views in regard to women. He held that women's position was the only exception to the peculiar character the world had assumed in his own time, *i.e.*, about the middle of the 19th century. The time was passed, he said, when human beings could be held to have been born of their place in life and joined down by an inexorable bond to the place they are born to. They are, he held, free to employ their faculties and such favourable chances as offer to achieve the end which may appear to be most desirable. It was, he said, over-stepping limits of authority to fix beforehand on some presumption that certain persons are not to do certain things. He was for joint self-development, for, true democracy meant that and that only. When he was told that people were not ready, and that, being ignorant they were likely to be led away by agitators, that women, they only in personal terms, were even more ignorant and liable to be led astray, his reply was prompt. He said frankly that they would learn, and could learn only by experience and practice. Mill was undoubtedly a believer in straight education. But he also held that the main branch of the education of human beings is their habitual employment, which must be their individual vocation, or some matter of joint concern, in which they are called to take part. Whatever acts on the mind of man or woman is properly his or her education. But his or her mind, like those of others, is acted upon by the whole of his or her social circumstance. Society educates those belonging to it for good or for ill by its contact to them, even more than by direct teaching. From this point of view Mill was a warm supporter of the cause of WOMEN as of LABOUR. From this point of view again he advocated fullest democracy—that is genuine democracy. But while he worked for political freedom for women and for the down-trodden of his times in his own country the question of economic freedom was left behind from the practical, realistic point of view. And, if the women's cause was lagging behind for a long time, for long after his time, it was due to the fact that woman in England was still economically not free. It required, I need not say, the passing of a number of Married Women's Property Acts to enfranchise women in their own household, to make them get beyond

the stage of mere domestic chattel. Indeed the question of economic freedom of women assumes larger proportions when we think of the work that yet remains, if democracy is to win through. Why has political freedom not emancipated the majority in England? Why has universal suffrage left power in the hands of upper and middle classes yet? Those orders of society have not accepted democracy in the sense in which Mill meant it as connoting genuine equality. Is it not because they have never seen the needs of women and of the poor in every matter as really on the same footing as their own? Is it not because they have preferred economic power and privilege for themselves, as opposed to the practical enslavement of their fellows. More than all is it not true that their system has largely been unfortunately accepted by poor? While women have shown better spirit and have fought for their rights as none else have done in western democratic countries, the history of the fight for the franchise by women in England since the days of Mrs. Fawcett and shows more than anything else the fight that was necessary to establish political equality in England. Mr. Asquith, the great radical leader, was the sternest and most violent opponent of women's rights in England during the height of the women's fight in that country. It is extraordinary, when we reflect upon it all, how one like him should have opposed to the expansion of women's rights of franchise as he did, especially considering the times he lived in. It required indeed two world wars to make Mr. Churchill—but he typifies the England of to-day—wish for

“The forward march of the common people in all lines towards their just and proper inheritance.”

Nor can women be forgotten in the changes coming off in this country. The equality that democracy inculcates is the equality of opportunities which Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru has so ardently pleaded in her address of to-day, the equality of opportunities for all men and women, for there can be no equality without equality of success as well in all departments of activities. When economic freedom in democratic society can exist, such freedom should be yours. First and foremost, if you are to progress, it should be your chief aim to secure it without delay.

One suggestion I would make before concluding. I would ask you to organise your work in such a way that you work throughout the

year instead of holding an active session like this at its end and then go on waiting for another year to complete. If you can set up a good and stable Working Committee you can watch the progress achieved and help to garner the results on a larger scale. I wish you all success and thank you for your kindly hearing.

Then Rajacharithavisarada Rao Sahib C. Hayavadana Rao was garlanded.

Proposing a vote of thanks to the President, to the speakers of the evening and to the visitors to the meeting **Mrs. Cousins** said :—

Friends,

At this late hour of the evening, I will only very formally speak what is very much in our hearts as members of this Conference and simply say that our hearts are full of thankfulness and gratitude to the members of the Mysore State Women's Conference, Mysore constituency of the All-India Women's Conference, and we thank you from our hearts for the amount of work you have already put in, in getting this splendid meeting and in getting all the other arrangements made for the reception of delegates from other places and we also particularly thank you, in Bangalore, for having arranged this meeting for the first time, of our Women's Conference in your State open to men and women together. Here you have gone a step further and we thank you for taking that step and we thank all who are working for our happiness and for making this function a success.

With the singing of the Indian National Anthem and of the Mysore National Anthem the function terminated at about 7-45 p.m.

ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, BANGALORE.

First Sitting, 28th December, 1940.

9-20 a.m.—12-40 p.m.

The first sitting of the Conference commenced at 9-20 a.m., with Mrs. Brijlal Nehru in the chair. The proceedings of the Conference were conducted in the English language and at each step the reports were translated into the Kannada and the Hindustani languages.

The proceedings of the day commenced with the following two condolence resolutions:—

- (a) The Association of the All-India Women's Conference places on record its sense of deep regret at the passing away of Mysore's great and noble ruler, His Highness the Maharaja Sri Krishnarajendra Wadiyar Bahadur and of his distinguished brother His Highness Sri Narasimha Wadiyar Bahadur, the Yuvaraja of Mysore. It offers to the members of the Royal family and to all the people of this State their deepest sympathy and condolences.
- (b) We deeply regret the passing away of the Dowager Lady Cowasji Jehangir whose services to the cause of Indian women will be long remembered.

The following reports were then read and adopted by the Conference.

Message from the Liaison Group in Great Britain to the annual session of the All-India Women's Conference.

We send to our sisters in India our greetings and best wishes for a fruitful Conference. We know that you and we have the honour and responsibility of living at a great formative period of history. Now we suffer birth pangs, later we shall welcome the new birth. We see our men and women courageous and gay, determined and tireless under daily

and nightly dangers, and we hope that, forged in this furnace, we shall emerge resolute to wage war, not on mortal foes, but on poverty and disease, and that we shall widen our liberties and broaden our responsibilities. Without that hope we could not go on. To you we send our fervent wishes that you may gain the same liberties and responsibilities without war, that you may wisely guide your great country into unity, peace and prosperity, and, linking hands and hearts with China, lead Asia to spiritual victory.

Report from Liaison Officer in Great Britain.

The Liaison Group in Great Britain find it hard to draw up an annual report on any co-operation it has given to the A.-I.W.C. this year, as its activities have been greatly restricted owing to war conditions. We believe that our sisters in India will understand and forgive. The Committee has seldom been able to meet, as its members are dispersed, some on special war time active jobs and some tied to their own locality. Meetings and receptions have had to be abandoned, and all kinds of publicity have become very difficult. We are glad that Agatha Harrison has been able to carry on her work for India, and maintain her close links, and she has done much to make good where the Liaison Officer, through force of circumstances, has found it almost impossible to carry on. But, in spite of what may appear to be a sterile year as regards co-operation with the All-India Women's Conference we would assure all officers and members that our interest and sympathy are unabated, and that we look forward to the day, when vital contacts will again be renewed, with fresh vigour and enthusiasm. We know that when the agony of the war is over, we can never go back to the world as we knew it before, or attempt to reconstruct it on the old lines. Our one desire is that this time peace may be built on surer and more lasting foundations, and that a new sense of the need for co-operation, and mutual respect and the realisation of inter-dependence among the nations may develop, and we look forward already with confidence to the part that India, with new found liberty and unity, will play in helping to restore the world to sanity, decency and hope.

G. Lankester.

Liaison Report**Mrs. S. N. Ray, Liaison Officer in India.**

There is very little to report in regard to the Liaison work during this year. Due to the war and abnormal conditions prevailing in Britain and other European countries it has not been possible to keep in contact as before. There have been very few letters from Mrs. Lankester and these have been delayed in transit. The last letter received from Mrs. Lankester was August 1, and received in October and with this she has included Mrs. Cobbet Ashby's views regarding the British women's standpoint on the war. At the same time I also had a letter from Miss Agatha Harrison on the same question and the attitude to India. These letters are being attached for the consideration of the S. C. Mrs. Lankester also sent her impressions which has been printed in the "Roshni".

Earlier in the year, the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship sent an invitation to a meeting to be held in May and enclosed a questionnaire. A reply to this questionnaire was sent by our President, Begum Hamid Ali. The Social Affairs Committee of the League of Nations have continued to send their publications from Geneva, but there is nothing of particular interest.

Madam Chiang-kai-Sheik, wrote welcoming a delegation of Indian women to China in October and arrangements were made for at least two or three delegates to go on this Goodwill Mission. Unfortunately the plan has since had to be abandoned for the present.

Contact is being maintained with one or two women's organisations in the U.S.A. The "Business and Professional Women Organisation" of California send their quarterly bulletin to us. Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan and Kamala Devi have continued to do useful propaganda for the Indian women's cause and that of Indians in the U.S.A.

It is not possible for the Liaison group in England to maintain contact with us as before, due to the grim struggle they are facing, but among these friends of India they are making a valiant effort to induce the British Government to see the Indian point of view. Quoting from Mrs. Lankester's letter she says "one feels that the war is now getting to a very grim stage and one can only live from day to day. One thing is different, I think,

to the last world-war and that is that people are thinking very furiously about the sort of peace that should be made when this ghastly war is over. A great many study groups are formed and that is where I hope we will face up to the question of India". Miss Agatha Harrison writes "in spite of the preoccupation with events nearer at hand, there is persistent effort to bring about an ending to the deadlock between us. We now have the Poona resolution before us and we are hoping that some move will now be made from this end. I send you my love and to my other friends in the All-India Women's Conference. It is grievous to think we can hear so little of each other during these days; but the links that bind us together are firm. In happier days we renew them again".

Report of the A.-I.W.E. Fund Association and the Lady Irwin College for 1940.

I have great pleasure in presenting this Report at the 15th session of the All-India Women's Conference. In it I wish to record a few of the more outstanding events of the year and to say something in particular about our new activities.

In the early part of this year, when the College had completed barely seven years of work, a formal inspection, arranged by the Government of India at the request of the Governing Body, took place and it is with no little pride that I can refer to the highly appreciative Report submitted by the Inspection Committee. The Staff, the equipment, the standard of work, the syllabus and several other details were commented upon as being—to quote from the Report—"highly efficient," "most satisfactory." "excellent," "comprehensive and practical," "quite adequate." It might be pertinent to add that the Inspection Committee spent nearly a week at the College, residing on the premises. They made a searching investigation into all the departments and carefully scrutinised students' note books and charts, office reports and files as well as other records and papers.

The Annual Meeting of the Governing Body was held just before this formal inspection but copies of the reports were circulated among all the members. Fortunately, however, the Report of the Reorganization Committee, appointed in 1939, arrived in time to be placed before

the meeting. This Report, too, meticulously drawn up by experts also, evinced a deep appreciation and, if I may say so, an understanding of the nature of our achievements, and offered useful suggestions for future developments. We cannot but be sufficiently grateful to these two Committees for their interest and invaluable help.

The successful working of the College, as we had anticipated, attracted as before a large number of students. The accommodation proved to be insufficient; and, though seven four-bedded dormitories were added during the Summer holidays, approximately fifty candidates had to be refused admission again this year. Because of the addition of new rooms the number of students on the roll could be raised from 76 to 116. This naturally necessitated the employment of a larger teaching staff. Their extra salaries, however, were met from the fees of the additional students.

The increase in the strength of the staff proved to be of great assistance in the launching and expansion of our scheme of Extension Classes and Refresher Courses. These classes were successfully conducted and attracted several local women. We intend to make them a regular feature of our activities.

Much of what I have to say of this year's work would be but repetitions of paragraphs that appeared in my previous Report, and, therefore, I need only briefly reiterate some of the points.

1. The demand for Domestic Science teachers was again far in excess of the supply.

2. The students continued to be drawn from all the provinces and most of the major Indian States and about 50 per cent. of them possessed qualifications higher than the Matriculation, a fair proportion of these being graduates.

3. Extra-curricular activities and hobbies were as popular as before and interest in extra-mural lectures was maintained. Physical Culture and spinning were recently introduced.

4. The results of the Diploma and other examinations were again satisfactory.

The Social Service and Rural work of the students deserves special mention. As this aspect of their life at the College has figured in previous reports, I need only touch on its new developments. Literacy classes and elementary educational talks were arranged for servants and their families, including their children, and simple medical aid also was rendered regularly. Sunday morning in the College grounds rang with the laughter of children as they played games and took part in competitive sports. Thus were the students able to import into the lives of these children a little of joy and a little of that healthy training that playing-fields and team games afford.

Visits to the village during the year proved to be more effective and evoked greater response because a medical woman accompanied the students and placed her service and knowledge at the disposal of the rural women. The students, with their growing contact with rural life, have become more keenly alive to their responsibility, and, in the course of the year, raised sufficient money for constructing a well in a village where it was sorely needed.

I should like to end this Report by thanking the kind friends and the Governments for the financial help they have so generously rendered. Mr. G. D. Birla, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Sahiba, Mrs. Rustomji Faridoonji, Mrs. B. L. Nehru, Rani Sahiba of Vizianagram, the Governments of Bombay, Punjab, Jind and Indore are among those, to whose valuable co-operation we owe so much of our success.

B. Sewa Singh Gill,

Honorary Secretary,

All-India Women's Education Fund Association and

The Lady Irwin College.

REPORT ON INDIGENOUS INDUSTRIES.

The country is sufficiently awakened to the urgency of developing Indigenous Industries. It is superfluous to dwell upon India's past greatness in her arts and industries and deplore her present condition. The people are fully aware of the causes for the decline of these industries, some of them being foreign competition, cheap machine-made articles, ignorance and poverty of the masses.

The Government too has awakened to the necessity of developing Indian Industries. Numerous committees have been formed to investigate India's industrial condition and to suggest remedies for reviving old industries and starting new ones. The recent report of the Bombay Economic and Industrial Survey Committee is a valuable document giving practical suggestions for the economic development and promotion of cottage industries. These books and the reports of the various committees, one and all, agree that unless the Government takes immediate steps to revive Indigenous Industries, they are in danger of being completely ruined. If Indigenous Industries are to thrive, the Government has to alter its tariff policy and put a limit on imports. The Government should also pay attention to other matters vitally connected with the industrial development of the country such as removal of illiteracy, financial help to workers, improved methods of production, new and attractive designs, marketing and transport facilities, co-operative societies, etc. India is prepared to take up any industry but she cannot do so without the sympathetic support of the Government.

We have spilt enough ink on paper upon the subject of encouraging Indigenous Industries and passed resolutions enough numbers of times on this subject. It is of no use giving a long catalogue of Indian Industries or to mention a few haphazard and half-hearted attempts that are being made both by the people and the Government. We should show some results by our concentrated efforts.

Now is the time for A.-I.W.C. to do some practical work in influencing the illiterate and ignorant rural population by taking a centre and creating an ideal village, where compulsory education, employment for all, a good water supply, efficient housing, good roads, gardens, a co-operative society, a library and reading room, a club, last but not least a charkha class will be provided for the well-being of villagers and where peace and plenty reign.

The A.-I.W.Ch., as to its credit the Lady Irwin College to teach Domestic Arts to girls, but it is not within the reach of the poor. Now it will do well to start a centre for the poor and the uneducated on the lines suggested. This may seem at first to be impracticable but the way

is there, if we will. There should be a missionary-like effort and the A-I.W.C. has been in existence long enough to have an experimental centre to carry out its ideals. I hope the members of the A-I.W.C. will give serious thought to this question and create an ideal Indian village for others to imitate. Some one has said "Some countries have been saved by their men but India must be saved by her women".

The subject is such a vast and complicated one that it takes an international aspect. To give one instance, the growth of coffee in Brazil has affected the coffee market in Mysore. Similarly other industries also are affected. At the coming Conference in Bangalore all the details of the question will be fully discussed. I expect the full co-operation of all the members in this effort and invite their valuable suggestions.

"It is better to have tried and failed
than never to have tried at all."

Kamamma H. Dasappa,

*Member in-charge of Indigenous Industries,
All-India Women's Conference, 1940.*

**Report on the problem of Legal Disabilities of Women
(1940-41.)**

It is a deplorable thing to consider that because of disturbed political conditions, the possibility of progress in the work of the removal of women's Legal Disabilities has become very little.

Law-making on this subject is almost at a stand-still. The Committee appointed by the Government of India according to the Hedge Resolution, with Sir N. N. Sircar as its Chairman, to consider women's rights to maintenance and residence, has never been able to meet, and has quietly passed into non-existence.

A bill was introduced into the Central Legislature this year by Mr. A. C. Dutta, to amend the Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act of 1937. The contention was that the passage of the Act of 1937 caused

injustice to daughters with regard to inheritance. Mr. Dutta's Bill sought to restore to the daughter the position she occupied prior to the passage of the 1937 Act. This bill was rejected without a division.

Dr. Deshmukh has again introduced two bills in the Central Legislature; (1) A bill to provide for judicial separation and divorce among the Hindus; and (2) A bill to give Hindu married women a right to separate residence and maintenance under certain circumstances It appears from these bills that Dr. Deshmukh has not considered it advisable to go into detailed drafting of all requirements at this stage. He has thus given no definition clauses, neither is the explanation of judicial procedure that would be required is given. It may be pointed out on the other hand, that proposals for a Divorce Bill should be correctly defined, so that there would be no confusion in the interpretation of the measure, and unanimity of opinion can be secured in favour of such legislation. A far more serious objection to Dr. Deshmukh's proposals is his suggestion that we should accept separate residence and judicial separation as measures of temporary relief in case the actual provision of divorce from the marital bond cannot get legal backing. It may be pointed out that there is danger, that this compromising is very mischievous, as it would deter desirable divorce legislation for an unnecessary longer period.

It is necessary to consider the attitude that the All-India Women's Conference should adopt on such attempts at legislation. It has been sufficiently proved by now that all kind of piecemeal legislation, however well-meaning it may be, leads nowhere; and creates difficulties more than achieving any good. The All-India Women's Conference has definitely expressed its distrust at all kind of piecemeal legislation for the last four years. It may be suggested that the Conference should take a lead in educating public opinion on this point. We have backed up one Divorce Bill before this,—that one also being sponsored by Dr. Deshmukh—, on its principle. One of the reasons for the failure of that Bill was its entire lack of any definite proposals. By backing up such bills even in their principle, as we have done before this, we encourage public distrust in such measures. Our propaganda in their favour bears no result, it would seem, than this.

On the other hand, it is necessary that our Conference should take up the responsibility of getting bills drafted on various subjects of Women's Disabilities, and get them introduced in the legislatures through members sympathetic to our cause. We can then lend the full strength of our organisation by doing propaganda in our branches throughout the country. A bill has been drafted by the Bombay Social Reform Association which was recommended for approval by Srimati Sharadabehn Mehta, our Member-in-charge for Legal Disabilities last year. I have to recommend that we should take up the proposal of getting this bill introduced in the legislature during the coming year, with any improvements that we might like to suggest.

As regards propaganda work done in our branches, it appears from resolutions passed in the Constituent Conferences, that the work of propaganda regarding removal of legal disabilities is being continued as usual. From experience of work in the Maharashtra and Bombay branches, it appears,—though this remark may not be true in the case of many other branches,—that the demand for removal of legal disabilities is no longer a matter of contention among our members. Passing resolutions on this subject has become a mere matter of form. It appears that it would be of some practical use if a definite measure is being backed up that would create more faith and enthusiasm in the work of the Conference.

Shanta Bhalerao,

Member-in-Charge of Legal Disabilities.

LITERACY AND ADULT EDUCATION.

A fairly full questionnaire of nearly thirty questions asking for information about conditions of literacy education both for children and adults, and the cost of such, was sent out to all our Branches as well as the different Provincial Governments and Municipalities.

I have received replies from the following :—

| Director of Public Instruction. | States. | Local Boards and Municipalities. | Our Own Branches. |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Bengal | Jammu and Kashmir | Bangalore | Moradabad Guzerat |
| United Provinces | Patiala | Dharwar | Silchar |
| C. P. and Berar | Hyderabad (Deccan) | Belgaum | Phaltan |
| N.-W. Frontier Province | .. | Quetta | Hyderabad (Deccan) |
| Madras | .. | Ahmednagar | Madras |
| | | Bandra | Calcutta |
| | | Surat | Baroda |
| | | Rawalpindi | Indore |
| | | | Poona |
| | | | Nagpur |
| | | | South Bombay |

I have also received replies from the Literacy Officer, Bombay, Assam, and the Educational Expansion Officer, Lucknow, the Lady Irwin College, and the Rural Reconstruction Association run by Mr. S. R. Bhagwat, President of the Bombay Provincial Committee on Adult

Education. Thus it will be seen that it is not possible for me to present an accurate or comprehensive report about literacy in India. But, none the less a fair amount of information has been collected and the beginning has been made. This collection of information must, I feel, be continued during the next year to make it really worthwhile. The Director and others have, in many cases, given me names of others, who may be useful in our inquiry, but unfortunately these people have not yet all replied to my questionnaire.

As regards the percentage of literacy for adult women, the variation in different parts is very great. Thus it is in:—

| | | |
|--|------|-----------|
| Bangalore (Civil and Military Station) | 23 | per cent. |
| Bengal | 1 | ” ” |
| Assam | 2.3 | ” ” |
| C.P. | 0.93 | ” ” |
| Indore State | 2.3 | ” ” |
| Guzerat | 3.2 | ” ” |
| Hyderabad (Deccan) | 1 | ” ” |
| Madras | 4.3 | ” ” |
| Bombay Province | 2.9 | ” ” |
| Bombay City | 17.3 | ” ” |

Education is compulsory in very, very few areas. From the replies sent to me, it will be seen that education is compulsory only in a very few cities, as per details below:—

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Bombay | Since last year for girls as well as for boys. |
| Dharwar | A part of the city only. |
| Dhulia | For girls as well as for boys. |
| Ahmednagar | Only for boys. |
| Bandra, Bombay | |
| Suburban Dist. | For boys as well as girls. |
| Chittagong | |
| Municipality | Only for boys. |
| Calcutta | Ward No. 9. |
| Surat | Since the last 20 years. |
| Madras | In 28 Municipalities, but it is compulsory in four of these for girls, |

Education is compulsory in Baroda State. But all people, even where there is compulsory education, report that it is not strictly enforced for various reasons. None the less, in certain areas, without compulsion, a very high percentage of the girls and boys of school-going age are at school—from 80 to 85 per cent. in Bombay City and Bangalore City.

An enquiry was made about the salaries paid to primary teachers. There is a very considerable variation in the salaries paid to teachers in different provinces, even in urban areas—varying from Rs. 15 to about Rs. 40 as the lowest salary in different urban areas, and from Rs. 30 to Rs. 150 as the highest salary. The averages of salaries for vast and large divisions give very inaccurate ideas, and hence the lowest and the highest rates are given.

As regards the adult work that has been undertaken, first by Governments and other Departments, I have been able to get the following information :—

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| N.-W.F. Province | Has no class for women. |
| Central Provinces | Has about 100 adult and night schools. These are really in the nature of primary schools, rather than literacy centres. There are 2 classes for women with 263 women in them. |
| Assam | Has a thousand literacy centres for men and women. |
| Bandra Municipality | Has one class with 39 men. |
| Bombay | The Bombay Committee for Literacy set up by the Government of Bombay has literacy classes of the duration of 4 months, and since April 1939, has run 1,400 classes at which 24,000 men and 3,000 women have been taught; of these 78 per cent. men and 71 per cent. women, stay the full term and achieve literacy. Our branch has run some 80 classes at which some 1,200 women have been made literate. |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Hyderabad (Deccan) | 52 classes for educating adults. |
| Madras | Some local bodies and private agencies maintain night schools for adult women. |

The time taken, according to the answers, varies considerably. Thus Indore reports a period of 3 months, while Hyderabad (Deccan) speaks of a year and a half, and the C.P. 2 years and Assam one year. In the Bombay Constituency and in the Bombay Literacy Classes run by the Government Committee, we have found that four months of regular attendance is quite sufficient for making an adult man or woman of the cities literate.

The costs vary considerably according to the method of payment. Thus Assam pays 4 annas per literate on results, whereas the C.P. pays the teacher Rs. 5 a month, and Bandra pays Rs. 10 a month. In women's classes in Bombay City we have had to pay from Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 a month, for, as women's classes have to be held very often in the day time, it is not possible to make use of the primary teacher who, in other cases, is paid a small extra charge to add to his monthly earnings. The N.-W.F. Province pays from Rs. 3 to Rs. 15 per year. Thus no fixed rates or costs for large and varied areas, such as this country, have been worked out. Hyderabad (Deccan) says it costs Rs. 8 to make a man literate, while Madras reports only Rs. 2. In Bombay on an average it costs us Rs. 5 to make a woman literate.

Of the work actually undertaken by our Branches, as reported to me, Moradabad has been running classes in four Mohallas, where a few women have been made literate. At Silchar, there is one class for 20 women. Phaltan runs four classes for 50 women, and last year had 6 classes at which 60 women were made literate. The Ahmedabad Branch reports 4 classes, where the women are taught spinning as well. The attendance of these classes varies from 8 to 15. In Bombay City we do not run classes where the average attendance is less than 15 and the numbers on the rolls may be anything from 25 up to 30, but, unless the average attendance at a class is 15, we do not continue that class. Ahmedabad reports that they cannot run more classes for lack of funds. Poona has 17 centres at which 96 women have been made literate. The South C.P.

reports 2 classes, at which 25 women were made literate. Even Calcutta reports of a very elaborate plan of running adult Co-operative Centres for women, and, as this requires vast funds and as they have found difficulties in collecting any sort of funds just now, they say their plan is in abeyance.

Even at the risk of being considered as blowing our own trumpets, I must mention in detail the work that has been done in Bombay. In April 1939, the Social Service League of Bombay organised a very big campaign, the great success of which was due to the enthusiasm and drive of some of our members, particularly Miss Gokhale, who was the secretary of that drive. Some 500 classes, of which about 50 were for women, were started, and after a month these were taken over by the Committee appointed by Government and continued for some months until the adults had achieved literacy. The main value of the work of Miss Gokhale and her first Committee, on which practically all the members of our Executive were taking an active part, was that, now the question of literacy and the need for it has penetrated the working classes in Bombay City, and regular four months' classes, at which there is no trouble in getting attendance, have been going on ever since, according as the Committee has the funds. In this connection special literature was prepared, and the first batch of teachers were given instruction in teaching. All this work was done by members of our Committee. Thus though we ourselves as a Branch did not run this campaign, we have played a very important part in it. Since then our Branch has run some 80 classes, at which nearly 1,200 women have been made literate. Our policy has been to collect money. When we find we have enough money for the running of a class, then and then alone do we open the class. We alone in the Branch have collected some Rs. 4,000 and the Government gave us a grant of Rs. 2,500. The Bombay Government, it must be said, are really paying attention to this work of adult literacy and have spent since May, 1939, Rs. 60,000 on it, both by way of direct expenditure and grant to classes. Unfortunately, the population of Bombay is a very floating population, and hence despite these efforts, the total eradication of illiteracy will take a long time, but, there is this advantage that this message of literacy if for that same reason spread to the villages by this floating labour population.

The problem in Bombay is further complicated by the numbers of languages in which classes even in the same locality have to be conducted. Some seven distinct languages are being taught in our classes.

As regards the literature that I have received from various branches, I feel that in many cases it has evidently been produced in a hurry and hence needs much revision. Some of the literature sent to me from certain provinces is mere propaganda for war purposes. It was suggested by the last Finding Committee of the All-India Women's Conference that special books be written for these adults on matters of health, etc., but unless the writer has real contact with such people, it is not possible to write such books. There are on the other hand numbers of simple books of an informational character, and I would consider that efforts be made to find these and circulate them to different classes. In our Association, we are keeping teachers to visit our newly literate women, once a week, and give them such simple books which they find of great interest.

Urmila Mehta,

Member-in-Charge, Literacy and Adult Education.

CHILD LABOUR.

In obtaining the information regarding Child Labour employed in factories in India, I had sent a questionnaire to all the Branch Representatives of our Conference, but replies were forthcoming only from Assam, Indore, Kashmere and Bombay. As for Bengal, certain Government publications have been referred to.

A child is described by the Factories Act as a person above 12 years or under 15 years of age.

The average number of children employed in the place mentioned is as follows:—

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Assam : Tea Gardens | 548,516 |
| : Regd. Factories in 1938 | 7,062 |
| Indore | 672 |
| Kashmere | 4,000 |
| Bengal | 1,474 |

Taking into consideration the fact that Bengal alone employs about 56,458 labour in all her industries, the number of Child Labour, at least, in the above-mentioned four other places, is not very high. This low figure is, I believe, in conformity with the rest of India, although I have not been able to collect positive information.

The working hours prescribed for children in factories are more or less the same in all provinces as the hours during which children may be employed to work in factories are laid down by the Factories Act. These are from 5 to 6 hours per day. The answers to the questionnaires issued by me would go to show that the nature of work which children perform in the factories is not too arduous. It may be suggested that it should be enforced by legislation that children should not be allowed to work for more than 5 hours a day, which should not spread over for more than 7 hours. The minimum interval specified for rest should be 1 hour. The hours of work may preferably be fixed between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m.

It does not appear that there is at present any provision according to the law for the medical treatment, nursing during convalescence, recreation and educational facilities to children employed in factories. It is realised that small factories would find it difficult to provide for these, but the larger factories, *e.g.*, factories which employ more than 300 labourers or in which the number of Child Labour exceeds 10, should be made to comply with these.

These larger factories should be made to provide their Child Labour with free medical aid and medicine. Proper facilities should be afforded to children to receive nursing at the hands of trained nurses in cases of infantile and vocational diseases. In consideration of the fact that children are lowly paid in factories, the employers should be made to provide for adequate special diet in such cases. Proper recreation facilities in the shape of play-ground, suitable grants for the purchase of sports requisites should also come from the employers. As regards education, provision should be made for the establishment of night schools attached to these larger factories where suitable subjects both in the line of imparting a general education to the young people as well as for giving them a technical education which in the end might lead them to better positions. In case it is not possible for the factory itself to establish such

a school, arrangement should be made for the children to attend some neighbouring night schools.

It may also be enforced by legislation that a child employed in a factory for a period of 6 continuous months, would receive 15 days' sick leave with pay, and 10 days' casual leave with pay. This figure is suggested on the lines as followed by most factories in the case of adult labour who have to put in 12 months' unbroken service to earn correspondently longer sick and casual leave.

It is a fact that at the present moment the quarters for labour provided by the employers are in most cases insufficient and unsatisfactory. The employers should be made to arrange for accommodation for labourer and the construction of the same should be subject to the approval of the Government. It should be arranged for by legislation that especial attention be given to quarters allotted for Child Labour. Children with no guardians to live with, should be accommodated separate from other labour.

Sudha Mazumdar,

Member-in-Charge for Child Labour.

HARIJAN WELFARE.

Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru, Member-in-charge.

Harijan work both in the country at large and in our branches has been slack during the year. It was reorganised and consolidated by the Harijan Sevak Sangh in the Province of Sind where a tour for the purpose was undertaken by Thakkar Bappa, the General Secretary of the Sangh and myself.

Thirteen of our branches have made a mention of Harijan work in their annual reports. Of these, five branches, namely, Bengal East, Bihar, Calcutta, C.P. South, Punjab Central, have either started or are maintaining schools for Harijan children. Calcutta is maintaining a Bal Mandir and Night School for adults both of which were started sometime ago. Gujarat, Konkan, Maharastra are running adult schools. Konkan is giving a scholarship to one student. Maharastra, Phaltan, Central Punjab, Moradabad Sub-Branch mention creating social contacts

with the Harijans by means of paying visits and holding *kirtans* and inviting Harijan women on festival days.

Maharashtra tried to remove their water difficulties by approaching the Municipality. Madras only mentions that work for Harijan Uplift is carried on. Certain other branches have promised to take up this work in future.

This is the sum total of the work done by our Branches during the year.

REPORT OF THE HON. SECRETARY ON THE WOMEN'S INDIAN CLUB. ITS ACTIVITIES AS FROM JULY, 1939 TO JUNE, 1940.

Lady Rama Rau

Introduction.—

Members and Friends,

It gives me the greatest pleasure in submitting to you the report on the activities of your Club for the past eleven months.

Formation of Club.—

At a party held at the Hotel Edward, in July, 1939, the Women's Indian Club was initiated by Lady Rama Rau.

Club House.—

Lady Rama Rau made strenuous efforts to purchase or rent a house suitable for a Club and, with this purpose the Agent-General interviewed the City Council for a site suitable for the erection of a Club House. The Council promised to help but owing to the unsettled conditions in Europe the matter was deferred. But it is hoped that in the future the Club Officials will once again approach the Council.

Temporary Club Quarters.—

In the meantime it was decided that we hold our Club Meetings at the Ozoné Club Durban North. Owing to the distance this suggestion was unsatisfactory. Matters were settled when Miss Slatter, Headmistress of the Dartnell Crescent School, came to our aid and generously offered the School, Grounds and Tennis Court for the Club's use, which was enthusiastically accepted.

Club Days.—

The Club has met regularly twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays only a few days being abandoned owing to inclement weather. But I am happy to say that the attendance on the whole has been quite satisfactory.

Membership.—

I would like to place on record that the membership of the Club from its inception has been doubled although this does not in any way mean that we have a membership as large as we hope.

Periodicals.—

Mrs. Ridley has been very kind in placing at the Club's disposal copies of the Illustrated Weekly of India. Other papers are also received and I would urge members to take advantage of this.

Visitors Speakers.—

We have had very few Talks during the past few months but they were most interesting.

1. Mrs. Ridley gave a short talk on Girls in India.
2. Madame Douvern on Beauty Culture.
3. Miss Mildred Barrett on Physical Culture.
4. Mrs. A. Colly on Finland.
5. Mrs. D. F. Cawston on Indian Blind Welfare.
6. Miss Mary Barr, an associate of Mahatma Gandhi, spoke on Life in India, and the winding of Khaddar was performed by her.

Indian Blind Society.—

A Special collection was made and your Club donated to the above Society the sum of £4-0-0.

Finance.—

Donations and Subscriptions have been received fairly well, details are herewith submitted by Treasurer.

After expenses of

Badminton Court Racquets, etc.



Members of the Standing Committee of the A.-I. W. C. for 1940.

Club Stationery, Books, Boy's Wages, Milk, Tea, Sugar and Tennis Balls have been paid out.

Balance in Bank £77-2-0.

This includes Donations at the Foundation of the Club and balance of Club Subscriptions. We have also a balance of £2-7-3 on hand for running expenses in the Club.

War.—

Before I conclude I must in duty bound make reference to the War. These are dark and anxious days, and if in this Great conflict the Allied Cause is defeated it would mean the destruction of all Good that Man has tried to create and the Ideals that we know will descend into darkness. Therefore I appeal to you, the members of the Women's Indian Club and *all* who wish to help to place all your energies towards helping the War and responding to the Call by way of supporting the Funds and offering your services such as Knitting and Sewing for the benefit of soldiers and their dependents for the duration of war, and give assistance and sympathy to the unfortunate Evacuees in their sad plight. LET US CO-OPERATE AND DO OUR SHARE FOR THE MEN WHO ARE SERVING THEIR COUNTRY.

Vote of thanks.—

In conclusion I would like to thank our President and all other Officials of the Club for their assistance.

Our thanks are due to Mrs. Forth and Mrs. Leon for the services and interest in the Club which have been very much appreciated. I beg to accord your Club's thanks to Miss Slatter to whom we are very grateful for her kind permission in allowing the Club to enjoy the hospitality of the School.

I would like to convey to Mrs. Joseph, our capable and efficient Organiser in whom we have found a true friend, our heartfelt gratitude for her untiring services and support without which the Club would not have achieved the success it has made.

Indira Maghrajh,

Hony. Secretary.

After the Annual General Meeting we have been extremely busy owing to war work. We have collected about £80 and have completed many little garments for refugee children including woollen comforts for the troops overseas. During the last week the Club with the assistance of the Indian Schools has knitted 300 scarves for the S. A. Indian Transport troops. We are proud of this and I am sure you will be too.

* * * *

The Hon. General Secretary of the A.-I.W.C., Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon, then announced that the work of the afternoon would be divided into five groups namely:—

- (1) Civic Training, (2) Removal of illiteracy and Adult Education,
- (3) Laws affecting Marriage and Divorce, (4) Untouchability and communal unity, (5) Cottage industries in India, housing, expansion of opportunities for the economic freedom of women.

and requested the delegates to sign their names on any of the five lists pertaining to the five groups.

WAR RESOLUTION.

Then Mrs. Swaminathan read out the War Resolution which ran as follows:—

This conference views with the utmost distress the continuance of war in various parts of the world. It expresses its horror at the cruel suffering inflicted on innocent people, at the loss of human life, at the destruction of great centres of learning and priceless treasures of art, at the colossal waste of wealth and above all at the hatred engendered in the hearts of men.

It once more affirms its faith in non-violence as the best solution of the world's ills and appeals to the heads of all nations to put aside their weapons of destruction and seek peace in human ways. It appeals to the women of the world in particular to throw in the full weight of their moral force on the side of permanent world peace.

It expresses its keen disappointment at Britain's failure to recognise India's free status which would be the first and logical step towards the attainment of freedom of all nations and world democracy, for which Britain has declared she is at war.

In the course of proposing the above resolution she spoke as follows:—

“I have merely to explain that this resolution is the result of exhaustive discussions by all the Standing Committee members. It represents a synthesis of resolutions on the subject of war, passed by Constituencies all over India. This is really a reiteration of the resolutions passed at Allahabad, and also at our half-yearly meeting this year. It is but right that we should raise our voices again at this critical state, when the world is passing through great horrors. I feel very strongly that we, women not only of India, but of all nations, must unite and do everything we can to bring peace into this world. Again I request the delegates assembled here to pass this resolution unanimously.”

Mrs. Vidya Puri from Punjab seconded the resolution :

Lady Rama Rau proposed that the resolution had better be taken up for discussion and voting section by section.

The President desired to split the resolution into three parts namely:—

“This Conferencemen”

“It once morepeace”

“It expressesat war”

for the purpose of discussion and voting. The President wanted to take up the amendments to the resolutions as a whole, but Lady Rama Rau preferred to have even the amendments section by section.

The first part of the resolution was thrown open for discussion—“This Conferencemen”. There being no more speakers on that part, it was put to vote. 114 voted for the first part of the resolution and it was passed unanimously.

Mrs. Billimoria from Bombay in proposing an amendment to the second part of the resolution, namely, that the words, “It once more ways” should be deleted, read as follows:—

It may appear that I am against non-violence, because I am asking for the deletion of this clause, but Indian women have, for ages been non-violent in thought, speech and action. As a creed, non-violence may be an ideal; as a matter of fact, Gandhiji in his

wisdom formulated this creed, because difference of political opinion in India is apt to lead and has led to acts of violence. But to preach that creed to those who have war at their doors is simply inconceivable. Situated as we are, thousands of miles away, from the seat of war, it is very easy for us to pass the resolution saying that non-violence is the best or only creed. But I ask you, if tomorrow your homes were invaded, your daughters and mothers and sisters fell a prey to the lust of invading hordes, would you ask your men to sit with folded hands offering non-violence? I, for one, would be ashamed of a father or husband who left me alone to the lusts of unscrupulous invaders. What we really ought to do now is to help to overthrow the one enemy that people of all shades of political opinion have combined to condemn with a united voice. Having done that we can throw the whole weight of our moral force on the side of permanent world peace.

Only the other day we honoured the memory of Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi; a beautiful cultured woman, she donned a warrior's garb and rode at the head of her army to defend her kingdom and her people. We have held up people like her and Chandbibi as ideals to the younger generation. We idealized these brave heroines and now times seem to be so changed that we ask our men-folk to sit at home with folded arms when their country is invaded and their wives and children are at the mercy of unscrupulous pirates.

Lastly, I shall once again reiterate what I have said. We shall be non-violent in thought and speech and action so long as there is even an infinitesimal chance of our arguments being listened to, but when it is impossible, my only advice would be "defend yourself, and having overthrown the invader and established the sanctity of your homes, put in your weight for world peace."

Mrs. J. R. Doctor in seconding Mrs. Billimoria read as follows:—

The creed of non-violence had to be evolved because difference of political opinion in India were apt to lead and actually led to acts of violence. How we women in India could enforce this creed of non-violence to other countries of the world into whose politics we have no right to interfere, and who themselves would and could brook no interference in their politics?

Also we cannot demand of nations to be non-violent, that is, sit with arms folded, when their country is invaded, cruel suffering inflicted on the people and immense loss of life and destruction of property and everything that the people hold sacred are threatened with annihilation, and their women-folk are molested and subjected to shameful treatments.

Can we ever think of an Indian to take no notice of, and remain absolutely quiet when ruthless robbers commit atrocities in his home? Can you ever think of an Indian who would not rise up in arms to defend his home and his women-folk?

It is an indisputable fact that every woman is, and should be non-violent at heart, but women have beaten off and killed wild animals and snakes who came to threaten the life of their children. Show me a mother who would remain passively inactive when her child is threatened with destruction or harm. She would not be a mother.

We can preach non-violence when violence is in the atmosphere. We could and should do all in our power to abate inhuman feelings, passions for lust and might with our non-violent arguments, but at a time when the countries in Europe are subjected to cruel violence, it is beyond human understanding and intelligence to preach and enforce non-violence to those countries. In fact if it is preached, who will listen to him, where bombs and cannon balls fall all round them and mutilated bodies are hurtled through the air.

The creed of non-violence, therefore, could be promulgated in times of peace, but becomes a vague assertion in theory and not at all practicable.

Mrs. Shiva Rao proposed the following amendment to the second part of the war resolution :—

“It once more and appeals to the governments of all nations in ways other than War”.

Miss Renu Roy seconded the amendment.

Mrs. K. D. Rukmini Ammal supporting Mrs. Billimoria's amendment spoke as follows :—

“It is too big to expect human beings to live in perfect peace with each other. It is impracticable, human nature being what it is. When

great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal and others are sacrificing a good deal for the faith of non-violence, some of you might think it is impertinent on my part to speak against non-violence. It is impracticable to expect human beings to follow up non-violence permanently. In the GITA we are faced with this problem. Our Hindu religion asks us to go through the VARNASHRAMA DHARMA. When Arjuna was faced with doubts and fears Lord Krishna asked him to fight the battle. So long as life lasts there is strife and discontent. We are living in a world of opposites,—friendliness and enmity, vice and virtue and so on and so on. Even the League of Nations failed to bring about peace. It tried disarmament. It was not practicable. Where the League of Nations failed do you mean to say, that the resolution passed at our Conference will carry much weight and will be effective. There is something basic in this. It presupposes perfect equality in human beings, equality in temperament in physical fitness. All should be of the same pattern which is not possible, and which is impracticable”.

Miss Vilasini Devi Sheanoy in opposing Mrs. Billimoria's amendment spoke as follows :—

With due deference to the previous speaker, I do not agree with her. These are not Puranic days. What Krishna said in those days to Arjuna is not applicable to us this day. Then we did not have scientific discoveries in regard to warfare, we did not have bombs and poison-gas. In those days, there was a particular kind of chivalry. Ordered population did not suffer. But what do we see to-day? Bombs are dropped on the poor innocent population, women and children are dying without number. Industry is suffering, trade is ruined and fields are devastated. There is no meaning in appealing to men to vote for this amendment. To be non-violent is not an easy job no doubt. We must wait and raise our voices to see that non-violence is established. There is no use in saying that there is no use in non-violence. We must go one step further. Therefore I raise my humble protest against the speech of my predecessor.

Miss Thakuri Lakhani from Sind speaking in favour of Mrs. Billimoria read her speech,

Mrs. Kameshwarama opposing Mrs. Billimoria's amendment spoke as follows :—

If the amendment of Mrs. Billimoria is carried, then the spirit of the resolution would disappear. Krishna did not really and in the ordinary sense want Arjuna to take to arms. What was the motive behind Krishna asking Arjuna to fight? It was not for self-aggression or to deprive another man of this Empire. It was for the establishment of righteousness and Dharma. Mahatma Gandhi is trying this experiment in all seriousness. It has gone into the heart of every Indian and of every American. In South Africa this has had a great success. No poison gas can be as successful as non-violence. Non-violence is something spiritual. It is something which goes deep in the heart of every one of you. If we want to establish Dharma in our lands we should really support this whole resolution.

Miss Sharadamma supporting Mrs. Billimoria spoke as follows :—

We want our resolutions to be practical and workable. Non-violence is certainly an ideal and it is true that Mahatmaji follows non-violence cent per cent. But have we that amount of moral courage to carry out the campaign of non-violence? Since there are violent means going on in the world smaller nations are at the mercy of the bigger ones. Unless we exert our force we cannot live. We must perish. It is our duty to keep the invader at a distance.

Mrs. Amir Hussain spoke for the amendment of Mrs. Billimoria in Urdu.

Rajkumari Amritkaur opposing Mrs. Billimoria spoke as follows :—

I have come to oppose the amendment with all the strength at my command. This Conference has accepted non-violence on more than one occasion. We stand to-day under the shadow of a terrible happening in the world. It has been said that non-violence is a party political issue. I say it is a world issue. Because of violence to-day the world has come to a sorry state, which permeates every state and every country in Europe. I do not want this great land of ours to lose her heritage. Our land stands for love and for religion. Non-violence is not a new thing here. I ask you as Indian women to show a way to the world that is simply dying now. Is this war going to end wars? Will not Hitler's weapons be destroyed by

somebody more powerful than Hitler? Has war solved any war? Is not Hitlerism the result of the last War? We are here standing for something much higher and much nobler. He that killeth shall be destroyed. I ask you to believe this truth, this ancient truth of Hinduism, of Jainism, of Islam, of Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. Let us be killed, but let us not kill. I say to you that he who kills will be tired of killing. No man can destroy your soul; he can take your body. By supporting the amendment before our house you will be asking for the destruction of your own souls. Therefore my appeal to you in the name of religion, in the name of humanity, in the name of Indian womanhood, in the name of world as a whole is to stand by non-violence, and to see to it that we bring to this world an era in which every exploitation, every cruelty, and every war shall cease and that we shall live in love for each other. We must stand for non-violence if we are to live at all.

Mrs. Billimoria was given the final right of reply. She asked the delegates present what they would do if a war like the present one was brought to their very doors. Hitler and Mussolini were not going to listen to their voices. She reminded that their concern was to end the present war as speedily as could be done.

The President got up to speak a few words herself on the resolution. Mrs. Doctor was of the opinion that she could not do so from the chair. Begum Hamid Ali then took the chair.

Mrs. Nehru spoke as follows:—

“It is very sad that there should be discussion on this resolution. I am too full of feelings just now to say anything more. But I appeal to you not to allow your heritage to go to waste. I appeal to you as mothers, wives, and daughters to vote against the amendment, that is before you. You are the creators of life and therefore do not fight with the destroyers of life. Even for defence if we use violent means a time will come when we die on account of those very means, for, those who fight with the sword will die by the sword. Remember these words; the whole weight of women should be thrust towards amelioration of the country. I request you, therefore, to unanimously pass the resolution.”

At this stage Mrs. Shiva Rao's amendment was put to vote. 58 voted for and 22 voted against. The amendment of Mrs. Shiva Rao was passed by a majority of 36. Then Mrs. Billimoria's amendment was put to vote. 50 voted for and 70 against. The amendment was lost.

The second section as amended by Mrs. Shiva Rao was finally carried.

The President invited amendments to the third section of the resolution namely, "It expresses. at war".

Mrs. Billimoria proposed an amendment to completely delete this part of the resolution in view of unity in their Conference. Mrs. Doctor seconded this amendment.

Mrs. Shiva Rao proposed the following amendment to this section namely, "such peace for which Britain hasat war.) with the words that it was their intention to bring about such good changes which would be more lasting than the last war brought about. The world could not go on at its present rate. There would have to be a reorganization of social life and creation of a comity of all nations. It was not possible for any nation in the world to rule another nation and yet stand for national freedom in the world. There would never be any peace in the world as long as there was discontent. This Conference also must extend its sympathy to the sufferings of the peoples whose freedom has been taken away from them. No war had ever brought on as much suffering to the people behind the lines as the present war had done. Even innocent women and children were suffering from the present war. It must be our immediate duty to think out a way by which future wars can be avoided.

Miss Renu Roy supported Mrs. Shiva Rao's amendment with the words that permanent peace in the world was possible only when inequalities were done away with. A New Order based on equality of all nations must be our aim.

Mrs. George from Cochin continued in support of Mrs. Billimoria's amendment with the words that the Conference had little to do with the political activities, but it had everything to do with the social and educational questions: Moreover, at least some of the delegates, for reasons which need not be specified, could not take part in this part of the resolution which was political in nature. She proposed that the resolution might be made more comprehensive to enable all the delegates of the Conference to take part in the discussion and thus the resolution might be passed by a big majority.

Mrs. Cousins opposed the amendment of Mrs. Billimoria with the words that she desired India to have full freedom and that she was also a lover and admirer of Great Britain and all that it stood for, and added that England was going against her own reputation in not giving India the substance of freedom. To save India from bloodshed must be the aim of the Conference. She was keen on seeing India get her right quickly with all the consistency to England herself for the greater good of India and England and the whole world.

Lady Rama Rau opposing the amendment of Mrs. Shiva Rao was for keeping the words of the original resolution on the ground that those words were more concise, more comprehensive and more to the point and that any change would make the thing more diffused.

Miss Gadavari Gokhale brought to the attention of the delegates the policy laid down in the constitution of the Conference which was as follows :—

“The All-India Women's Conference shall not belong to any political organization, nor take any active part in party politics, but shall be free to discuss all questions affecting the welfare of the people of India with special reference to women and children.”

It was not wrong in the interests of the Conference to say that the women of India stood for the freedom of their country. Through exploitation the women and children of India were bound to suffer. There could not be any equality as long as the nations stood as the exploiters and the exploited.

Miss Bannerjea from Bengal appealed to the delegates to support Mrs. Billimoria's amendment.

Mrs. Nazir Hussain from Madras spoke in Urdu.

Mrs. Urmila Mehta in support of the amendment of Mrs. Shiva Rao drew attention of the delegates to the fact that although Miss Gokhale mentioned that the Conference was pledged to avoid party politics, it was the duty of the Conference to stand for self-respect and the only way of getting permanent peace in the world was to do away with exploitation and subjugation.

Mrs. Hussain Ali Khan read out her written speech the text of which is given below:—

It is not that we do not want freedom or that India does not need it—but I don't see any reason why a non-political organisation like ours should deal with something which is not the main aim of our Conference. For those who desire freedom and want to achieve it by active participation there is already the Indian National Congress which is extremely keen to have women Satyagrahis. This is not the platform for it. Many of the speakers who have made such stirring appeals to our sense of justice have quite misunderstood us and I am sure I am voicing the feelings of all the state delegates.

Mrs. Venkataraman from Nandyal—a Telegu District—remarked that the resolution as drafted by the Standing Committee should be accepted by the delegates in that it had been drafted along the line of non-violence, which was so dear to Mahatmaji.

Mrs. Shiva Rao by way of final right of reply on her amendment added that it was time to stress the fact that a new World was to be created and that women of all countries would have to take part in bringing about social justice and order in the midst of chaos. The point in bringing the amendment before the Conference was with a view to establish social justice and order throughout India.

Mrs. Billimoria in her turn of final reply wished to say that the time was not opportune to pass the third part of the resolution. The President read the third part of the resolution as amended by Mrs. Shiva Rao,

This part of the resolution was put to vote. 44 voted for and 32 against. The amendment was carried by a majority of 12.

Then the amendment of Mrs. Billimoria to delete the third part of the resolution was put to vote. 38 voted for, 63 against. This amendment was dropped. Then the whole resolution, as amended, was put to vote. 72 voted for and 29 against. The resolution was thus carried by a majority of 43.

Then Mrs. L. Menon announced that group meetings would be held at the National High School at 2 p.m., each group headed by a President and two Secretaries.

WAR RESOLUTION AS AMENDED BY Mrs. SHIVA RAO.

This Conference views with the utmost distress the continuance of war in various parts of the world. It expresses its horror at the cruel suffering inflicted on innocent people, at the loss of human life, at the destruction of great centres of learning and priceless treasures of art, at the colossal waste of wealth and above all at the hatred engendered in the hearts of men.

It once more affirms its faith in non-violence as the best solution of the world's ills and appeals to the governments of all nations to put aside their weapons of destruction and seek peace in ways other than war.

It appeals to the women of the world in particular to throw in the full weight of their moral force on the side of permanent world peace.

Such peace is impossible without a new order, based on social justice and equality of all nations. It therefore recognises that there can be no world peace till India and all other subject nations attain their liberty, as the first and logical step towards the attainment of the ideals for which Britain has declared she is at war. This Conference cannot but deplore the sufferings of all peoples whose freedom has been taken from them. It reiterates that war can never solve any problem.

Second Sitting 29th December, 1940—11-25 a.m. 12-50 p.m.

The Plenary Session of the Conference met at 11-25 a.m., on Sunday the 29th of December, 1940, with Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru in the chair.

The report of Group No. 1 was read by Miss Renu Roy.

**REPORT OF GROUP No. 1.
Adult Education and Literacy.**

Whilst congratulating the many Branches who have achieved great success in the sphere of adult education and removal of illiteracy during the year, the Group was of opinion that effort should be redoubled so that by the next electoral roll a very much increased franchise will be exercised by women. It was also asserted that all Branches should approach the Government to take the literacy census according to language groups and not by religion.

The Group circulated the report and questionnaire of the Member-in-charge of Adult Education and advised all members to gather as many statistics of their province as possible and to submit it to the Member-in-charge. The recommendations made by the Group were as follows:—

Methods of Organisation and Teaching.

Mohallas and working class areas should be visited and sympathetic, understanding discussions held as a preliminary to establishing literacy centres. The first essential must be to establish contact with the people and to win their confidence. Only then literacy centres can come into existence and prove successful.

Teachers. The Group was of opinion that the teachers engaged should, if possible, be trained in the methods of teaching adults. Where this is not possible branches should follow the Laubach Method and adapt it to the special conditions of the Province. The students should not only be taught to read and write, but also be encouraged to enact dramas and organised debates and lectures on subjects such as Health, Hygiene, Mothercraft, debt alleviation and other subjects of everyday interest to them.

Text Books and Apparatus.

The Group was very strongly of opinion that adequate text books for adult literacy and post-literacy should be prepared. It suggests that a Committee be formed from the A.-I.W.C. to procure all available literature already existing in the vernaculars and to prepare new literature where necessary. Small bulletins and wall newspapers should be encouraged to aid the spread of literacy.

Post-Literacy.

The Group considered the large percentage of women that fall back into illiteracy and recommended that post-literacy classes and circulating libraries be established to make literacy permanent.

Responsibility of Government and Municipal Bodies.

The Group strongly urge the Government and Municipalities to immediately introduce free and compulsory primary education for all boys and girls as the surest and most complete way of eradicating illiteracy.

Further, it urges all employers, especially Government and Municipal Bodies, to insist and give every facility to make the employees literate.

The A.-I.W.C. The Group calls upon all A.-I.W.C. Branches to establish "Literacy Leagues" of members and non-members of the Conference, who will start and finance literacy centres as well as train teachers for the work. In these Leagues effort should be made to co-ordinate the work of all organisations doing the same type of work.

The Group further urged that the Government and Municipal Bodies should co-operate and give every financial and to the Literacy Leagues.

The President requested such of the delegates who liked to speak, to send up their names to her. **Lady Rama Rau** was of the opinion that appeals should be made to all authoritative bodies such as Municipal and Government. Mutual contact between *the adult education group official body* and *the private literacy campaign group* was desirable so that constant exchange of ideas and schemes of work would be possible between those two. The insistence on that contact would spread the campaign from urban areas to rural areas, In view of the general election which was

to come soon and since literacy is one of the qualifications for the enfranchisement of women and since also it was felt that a very much larger electoral roll was necessary in the country they could not do without the literacy campaign. She added that post-literacy should be undertaken to lessen congestion in education in India.

Mrs. R. Faridoonji wished to know a little more about the method of financing the scheme under consideration, for the help that would come from Government would be only in the form of a small grant-in-aid.

Miss K. Khandwala enlightened Mrs. Faridoonji that the scheme would not get on without private effort. Literacy Funds had been started and collections were being added to them from time to time. Boxes for collection had been sent to the examination halls so that even students put in their mite into them. Private effort subsidised by Government would be the chief method of financing. The speakers drew the attention of the delegates to various methods of literacy such as Laubach method, and Dakshinamurthi method and one other method very much prevalent in Bengal, and added that it was necessary for their purpose by a combination of these different methods to evolve a method suitable to their needs and the local conditions—regarding text books the speaker felt that it was very necessary to pick out good books from various languages and then compile set text books as would suit their local conditions and needs for, without adequate text books the problem could never be solved satisfactorily. The same would apply to post-literacy. Therefore it was for the Conference to produce the desirable and much-needed books.

Mrs. Hosain Ali Khan observed that a literacy census should be taken under the heads of communities for the express purpose of finding out which community was backward so that more effort could be made to bring it in line with other communities.

Lady Rama Rau agreed heartily with the observation.

Mrs. Velayudha Menon was of the opinion that it was very essential to let the different communities know where they stood as far as literacy was concerned. As the Governments were in the habit of granting aid and other concessions to communities according to the degree of their backwardness, it was advisable to have the census figures concerning literacy based on different communities.

Mrs. Gandhi while approving the report stressed the greater necessity for literacy in villages and suggested that the leisure period of the villagers should be particularly taken into consideration in view of their being mostly engaged in field work and added that more than making arrangements for post-literacy, effort should be made to retain that education in them.

Miss Renu Roy suggested night classes for villagers to meet the point raised by the previous speaker. Also consideration of local conditions in addition should not be lost sight of.

Mrs. Gandhi was not very hopeful of achieving good results by conducting night classes because the villagers were very much hard worked during the mornings and they needed sleep. She suggested that certain months in the year might be better.

Miss Renu Roy suggested that interested and intelligent women without many encumbrances should be employed to turn literacy classes into a sort of co-operative club so that literacy could be made more permanent.

At this stage the report was put to vote and passed unanimously.

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Then **Miss Leelamani Naidu**—Constitution Member—presented certain changes in the constitution made by the Standing Committee for ratification by the general body. The present rule made every ex-president *ipso facto* a patron who got a right to come to the Standing Committee. At that rate a time might come when the Branch representatives would be outnumbered by individual members of the Standing Committee. From that point of view she ventured to suggest that some sort of restriction should be placed by the General Body upon the number of patrons who would be on the Standing Committee. The recommendation of the Standing Committee in the matter was that there should be ten patrons of whom the retiring President would be *ipso facto* on the Standing Committee and the other nine would be elected.

Mrs. Menon seconded Miss Naidu's resolution.

The suggestion was put to vote and passed unanimously.

Miss L. Naidu's second point was with regard to limiting the number of Ordinary and Extraordinary co-opted members. While the Ordinary co-opted members had the right to vote, the Extraordinary co-opted members could not exercise that right. The recommendation of the Standing Committee was to limit the Ordinary co-opted members to 7 and the Extraordinary to 10.

Mrs. R. Faridoonji wished to have the matter further cleared up.

Miss L. Naidu drew the attention of the member to the bye-laws of the Association. As there was no more discussion on the matter it was put to vote and passed unanimously.

The President at that stage announced that other group reports would be taken up for consideration at 2 p.m.

Third sitting: 29th December, 2 to 4 p.m.

REPORT OF GROUP III.

Social: (b) Communal unity.

This Conference views with utmost distress the forces of communal discord which are disintegrating national life and calls upon the women of India to make a special contribution to the rebuilding of society upon permanent foundations of co-operation and good-will and peace.

The Conference makes a special appeal to its own branches to go into the hearts of cities and allay rumours that are likely to stir up strife, and restore calm and confidence if they happened to be in areas where communal relations are strained.

It recommends:

- (a) Personal contacts and the study of each other's literature and religion.
- (b) The desirability of making it compulsory for teachers of primary schools and adult education to know both *Devanagari* and *Urdu* scripts.

- (c) The use of simple language in text-books eliminating as far as possible Persian and Sanskrit words; common text-books or extra-readers may contain short sketches of the lives and teachings of the great spiritual teachers of different communities to teach them the unity of various religions.
- (d) The stressing of points of contact and the elimination from all text-books especially history books of all that may engender disharmony.
- (e) The elimination of separatism in any form in public institutions such as schools and college hostels and hospital wards, etc.
- (f) No Government and Municipal aid in future to be given to communal institutions that work amongst their community only.
- (g) Societies of social service such as seva samajas etc., should be inter-communal, for nothing binds people together so much as common service.
- (h) The encouragement by way of prizes for essays on the culture, religion and history of the different communities.
- (i) The abolition of communalism in sports.
- (j) The importance of newspapers doing their best not to indulge in communal propaganda.

This Conference calls upon our public speakers to take every opportunity to stress the common fundamentals of all religions.

Miss Ayesha Bibi who read the report of Group III social (b) supplemented the reading with the following words. Women were becoming feeble because they were not united. The All-India Women's Conference was the fittest organization to promote unity because it did not have any colour or caste distinctions. All the different communities must feel that they were the daughters of India first, and

then Hindus, Musalmans, Parsees, and Christians. In that event their goal did not lie far off.

A translation of it was rendered into Kannada by Mrs. Nanjamma.

Mrs. Parekh observed that communal disunity was cutting India into small pieces. The only way of establishing the whole body and the one body would be to be united. The factors that led to communal disunity had been—

1. Communal elections.
2. Communal games.
3. Communal dress.
4. Communal hotels and restaurants.

To remedy the evil there ought to be general elections, Indian games, national dress and Indian hotels. The Indian hotel might be divided into vegetarian and non-vegetarian. The women of India ought to know that they should unite for the sake of India's freedom.

Mrs. Ismail particularly pointed out that Hindus should stop suspecting Musalmans and *vice versa*. Hindu sisters must have the confidence in the Musalman sisters and *vice versa*. It should be remembered that the eight crores of Musalmans in India were the converted Hindus. The Hindus and Musalmans should not forget that there was the same bond of blood in them. The present compared with the past in the matter was unimaginable. Whereas in olden times gifts of fruits and flowers were being exchanged between the two communities, at present even an exchange of mere greeting between them was a wonder. The speaker stressed that more effort should be made to put into practice the pious resolutions passed at conferences.

Miss Malthe opined that real unity in a land meant no war, no conflict, no disaster and no disunity, but absolute harmony. She drew the attention of the delegates to the Presidential address "not much direction is needed when the heart is stable. It knows how to make its own way." She enlightened the delegates that the one thing that she saw in Bangalore, that struck her most was a pucca stone building not far from the Town Hall, with the words UNITED INDIA prominently carved on it and requested them to take that as their motto.

Mrs. Nazir Hussain spoke in Hindustani stressing the need for unity.

Then **Mrs. Chowbal** spoke in Hindustani that communal elections led them nowhere, that communal feelings would divide them into various parts and that Hindus and Musalmans must begin to trust each other, and that it must be their common goal to try to win swarajya.

Mrs. Hamid Ali spoke as follows:—

Friends, I am going to say a few words on Communal Unity because that is a subject which is very very close to my heart. We have started this Conference in the hope of achieving this object and some of us have worked very hard to bring it about. I am not despairing. We feel that we have sown the seed of communal unity in at least some of the places in India. The seed is growing now into a tree. We hope that those who come after us will sow more seeds and in a few years communal harmony will be an accomplished fact. We believe that for our country, for our children, and for ourselves if we have to be in a line with other advanced countries in the world we must have communal unity. It is true that in some places riots take place. But that is no reason for some to say "what is the use of all this? We never come to an end about this matter. Let us stop it." That is the defeatist attitude and it will bring us nowhere. I will assure you that every little effort that you make in your own house, in your dealings with the people who do not belong to your own community will always be met with a thousand-fold good. Seeds once sown can never get obliterated from the minds of the people in whom we sow them. Look at the bright side of things and be optimists. You must realise what good you have been able to achieve in these fifteen years. We take our happiness in your happiness. We should be able to inspire our women with these ideals. You are the mothers of the future generation. Keep a brave heart and if today five people are thinking like you, to-morrow 25 of your own circle will do so, and so it will go on developing and become a very great factor in the life of India. I have every hope that we shall achieve this end. Once more I ask you not to be pessimistic.

The President read out the few alterations made by Mrs. Velayudha Menon.

The report embodying the amendments made by Mrs. Velayudha Menon having been approved the report was put to vote and passed unanimously.

* * * *

Mrs. Cousins brought the following proposition before the house :

“The All-India Women’s Conference request the Government to grant Madam and Signor Montessori permission to hold Montessori training courses in other provinces under similar conditions to those which the Government has allowed them in Madras.”

This proposition was seconded by Mrs. Thamby. It was approved by Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru, Rajkumari Amritkaur, Begum Hamid Ali, Mrs. Urmila Mehta, Mrs. G. R. Billimoria Mrs. S. Majumdar.

Lady Rama Rao translated the text of the resolution into Hindustani.

There being no discussion on the proposition it was put to vote and passed unanimously.

Mrs. Billimoria read out the statement of accounts. None being against it was also passed unanimously.

The President then announced that there was only one nomination for the Office of Secretary that being Mrs. Urmila Mehta, that there was only one nomination for the office of the Treasurer that being Mrs. Billimoria and that there were ten nominations for the office of Vice-President, out of which—Mrs. Billimoria and Mrs. Menon withdrew—ultimately making the number eight—namely,

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Lady Rama Rau. | 2. Lady Mirza Ismail. |
| 3. Mrs. S. C. Mukerjee. | 4. Mrs. Shardaben Mehta. |
| 5. Mrs. Hussain Ali Khan. | 6. Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan. |
| 7. Mrs. Asaf Ali. | 8. Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. |

REPORT OF GROUP V.**Economic: (a) Cottage Industries.**

We live in what is commonly called the "machine age". In our opinion it is the cut-throat competition resulting from large scale industry and the fact that this large scale industry is in the hands of vested interests that the world to-day is in the throes of the cruellest war ever waged in the annals of the history of mankind. Therefore, we feel that the place of cottage industries in the life of not only India but of every nation is one that must be increasingly recognised. Ours is preeminently a village civilisation. We can boast of some of the finest artisans and artistic creations in the world. These must be revived. Women can play a great part in their revival and in their improvement. Women can also use articles made by hand to the exclusion of mill-made goods—in particular foreign goods. We realise that hand-made goods are more costly and cannot compete with foreign goods. In order to remove this handicap we appeal to the governments of States and of British India to give the necessary protection and marketing facilities to hand-made goods. Such large scale industry as must come into being should be controlled by the State, provided the State is really representative of the people. Cottage industries are absolutely necessary for the economic uplift of the masses—in particular while India has no economic independence. They can usefully and easily supplement the villagers' incomes during their leisure months. We specially recommend hand-spun and hand-woven cloth as being preeminently women's domain and congratulate the Spinners' Association on the lakhs of money they are putting into the pockets of the poor village women. We congratulate the Mysore Government for the support they are giving to Khadi and other cottage industries in the State. Women can help in the matter of suggestions as far as designs and productions of new articles of everyday use are concerned. We therefore recommend to our Branches to find out what cottage industries exist in their areas, help in reviving those which require assistance, keep a swadeshi stores at their headquarters and thereby find as far as possible a market for hand-made articles. The maintenance of a high standard of art and well-finished and useful articles lies to a large extent in the hands of women. We appeal to individual members of the Conference to use hand-made articles and cloth for their personal and home needs. We recommend the frequent holding of swadeshi exhibitions under the ægis of our Branches. We

are also of opinion that our members can do a great deal in the way of house to house sales as well as sales at the time of festivals and fairs.

We are of opinion that if cottage industries are encouraged the question of the economic independence of women will be solved to a large extent. We appeal to those who can afford to do so not to grudge the extra money they have to give for hand-made goods realising that their generosity means the alleviation of the distress of the starving masses of India.

(b) **Housing.**

There is no denying the fact that the vast majority of our people may be said to be living or eking out an existence in hovels. Town and village and house planning have not figured on the programme of any Government until very recent years. This is a crying need on which thought and money must be expended forthwith.

We recommend (1) Improvement committees in every town and district and money allotted every year for elimination of slum areas in towns and for building model cottages for villagers until such time as every person has a proper roof over his head. If local labour and local material are used for huts for villagers the cost will not be so heavy and the money will be served for a doubly useful purpose. Great care should be taken as regards facilities for proper sanitation when new homes are being erected as well as for the provision of adequate light and ventilation.

(2) The building of suitable homes on the hire purchase system. We congratulate the Government of Mysore and other Governments who are taking the lead in this matter and appeal to them to widen the scope of their activities in this sphere and extend them to the villages also.

(3) We are aware that the worst sufferers in this respect are Harijans and we therefore recommend that in every town and village their needs in the matter of housing should come first.

(4) *Pari passu* with schemes for proper housing we recommend that schemes for the adequate provision of pure water, proper drains and sanitation be taken up as well as instruction to the people in the matter of personal and general hygiene. In this latter our Branches should bear their full share and make a valuable contribution.

(5) We are of opinion that special attention should be paid to the housing of workers in factories. The owners of factories and governments should provide suitable living quarters for them. To this end necessary legislation should be enacted. Rent for accommodation should be controlled by the State and should be in accord with the earnings of the workers.

(6) We recommend to our Standing Committee members who happen to be in areas where housing schemes are being undertaken to send all useful information to the General Secretary for circulation among members. We also appeal to our members to agitate for house planning in those areas where no such schemes exist.

(c) Expansion of opportunities for the economic independence of women.

In the matter of increased opportunities of economic independence of women we recommend the following as necessary:—

- (1) Compulsory primary education;
- (2) Vocational Training;
- (3) Improved legal rights;
- (4) Health Insurance Act—applicable to all women working in their homes as well as in industrial and other concerns;
- (5) Creches for the children of all women workers;
- (6) Facilities for work for part-time workers;
- (7) Equal pay for equal work;
- (8) Improved legal economic status of the wife as a home maker, *i.e.*, legal claim to a certain proportion of her husband's earnings.

We believe that if the above recommendations are given effect to, it will be in the power of every woman through her possibility of economic independence to create a free and happy life for herself.

Mrs. Francis :—

It is time that one-sided disqualification in the realm of economic sanctioned by usage or law should be removed. In the political life of the country the natural sympathies of woman-kind should lean to that party or organisation, that would guarantee complete economic equality of man and woman both in theory and in practice.

No woman is free who does not enjoy economic freedom. An equal share for every daughter with every son in the intestate wealth of the father. In Indian Society either custom or law has ordained, as to place the son at a decided advantage, at the expense of the daughter in the family. It is time that women of India should organise protests and make their influence felt in the legislatures of the land. The women of India strive for freedom—spiritual, intellectual and political and economic.

4th sitting 30th December, 1940, 9-25 a.m. to 12 noon.

REPORT OF GROUP III.

Social: (a) Untouchability.

It is sad that even to-day we have to acknowledge that the canker of untouchability still exists in our society. It is the duty of all Conference members and Branches to redouble their efforts for its removal. We therefore recommend to members and Branches :—

- (a) that they should keep at least one Harijan as a domestic servant for work other than sanitation;
- (b) that they should invite Harijans to social and religious functions and, if possible, adopt one family and serve as its god mother;
- (c) that they should form committees for regularly visiting Harijan bastis in cities and villages and make it a special duty this year to approach local bodies, Governments and others to redress the grievances of Harijans in the matter of housing, pay, leave, conditions of service, water facilities, etc., and carry on vigorous propaganda from press and platform until the necessary redress has been achieved;

- (d) that efforts should be directed towards reducing to the minimum, human agency for the work of sanitation. This can be achieved by the flush system and bore hole and deep trench latrine for both common and individual use in town as well as villages;
- (e) that separate quarters for Harijans should be discouraged in order to remove from this unfortunate section of humanity the brand of inferiority that we have placed on them;
- (f) that talks and lectures to elevate the Harijans morally and to rid them of the inferiority complex from which they suffer be undertaken by members. To this end the dignity of all labour must be stressed and given practical expression to by our members.
- (g) Educational facilities should be given to Harijans and in particular to women so that they may become Health visitors and social workers and thereby themselves contribute to the removal of untouchability. Municipalities, local boards and the government should be appealed to, not to give grants to schools that refuse admission to Harijans. The Conference here wishes to record its gratitude to Shri M.P. Birla for his handsome donation towards the education of Harijan girls as also to Thakkar Bappa for having given the entire sum allocating a portion of money collected for his birthday last year for this purpose.
- (h) All schools, hospitals, hotels, wells, temples and other such public places should be opened for the untouchables. Our Branches should influence the Governments and Municipalities concerned to undertake this work. In schools and colleges where reservation of seats obtains, Harijans should come in for their due share.

The session was adjourned till 9 a.m. on the 30th December,

Mrs. **S. Nanjamma** translated the report into Kannada and supplemented with the words, that so far as Mysore State was concerned, there was no question of untouchability because Harijans were being admitted into colleges and schools along with caste Hindus. Their places and the places of caste Hindus were mutually being exchanged in public functions and in society. A time had come in the Mysore State when man-made barriers did not at all affect the question of facilities to Harijans. She was also of opinion that the communal disharmony was not the product of age-long traditions but latterday excrescences which began to tear us asunder and to keep us divided. She put in a strong and most emphatic plea for getting ourselves united to constitute the young India of our vision. Anticipating a little she said that those who were endeavouring to achieve this object would be the real makers of that YOUNG INDIA, whose names would well deserve being written in letters of gold.

Miss Malthe speaking on untouchability said that if we ought really to help the backward community, we should really identify ourselves with them and referred to a thought-provoking example of the sweepers during the last war. She said that a man belonging to the sweeper community in the North of India and who had a very high education wanted to get permission to go to France to help the sweeper community which was assisting the Indian troops there. The answer was that there was no possibility for that. But he got over that difficulty, obtained sanction to proceed to France as a sweeper, went there, worked as a sweeper and helped his community.

[**Lady Rama Rau** put before the house the casuistical proposition, which was the real, rational, and the only substantial test to find out whether, with all the display of enthusiasm on the platform, the people were prepared to proceed from what is problematical to what is practical. She put the question to the delegates from Mysore particularly, how many of them were prepared to have in their homes at least a single Harijan servant who would be entrusted with all the works other than removal of filth and indicate their willingness to do that by a show of hands.

A good many of the Mysore delegates raised their hands.

Lady Rama Rau was very much pleased at that, but she was sorry to hear that most of the temples in Mysore were not yet open to them today, and that in the Seva-sadan in Bangalore, there was not a single Harijan yet admitted.

The President desired that such of those who were willing to entertain Harijan servants in their homes should send their names to the A.-I.W.C. Association through the constituent Branch of their State.

Mrs. R. V. Subramaniam went the length of mentioning that she already had a Harijan servant in her home for the last fortnight doing all the work except work in the kitchen.

Mrs. B. K. Singh from Punjab recalled that the subject of untouchability was not a new one. From time immemorial social reformers and religious reformers in India felt the necessity for bringing about the reform in question. They did not imagine that untouchability would assume such a magnitude and be a stumbling block in the way of progress of India. The great epic of Ramayana told them that Sri Ramachandra really ate the fruits tasted by a low class woman Sabari, an instance for emulation. The preachings of Buddha, Guru Nanak, and Kabir were nothing but pleading the embracing of Harijans. No doubt it was difficult to break off from the age-long traditions. In their own homes their mothers and grandmothers who were yet conservatives could not allow the engaging of a Harijan *aya*. The high-caste people were not even merciful to the extent of allowing the Harijan servants to come a little late for their work on such of the days which were days of festivities for Harijans. She concluded that unless in their daily lives they were considerate towards them, they could not do a great deal for the Harijan uplift either morally, or spiritually.

Dr. Mrs. Isasac emphasized that the question was one in which self-examination was very essential. One and the same blood ran in the veins of Harijans as well in those of caste Hindus. The caste Hindus should

at once cease keeping themselves aloof from Harijans. The superiority complex and the patronising attitude of caste Hindus must disappear. They must cultivate loving those whom they consider lower than themselves. She made a concrete suggestion that from the registers kept at hospitals and schools and colleges the column "CASTE" should be at once removed.

Mrs. Velayudha Menon from Cochin narrated the state of things regarding Harijans in her place. 70 per cent. of the women were literate there. A separate department has been created for the Harijans and an Officer called "PROTECTOR" of the Harijan class had been appointed. Strictly speaking the Harijans in Cochin were not called by the term "BACKWARD-CLASSES" but by the term "PRIVILEGED CLASSES." That day would not be far when the people from the Privileged class would be found as officers in the various departments of the State. She concluded that if the temple-entry had not yet stepped into some of the places in India, it would do so more honourably very soon.

Miss Praphullita Bhagat :—

Madam President, Much has already been said on the subject that I have only a few suggestions to make, which in my humble opinion is of large and vital importance.

1. That the Municipalities and Governments and the public are requested to contribute to a radio set for the Harijan quarters everywhere. The Broadcasting authorities to be persuaded to arrange some special programme for them, at least once a week which should include lectures and speeches concerning their uplift.

(a) Lectures which should elevate them morally from the centuries of deterioration they have undergone.

(b) Every effort should be made to remove the spirit of diffidence from their minds.

(c) Instruction should be imparted to them from radio dealing with the life work and history of all Harijan Bhaktas and great men Balmiki, Ekanath, etc.

(d) Lectures on Hygiene, sanitation should also be occasionally arranged for them to contribute to their physical welfare.

(e) Some sort of programme should also be broadcast for them. This point would solve the problem of appointing individual perhaps unwilling and disinterested visitors and their quarters. This way one person could do the work and this would also go to elevate the down-trodden intellectually. All this might perhaps be considered impracticable. But if an earnest effort is made everything could be rendered practicable. In my opinion propaganda by radio would be a very big step towards the uplift of the Harijans. There cannot be any glorious future for India until it is so and the untouchables remain in this sunken state. This propaganda is therefore very necessary and the radio method is the quickest and best. Due attention is required on our part to the very low wages to the municipal and domestic sweepers. If my information is correct the sweepers are only given a mouthful of grain in return for all the filthy work they do during the day. This should be stopped and it should be our concern to see that they get proper wages.

3. In some villages the Harijans are not allowed to take water from proper sources but fetch water for drinking and cooking from stagnant pools. Separate arrangements for getting water should be made for them wherever opening of public wells to them is not possible or the pool water should be somehow purified for them.

4. That sweepers should be supplied with some sort of aprons which they should wear while doing the filthy work and promote healthy process in such work.

Miss Hardekar pleaded the abolition of separate child-welfare centres for Harijans. Such centres should admit the public as a whole. That would remove the inferiority complex prevailing among the Harijans.

Mrs. Parekh mentioned that untouchability was a curse on India and especially on Hindu society and went the length of suggesting that

Harijans should be specially invited to the caste marriages and that Harijans should be employed to assist caste Hindus in all the works in their homes.

Miss Sharadamma narrated in brief the advancement of Harijans in Travancore. At present the Harijans there could go along with the caste people to the innermost shrines of the temple. Free education was being given to Harijan children. Special hostels for Harijan boys and girls were established and they were given grants. Common dinners there had been to which Harijans as well as caste Hindus were invited. Government had appointed caste people to teach Harijans how to behave in caste temples.

At that stage the President put to vote the report.

It was passed unanimously.

Then **Mrs. Jyotsna Mehta** read out the report of Group No. II. "Social; laws affecting marriage and divorce in India". She also translated it into Hindi.

REPORT OF GROUP NO. II.

Social: Laws affecting marriage and divorce in India.

This Group mainly discussed Dr. Deshmukh's Two Bills on Separation and Divorce and the necessity of a comprehensive enquiry into Hindu Law with a view to making it just and equitable to women. Only thus, we feel, will a divorce law be really practicable and effective.

Regarding the two Bills of Dr. Deshmukh dealing with Divorce and Separation, it was felt that these Bills were defective and will give rise to a lot of confusion.

It was therefore considered advisable that the questions of legal separation and that of Divorce be dealt with in two separate Bills. The following suggestions for amendments to some of the clauses of Dr. Deshmukh's Bill have been made:—

- (1) The custody of children should be left to the discretion of the Court the mother being given the preference ordinarily.

- (2) Maintenance should be given by the husband to the wife and for each child separately. The Group feels that the Divorce Bill that was drafted at the half-yearly meeting held at Baroda in 1938 covers all our demands and therefore it should be given full consideration.

It was brought to the notice of this Group that the Government of India have appointed an enquiry committee to look into the Bills of divorce and inheritance for Hindu women which are already before the Central Legislative Assembly. This Conference suggests that a resolution be sent to the Government to urge that no piecemeal legislation be undertaken and that the Enquiry Committee should be asked not merely to look into the Bills before the Assembly, but to make a comprehensive enquiry into the questions of marriage, divorce and property rights of Hindu women as a whole and to take evidence from the A.-I.W.C. and other representative women's organisations.

We understand that the Women's Sub-Committee of the National Planning Committee have also submitted similar views on this question earlier. It was proposed that the Conference draw up a memorandum containing its demands and suggestions and present it to the Committee appointed by the Government.

We further suggest that Mr. V.V. Joshi of Baroda and at least two women nominated by the A.-I.W.C. should be on the personnel of that Committee. The following names have been suggested :—

- (1) Rani Lakshmibai Rajwade,
- (2) Mrs. Asaf Ali,
- (3) Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon,
- (4) Mrs. Sharadaben Mehta.

A Sub-Committee should be appointed by the Conference to draw up the Memorandum mentioned above with the co-operation of all the Branches.

Lastly, we suggest that the Branches of the A.-I.W.C. should endeavour to secure the support of those members of the Central Legislative Assembly who happened to reside in their respective areas, so as to ensure the passing into law of the Bills referring to the rights of women.

The Kannada translation was made by Mrs. S. Nanjamma.

Miss Vilasini Devi Shenoi enlightened the audience that the law of divorce did exist in ancient Puranic times among the Hindu community. With the degeneration of the Hindu community came the wonderful law-givers who put down that the law of divorce had no place in the Hindu community. With regard to the point of divorce Muslim sisters were placed in a better position according to the Bill passed in 1939. The committee that was going to be formed by the A.-I.W.C. Association should go into the question of inheritance. At present the laws had been very partial. They allow the Hindu men to marry as many times as they like. But that concession or at least a part of that concession was not extended to Hindu women. The time has arrived when the same standard of morality should prevail both for men and for women. The faithfulness of Hindu women to their husbands had been so great in India that even if the law of divorce were passed, only a very small percentage of her women would take advantage of it. The committee under contemplation must see to it that the whole of the Hindu law with regard to women is revised to satisfy the needs of every Hindu sister.

Mrs. Shiva Rao stressed the point of making the memorandum to be submitted to the Government and to the enquiry committee very comprehensive and businesslike.

Mrs. Gandhi suggested an alternative that if it proved impossible to pass the divorce bill at least the separation bill might be passed. There need be no fear that if the Bill were passed the morality of the Hindu women would be at stake. If a husband were to abscond and if the wife could not maintain her children, born of him, the Government should have a hand in their maintenance.

Mrs. Hamid Ali pointed out that in Mr. Deshmukh's Bill the cruelty clause was not defined. Both the mental and physical cruelty should be taken into consideration. She suggested that their demands should be based on Kazmi's Bill in regard to cruelty passed in 1939. The speaker emphatically was for equal shares in a family namely, that in a family of a husband and wife and two children every one should get one-fourth of the property .

Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan drew the attention of the delegates to the fact that they need not be under the impression that Joshi's and Kazmi's Bills were not going to be considered. In the memorandum to be drafted the sections of those Bills would be incorporated. She appealed to the delegates that the various constituents of the A.-I.W.C. Association should without fail include in their report all the disabilities under which the ladies in their constituencies were labouring.

Mrs. Jyotsna Mehta read the following written speech:—

In our Conference I think this is the most important with which we are concerned as women. You know that all the matters in a woman's life centre round her happiness in married life. Everything else in her life would depend on that. It is not so with men. They have several other matters to occupy their minds and thought.

Now one of the main arguments advanced against divorce is that the Hindu marriage is a sacrament, which could never be broken like a contract. In reply to that I say that there is a sacrament on one side only, *i.e.*, on the woman's side; men do not consider it a sacrament. They can marry as often as they like, keep a mistress or go to prostitutes and so on without being subject to any criticism from the society. But when it comes to the women they say "Oh! marriage is a sacrament." It is against this injustice that we protest. The cause for this injustice is that men consider women as a thing of their possession, like a house or cattle, or their relation is that of a master and slave. A master is at liberty to behave just as he likes. The slave dare not object to it, and the slave could never have the courage to go against the master, no matter how cruelly he is treating him. He must tolerate all that mutely without signs of protest. But the educated women of India are not going to tolerate this injustice any more. We want equality for both sexes. Mahatma Gandhi says that monogamy should be as strictly enforced in the case of men as in that of women. But it is only the ideal of a Mahatma and not practicable. It is against human nature.

Another argument against divorce is that if you once introduce divorce it will be like America, where it is reported that women ask for divorce on very flimsy pretexts; *viz.*, the husband smokes too heavily or keeps too many dogs. But we do not want that sort of a divorce. We want it to apply only in extreme cases where women suffer tortures through out their life, because of brutal cruelty of husband, infidelity, or lunacy or venereal disease. It is criminal to compel a wife to live with such husbands especially with those suffering from several diseases.

At this stage the report was put to vote. 51 voted for, and 7 against. The report was passed by a majority of 44. Then the President appealed to the ladies that attended the sessions to make collections and also to give from their own pockets as generously as they could possibly do towards the funds of the A.-I.W.C. Association.

In response to the appeal, promises of donations, large and small, were made, by most of the ladies and one gentleman only. Also a fairly appreciable amount was collected on the spot.

Fifth and the Final sitting 30th December, 1940, 2-30—4 p.m.

President: Mrs. Brijlal Nehru.

To begin with **Mrs. Velayudha Menon from Cochin** spoke as follows:—

“I am very thankful to the President for giving me a few minutes to speak to you during the last session of this momentous conference. Let me assure you that I am not going to take even one minute more than what is allowed me to tell you in a few words about our work in this Conference. I had the privilege of attending the first All-India Women’s Conference in Poona. Fifteen years after that I am attending this Conference again. You know that one who sees a living thing every day cannot judge of the progress of its growth, like the one who sees it after a long time. Now after these years I find by attending the sessions of this

Conference how the Conference has progressed in its manifold activities. I am reminded of the story of Rip Van Winkle who went to sleep during the reign of George III and woke up after the American War of Independence when George Washington had won independence for America. I feel now like Rip Van Winkle. The mother of the Conference Mrs. Cousins, was our helper and adviser. This Conference unanimously wishes her long life and health to continue in splendid work. I have only a few suggestions to offer regarding the work of the Conference. The Conference in my eyes has progressed very much. The intricacies of the Constitutional development of the Conference have impressed me and the laws and bye-laws and rules and regulations have become so complicated that I feel that all of us have to go home and study them. They have grown like the democratic Constitution of the British Commonwealth, and I felt impressed by the back-bone of the constitution. But I have one constructive suggestion with regard to these complicated laws and bye-laws. It is not possible for all the members to read these details regarding the constitution and understand the important and fundamental principles. Therefore I believe it will not be too much for me to request our member for Constitution to frame a kind of ten commandments in a simple manner and insert them into the magazine that is being run by the Association, I mean *Roshni*. I would also suggest that the *Roshni* might become an organ of wider circulation. My second suggestion is we had very little time given to the Subjects Committee meetings. I know that there are many among the delegates who have very intelligent and original thoughts arising from their experience but every one is not bold enough to come to the platform and speak out her views. We do not wish to lose their experiences. Let us open a discussion column in the *Roshni*. This is one of the ways of increasing the number of subscribers for our magazine. Then we can hope also to reduce the rate of subscription. An enquiry column may also find a place in the pages of the *Roshni*. Questions may be asked by members and the editor will answer them. My next suggestion is with regard to the Camp. We are put in two camps, Vegetarian and non-Vegetarian. In my humble opinion I wish there were only one single camp. Of course all honour to the Reception Committee members who have been looking to our comforts. The single camp will enable the delegates from all parts of India to meet at close quarters and exchange in greater detail their viewpoints.

Miss Malthe suggested that the various newspapers that were being circulated in the place of the Conference should be made available for the delegates so that then and there they could get an idea as to how the deliberations of the Conference were being served to the public. She complimented the arrangement of various group meetings which enabled the delegates concerned to specialise in particular subjects.

Miss Renu Roy opined that a little more time for the group meetings was the dire necessity, as the present group meetings were a bit confused for want of time. And she further suggested at least three sittings for each group meeting. Her second suggestion was that the group meetings should be a place where each and every one of the delegates might discuss the problems and exchange their opinions.

REPORT OF GROUP IV.

Civic Training.

“Man perfected by society is the best of all animals. He is the most terrible of all when he lives without law and justice. If he finds himself an individual who cannot live in society or who pretends he has need of only his own resources, do not consider him as a member of humanity; he is a savage beast or a god”—Aristotle.

The importance of the subject.—A knowledge of Civics is most important and yet it is one of the most neglected aspects of our educational life. Our children grow up into adult men and women without realising their rights and obligations as citizens. We suggest that in their most elementary form the principles of Civics should be impressed on the child mind so that at home and in the family the child learns to give up his own selfish pleasures and privileges and lives the life of the family. This training at home can be implemented by the teaching of Civics in all our schools so that the child when he grows up learns to be a good citizen respecting the rights of his fellowmen and yet jealously preserving his own. We may even suggest that our universities should make Civics an optional subject for the Degree examination if not as a subject by itself, at least as part of the wider sciences with which this subject is so closely associated. In this connection we recommend that our Schools and Colleges should grow out of their present cramped systems, where the word of the teacher is law. We should urge

more of local self-government in these institutions which are after all the best training ground for real citizenship. College unions with a multiplicity of interests relating to the civic side of life should be encouraged, particularly debating societies run on parliamentary lines.

At the present time, Civics has assumed greater importance than ever. With a widening of franchise and spread of democratic ideals, it is highly important that every individual should exercise his vote to the best of his ability and in the best interests of society. The A.-I.W.C. has been demanding adult franchise and a full use has to be made of the vote, our men and women must be trained to a realisation of their civic rights and responsibilities—our women particularly, so that it may not be argued by our opponents that the woman's vote is a mere duplication of her husband's or father's vote.

To this end we would suggest lectures on citizenship for the masses in the language of the area. These lectures should be organised by responsible groups of men and women, both official and non-official. The lecturers should be selected with great care from among people who have a deep knowledge of the subject and a wide outlook and who would preach from the point of view of world citizenship and not from a merely parochial and sectarian viewpoint.

We regret the overemphasis laid on literacy *per se* in recent times. In our opinion literacy, divorced from instruction even in the basic principles of civics, has no intrinsic value. The newly made literate may lapse into illiteracy; but a knowledge of civic rights and obligations properly imbibed will become an integral part of his very life. This teaching should include an elementary knowledge of sanitation, health and hygiene, banking and the co-operative movement. In the very wide domain of civic rights and responsibilities, we would like to draw particular attention to those duties which it is incumbent on every good citizen to perform.

Public Health:—

(i) All citizens should actively co-operate with the municipal authorities—

(a) in taking advantage of preventive measures such as vaccination, etc., against diseases, epidemics, etc;

- (b) in boycotting all purveyors of adulterated and unlicensed food stuff;
- (c) in enforcing the existing bye-laws against beggars, etc., refraining from giving them alms where beggar homes exist. They should demand legislation where such does not exist and agitate for the establishment of beggar homes under proper supervision;
- (d) by not engaging the services of unregistered *dais* and saving ignorant people from the clutches of quacks.

(ii) *Family Spacing* :—Citizens should educate public opinion in favour of family spacing upon which is dependant to so large an extent the health and vitality of the nation. Municipalities should be asked to open birth control clinics and give facilities and grants to voluntary organisations.

The Rights of Citizen :—

(i) *Housing* :—Municipal bye-laws should be strictly enforced against all landlords particularly with regard to sanitation and adequate water-supply for tenants. Municipal employees should be provided with decent quarters. We are yet very far off from the ideal of Workmen's Colonies of the kind provided in European cities with facilities for creches, kindergarten, libraries, dispensaries, etc.

(ii) Provision by the Municipality of adequate civic amenities, such as parks, playgrounds, gyms, swimming pools, public telephone, etc.

Other Duties of a Citizen :—

(i) Public manners :—

- (a) Etiquette of travelling—the citizen of to-day is woefully ignorant of this;
- (b) Etiquette in cinemas, and at all public functions, meetings, etc.
- (c) Behaviour on roads, etc. The average citizen avoids the foot-path. A cluster of people discussing the latest gossip right in the middle of the road is a common spectacle in an Indian city.

(ii) *Attitude to servants and subordinates*:—Exploitation of labour to be abolished: more humane treatment to domestic servants; municipalities should be approached to fix minimum wages, maximum loads, etc., for their employees.

(iii) *Kindness to animals*:—It is best to impart this instruction at the earliest age.

The City Beautiful:—

Necessity of co-operation between the municipality and the citizen in the matter of cleanliness of roads and streets which must not be used as public lavatories or receptacles for refuse and garbage.

Ugly posters should not be allowed to mar the beauty of a place, poster-boards and kiosks to be provided by the municipality.

Our branches and their work in this direction:—

(1) Organise lectures on the rights and obligations of citizens preferably illustrated with lantern slides.

(2) Make vigorous propaganda in the matter of health, hygiene and sanitation. Women and men to be induced to take advantage of such civic amenities where such do not exist.

(3) Establish, where possible, Social Service Departments with paid and honorary staff for the training of social workers, on the line of the Delhi resolution.

(4) Create propaganda against the advertisement of quack remedies, and also against the publication of vulgar and obscene advertisement.

(5) Teach men and women to take an intelligent interest in the exercise of the vote.

Mrs. Billimoria read the report of Group IV on "Civic Training".

Mrs. Doctor was of the opinion that women should fight and work for making their cities beautiful.

Mrs. Rajan Nehru impressed upon the fact that women should agitate for the amenities and when they were granted they should make good use of them. Every citizen ought to realise that the city belonged

to him or her. The Delhi Branch passed the resolution to the effect that women should find places on the municipal and the social committees. Therefore they should be trained in citizenship. If as citizens the people were not prepared for emergencies they should be wiped out of existence. For example it should be the duty of the Air-Warden to give the signal in good time before air raid.

Dr. Olga Feinberg stressed the point about providing dispensaries for the Harijans because in her opinion it was more essential to attend to their health than to their education. As it was very difficult for the Harijans who practically had no leisure to leave their places it was imperative that small and cheap dispensaries should be provided in their own places.

Then the Treasurer **Mrs. G. R. Billimoria** read out the list of donations promised and paid in the morning.

The **President** concluding the Conference spoke as follows :—

We have practically finished all business that we had at this session. I have been preaching brief speeches, taking a short time, to all those who came up the platform. I can assure you I will be as brief as I wanted others to be. I have not got very much to say. But before saying anything else I want all those to whom I might have given offence to forgive me for anything that they did not like. The work of the President is always difficult. The President has to check people, has to give rulings which is not sometimes relished by the opposite party and therefore it becomes very difficult to keep everybody in good temper. The work is so hard and we have been working at such pressure that perhaps I myself have not been able to keep the balance as I should have done. Therefore I assure all those who might have felt hurt by any of my words that I never meant them. I want them to forgive me.

Then I want to thank all the delegates and all the co-workers who have been co-operating with me during the sessions. It is evident that without the guidance of the senior workers and the ex-Presidents it would have been very difficult for me to carry on the work. I am very grateful for the work they have been doing. For the last three years we have been carrying out our work in a slightly different way. We have adopted the

group system. In spite of the fact that we are 15 years old we are yet new to the task that is before us. It is quite evident. The group system is very good and has to be taken up. But for the efficient working of the group system specialised knowledge is necessary and I am afraid specialised knowledge is very much lacking among us. We have to work throughout the year to make the group system efficient and useful. Unfortunately that work throughout the year is not being done. That is why we find it rather difficult to work. Therefore it is possible that some of the delegates and other workers have found it difficult to go through the work in this manner. But I think that for the progress of the general work specialisation is very necessary. And as much specialisation as we can do, we should do, so as to make our work efficient.

Now I want to give my thanks and the thanks of the Conference, to the delegates, the Standing Committee members, the Reception Committee members, to Lady Mirza, to Mrs. Mandyam, to the girl guides, boy scouts, volunteers, pressmen, Municipal Council, the Government of Mysore, our hostesses and to all the people of Mysore for the very glorious reception they have given us. They have spared no pains to make us comfortable and I can assure them that all of the delegates who have come from far off north have felt very happy amongst them. Lady Mirza, every one of us has admired you. It is very difficult to praise a person to her or his face. But behind you we have no word except words of praise for you. Your dignity, your grace, your very graciousness, the friendship that you have extended to us, all that—we have admired and admired greatly. This session of the Conference has brought you very near to our hearts. And I can assure you we shall always remember you, your co-workers, and your beautiful State with great gratitude. The pleasant memories that we carry with us from here will ever be cherished in our hearts. We shall always look back upon them with happiness and gratitude.

Now, to our delegates I have one word to say. But before saying anything to the delegates, who have come from different parts I want to thank the President of the last year and the Secretary, Mrs. Hamid Ali, and Mrs. L. N. Menon respectively for the very splendid work they have done throughout the year. I tell you that the work of the president is an onerous one. It is not only so at the sessions. It is so all through the year.

Difficult problems are brought to the President. She has to solve them and she has to decide them so as to please the parties which send the problems, and they are bound to be unpleasant to the people against whom rulings are given. Therefore the work is difficult. But our last year's President had done it so well that she has come nearer to the hearts of even those against whom she might have given her rulings. Her work and that of the Secretary have been appreciated all round. The Secretary has done an extraordinarily good piece of work, very good work for us, and this is the editing of the *Roshni*. She has done it so well and so efficiently that there is not one amongst us who is not grateful to her, for this good work she has done. Without a paper of its own the work of the Conference cannot go on. We hope that she has made this her own work and for the future also she is willing to take up that work. During the past year she had other duties. But this year she has time to devote her attention solely to the editing of the *Roshni* and I can assure you that the next year's product will even be better than this year. So we are very happy that she has undertaken to do this good work. And I hope that all of you will become subscribers to that beautiful, useful, and very good magazine that she is editing.

I want to say a few words to the Delegates. I am very sorry to see that some of our delegates did not care to attend all the sessions of the Conference. They missed several sessions. I know Bangalore and the State of Mysore is very tempting especially to young people who come from far off north and other places and who want to see all the beautiful things that Mysore has created. But they should all remember that work is to come first before pleasure and therefore they should have postponed their visit to the places outside Bangalore which they must see after the Conference. So, Fellow-Delegates, I want you all to remember that when you come to the Conference you do not come in a holiday mood. You come in a mood of service to give the best thoughts that you can, to the work of the Conference. You give us the experience that you have gone through during the year and make your constructive contribution to the work on hand but not destructive criticism. Therefore I appeal to you all that during the coming year you give your whole attention to the work of the Conference. There are several amongst us who feel discontented in their surroundings. They have a desire for service. But that desire for service is so

much mixed up with other feelings. They like to see that they are observed going from one place to the other. They wish to have receptions and wish to receive other honours. They feel they are also as much educated and in spite of it when they are left out they wonder why it is so. But they forget that the person who is honoured has left behind a history. They forget the heart of that person. They do not stop to consider that that person deserved that position. They also forget that she has given her life to the service of the people and to the nation. Therefore all the people and all the delegates who are here must try and cultivate that heart and that mind which will impel them to give their best services to the womanhood of India. I tell you honestly. I do not admire speeches at all. Because I had a lot of speaking, you may not believe me. It is not necessary for people to speak. It is not even necessary for people to go to jail. I for one do not like to speak at all. I wish to keep quiet. The speech does not come from my heart. Wherever you are, in your colleges, in your houses, in your schools, you can be of service to your fellow-beings and your country. You can give a little out of your pocket money to the various things that are started to keep the public works going. For those things no big platforms are necessary. For those things you need not go out of your homes. You must have a heart, mind and determination to give. Be useful to the people wherever you are. Study what is demanded of you by the country to-day and then determine to do it. You can do it from where you stand. You need not go out for it. That is my only appeal to you. If our delegates, if our members do that, it is quite sufficient. We do not want anything more. We do not want your learning or speaking. What we want really is a good heart determined to be of service. The ideal of service in whatever circumstances you are is all we expect you to possess. That is all I have to tell you. Once again I thank you all for being patient.

At the concluding session of the Conference, Begum Hamid Ali spoke as follows:—

Friends,

I am just going to say a few things which come from the bottom of my heart. I thank you all very much for the kind things that have been said about me by the President and by everybody else and for the way

in which you have received me. I am thankful for the great help that the personnel of the Conference has given me,—every one of the members who worked with me, and the other oldest members, the workers and colleagues of the Conference. I am really standing here to thank very warmly and very heartily, my colleague, the loyal, methodical and efficient honorary General Secretary,—Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon. I would wish in future every President and Chairwoman of the Conference, to have as good a secretary as I had been lucky enough to have, and I wish they come to know each other better than we did before. We now part friends: so that we hope to work again and always, not only in the Conference, but also apart from the Conference all our lives. As for our President of the day of this year, you all know that I welcome her most warmly. I know she has presided over large deliberations. I know her for many years. I know she will be most efficient and a wise President and the Conference will gain by the inspiration that she will give to us next year. I also welcome our new Secretary, Mrs. Urmila Mehta, having been in the Conference for many years. I have every hope that she will do good credit to the Conference.

One of the things that Mrs. Menon has done is the editing of the *Roshni*. Mrs. Menon has already done much for it. I cannot praise that paper enough. Personally I like it so well, that I do not know how to praise it. I must tell you it has already become a reference paper for working the Conference. I do not think one can say more about the paper that is only one year old. In reality it has already become a reference paper for the workers of the Conference.

Mrs. Rustumji Faridoonji next spoke as follows:—

Madam President and sisters:—

Votes of thanks have been given. You have heard sound advice from our President. Mine is only a very personal note to-day. As I feel day by day that I am getting older and losing a good deal of strength, I am standing before you, here, to-day, to say—most possibly—a simple farewell. (**Cries of “no, no” from the audience.**) If God gives me health I will come to future Conferences but my coming to the Conference means being present there the whole time. I cannot bear the idea of coming to a Conference, and then, being forced, lie in bed for an hour, as I ought

to have done here to-day. It is this sort of a personal feeling which makes me feel that I should say good-bye to many an old friend, that I see here now. (No.) But before I just say "Good-bye", I want to appeal to you all and my appeal is that of your President:—"India needs every one of you, women". Do not think that "because Mrs. so and so is working, I can stay and do nothing". If you can do, each and every little you do, is wanted, and I beg of you, specially the younger generation, to try to find some little time to devote to the service of the country. You have gone through all the resolutions and problems and there is work ready to your hand. At your next door, your neighbour may want you. If you go further, your Mohalla may want you, your Municipality may want you. So, please make up your minds, that when you go home, you won't just devote your time to yourself—devote yourself to your own home and be selfish—but you will make greater effort to devote yourself to your country. It is the only request that an old member is making to you, to-day. God bless you all, bless the **All-India Women's Conference** . . . (pause) May God bless you all, and my friend, the old-guard—Mrs. Cousins. May the **All-India Women's Conference** rise higher and work for the women of India for ever.

Mrs. Doctor spoke for a few minutes:—

Ladies,

I thank you all for allowing me to speak a few words. I fully endorse all that has been said before me. As for Mrs. Cousins and Mrs. Faridoonji, I must say that their very presence here, on the platform, is a sort of stimulus for the Standing Committee. Their venerable grey hair, their beautiful faces, above all their sweet tempers, have induced us to work always for the Conference, and whether old age or grey hairs they will come to our Conference for many more years to inspire us. Our President has thanked the members of the Reception Committee. I am sure that you will all agree with me, when I say that those thoughts have come from the bottom of our hearts for all the comforts and kindnesses that we have received. Mrs. Cousins, our mother, remarked that whenever she came to the Conference, she felt younger and younger. I do not know how it is. Once again I bless the Conference and take my seat.

Message from Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

Sister Delegates,

I am sorry indeed that another engagement in Mysore—which I could not give up—prevents my being with you all to-day. I am writing these few lines to say “au revoir” to you to wish you every success in your work in the coming year. Annual sessions are nothing worth if they do not inspire us with enthusiasm and fill us with redoubled energy for the future. I know that workers are few but if the cause is worth while—and it IS worth while—then they WILL come and the work will not languish. The Conference lives from hand to mouth—financially—a good thing because it makes us all alert and keeps alive within us a real concern for it. I do hope the Mysore session will not fail us in this respect and that we shall be able to raise enough money for work for the coming year. The Conference and the Lady Irwin College, its child, are our first care and every penny we can spare should go towards their maintenance. Do give liberally and ask others to do so. I appeal to the Mysore public to be generous too.

Secretary's Remarks on the Eve of Relinquishing Charge.

In laying down the office and handing it over to my successor Mrs. Urmila Mehta, I hope you will permit me to say a few words to thank all of you, for your co-operation and patience. The General Secretary's work, I might tell you, notwithstanding the power and glory once associated with it, is not a bed of roses, but it is exciting if you are fond of fighting, and really educative if you are capable of learning anything by contact with others. It has taught me to ignore many things which once seemed important, and which still seem very important to others. It has made me a wiser woman because during the last nine months I was called upon to discriminate between essentials and non-essentials, the transient and the permanent. For giving me that opportunity I tender my sincerest thanks.

I dare say that in this meeting there are many who feel that the General Secretary might be a little more polite and a little less abrupt, and devote a little more time for a quiet chat. I am sure they are right and I

myself would like to have a few more days to meet my old students who are here with their children and whose numerous invitations I have had to refuse for want of time, and meet more of the delegates especially the Standing Committee members of 1940 with whom I have yet many quarrels to pick. I hope Mrs. Urmila Mehta will treat them kindly. I am also one of them. Most of them have forgotten all my warnings as I have forgotten all their threats. I know that time will heal if there is still any soreness left of the days of our comradeship. I thank you for your help, your co-operation and patience. Now I must confess that there is one person, a very prominent person here who had to put up a lot from me. I am sure she would smile if I were to mention her name—Begum Hamid Ali—the most understanding and forgiving of colleagues I have had. There are still three other persons whom I should particularly mention. Two of them are my oldest friends from the days of the Delhi Conference, Mrs. Cousins and Mrs. Rustumji. I knew I could always count on them and seek their help when necessary. But I do not think it is wise to tell you all the things that these veteran soldiers of the Women's Conference have done for me and the Conference in helping us to reorganise our different branches, organise this Conference. Then there is Rajkumari Amrit Kaur who, notwithstanding our strong spiritual differences was always an unfailing source of strength to me in everything. I am indebted to her and Mrs. Cousins—especially, in bringing out the *Roshni*.

I have reserved the Reception Committee for fuller treatment. The difficulties that the Branch had in coming to a decision melted like dew on a sunny morning when their chairwoman sent the telegram welcoming the A.-I.W.C. to Bangalore. Lady Mirza Ismail does not believe in words and I might confide in you that till I actually met her on the 19th I had not a word in exchange from her. She accepts things like a philosopher and I recall her words when somebody pointed out a difficulty "well, if we have to do it, it has to be done there is no sense in evading issues." "Things that have to be done must be done". I hope many of our standing committee members will remember her words and say, "if we have to do it let us do it." Duty is stern and we must obey her.



Mrs. S. R. Mandyam
Secretary of the Reception Committee,
Bangalore.

I have known Lady Mirza Ismail only during the last few days and I do not want to say things that you are already aware of, her cheerfulness of disposition and her untiring energy and her habit of going ahead in the face of difficulties. Mrs. Mandyam's only fault is her seriousness. Many a delegate has asked me to request her to smile occasionally which I have forgotten to do in the midst of preoccupations. But she is efficiency incarnate—firm and grim almost like the rock of Gibraltar, although I have seen her yielding a little once. Then there is the ever-present Indiramma, to whom everything is easy and simple, who is always everywhere offering her services to everybody; I wish every Reception Committee will have members like Indiramma.

I must not forget the little guides and scouts—the little unknown soldiers of this complicated organisation. If they are not here always at our beck and call, I am sure we would not have been able to carry on even a little of our scheduled work. It is due to them again that the working of the Conference has been so easy. They looked after our comforts here in the hall, supplied us with the necessary literature, looked after our lost articles, and the scouts had no rest. They are the messenger boys and considering the distance between this hall and the camps, I think they have done their work exceedingly well. And to think, that all they got in return were a few autographs! I congratulate them and other sister guides for their excellent work.

My last request is that delegates who are attending the Sessions should help the organisation by carrying the message of the Conference to their districts and implementing the resolutions adopted by the Conference.

Mrs. Mandyam :—

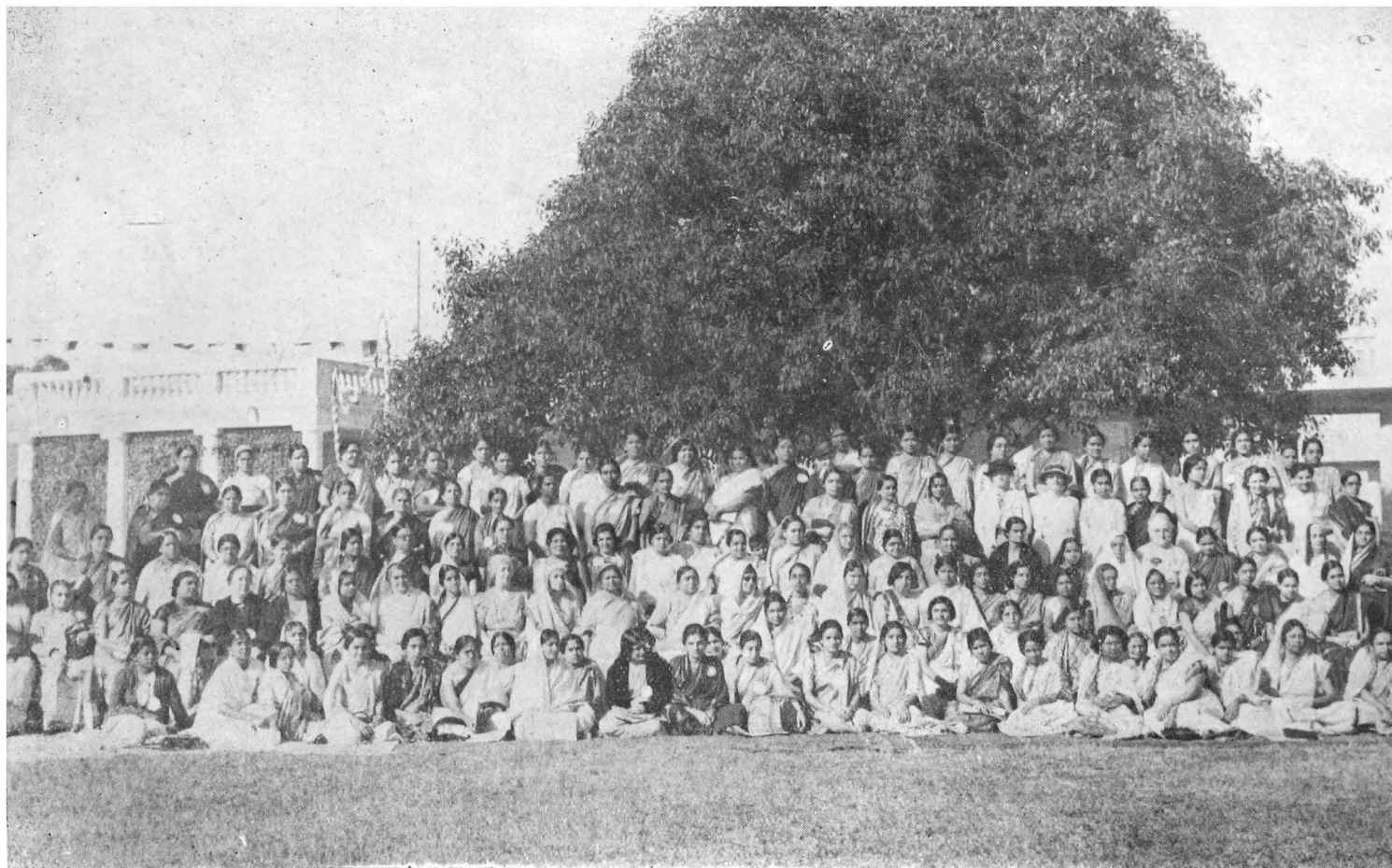
After all the splendid speeches that you have been hearing for the past four days my humble self standing before you to do my duty which is that of offering a hearty vote of thanks to you all. These four days have passed away in such a short time and before we could realise where we are, is over. This Conference has brought about better social understanding between the different classes of people which is one of the achievements of the A.-I.W.C.

The time at our disposal was very short for us to make all the arrangements. Now, on behalf of the Reception Committee I offer to the delegates and visitors a hearty vote of thanks for attending these sessions and making them a success. To you,—our President—Mrs. Brijlal Nehru we convey our thanks for the patience with which you faced the arduous task of conducting a huge Conference. Our thanks are also due to all the workers and other members of the Reception Committee who have spared no pains to put their heart and soul to make this function a success.

My sincere thanks are due to the gentlemen helpers who, though behind the *Purdah* have helped a good deal to make arrangements for the Conference. We are very grateful to the municipal authorities, the Deputy Commissioner, to the Electrical Department, the Health Department, Engineering Department and other Offices and Departments that co-operated with us to render us a great help. If by chance, I have omitted to thank any of my fellow-workers, it is not intentional but merely a slip, and I beg of you to excuse us. Our special thanks are due to the volunteers, rovers, girl guides who were ever ready to help us at all times.

Friends and sisters, we have done our best to make you all happy and comfortable during your stay here. If there had been any mistakes or omissions on our part I request you all to kindly excuse us.

Finally the President declared the Conference closed, and mentioned that the Delegates were at liberty to go and work hard. Miss Leelamani Naidu proposed three hearty cheers to Lady Mirza Ismail,—Chairwoman of the Reception Committee,—and Mrs. Mandyam proposed three hearty cheers to the All-India Women's Conference.



Delegates to the XV Session of the All-India Women's Conference.

**THE ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S
Receipts and Payments Account for the**

| | Rs. a. p. | Rs. a. p. |
|--|------------|------------|
| To Balance on 1st November, 1939 :— | | |
| Fixed Deposit in the Bank of India Ltd. | 2,856 12 0 | |
| Fixed Deposit in the National Bank .. | 630 0 0 | |
| With the National Bank .. | 7,838 8 0 | |
| With Mrs. Mehta (Social Section) .. | 15 15 6 | |
| With Mrs. Doctor (Social Section) .. | 56 12 0 | |
| With Hon. Gen. Secretary .. | 348 8 0 | 11,746 7 6 |
| „ Registration Fees of Delegates .. | .. | 1,420 0 0 |
| „ Donation for Conference Expenses .. | | 643 0 0 |
| „ Donation towards Central Office Fund | | 283 0 0 |
| „ Donation from Rajkumari Amrit Kaur towards Travel Expenses of Org. Secretary | | 500 0 0 |
| „ Donations towards Turkish Earthquake Relief | | 1,407 0 0 |
| „ Affiliation Fees | | 865 0 0 |
| „ Reception Committee | | 773 15 0 |
| „ Proceeds of Dramatic Entertainment .. | | 350 0 0 |
| „ Constituencies and Sub-Constituencies— For extra copies of circulars .. | | 240 8 0 |
| „ Vice-Presidentship Fees | | 40 0 0 |
| „ Subscription towards Education Fund Association | | 10 0 0 |
| „ Subscription towards Kamala Nehru Fund | | 10 0 0 |
| „ Sale of Annual Reports | | 77 3 0 |
| „ Interest on Bank Current Account .. | | 38 12 0 |
| „ Miscellaneous Receipts | | 36 7 9 |
| „ Interest on Fixed Deposit.. .. | | 129 14 0 |
| Total .. | | 18,571 3 3 |

Examined and found correct.

SORAB S. ENGINEER & Co.,

Incorporated Accountants,

Registered Accountants,

Hony. Auditors.

Bombay, 19th February, 1941.

The grateful thanks of the Association of the All-India Women's Conference are due to Messrs. Sorab S. Engineer & Co., for auditing the accounts of the Conference free of charge. This is a service which the firm has generously rendered us for many years and it has been of invaluable help to the Conference.

CONFERENCE.**Year ending 31st October, 1940.**

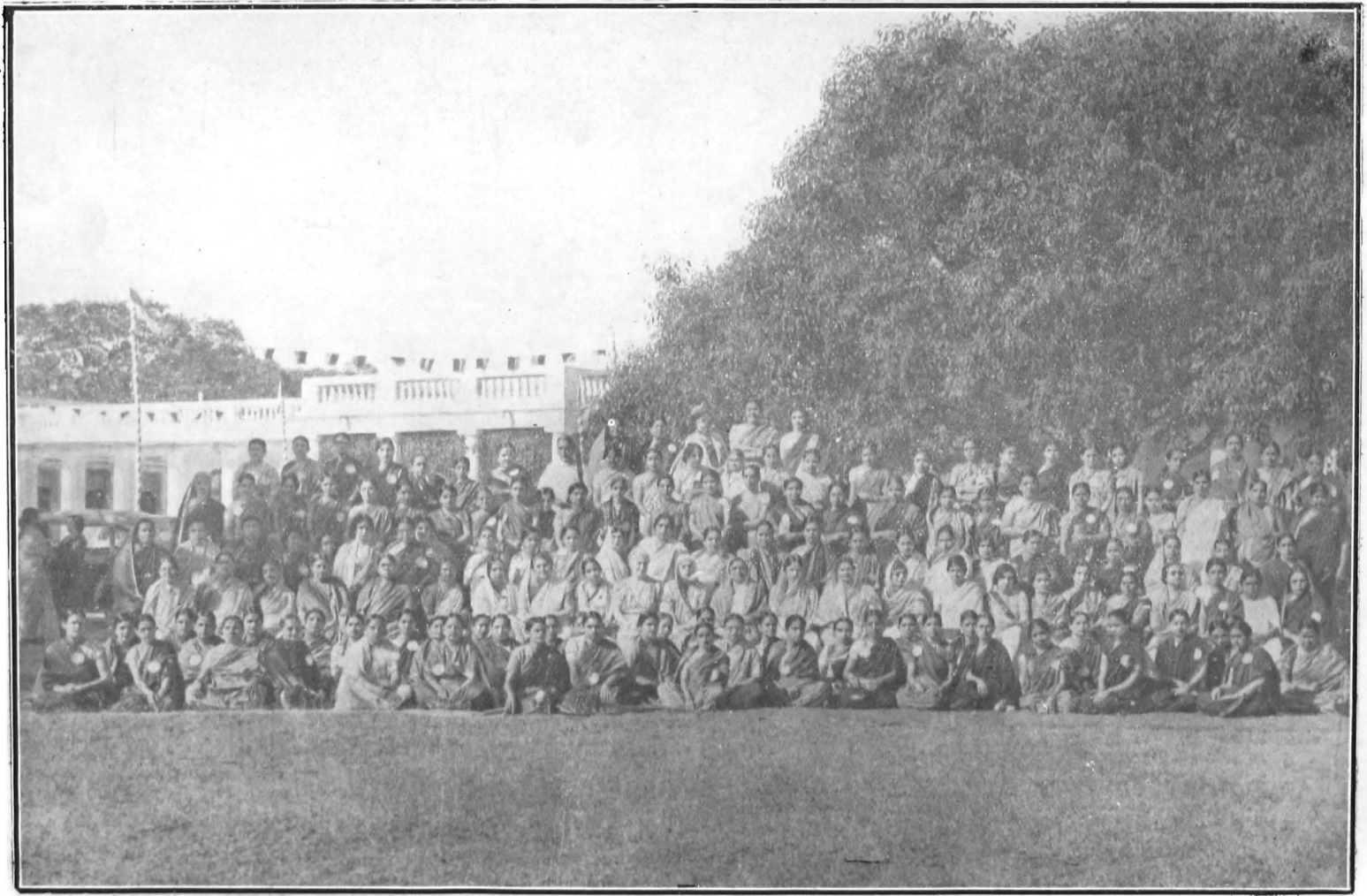
| | Rs. a. p. | Rs. a. p. |
|--|------------|-------------|
| By Reception Committee Expenses .. | | 710 0 0 |
| „ Honorary General Secretary's Expenses* | | 2,803 5 3 |
| „ Central Office Expenses :— | | |
| Mrs. Hajrah Begum Ahmed's salary .. | 416 2 0 | |
| Mrs. Hajrah Begum Ahmed's travelling, postage, etc. .. | 49 1 6 | 465 3 6 |
| „ Printing and Stationery .. | .. | 1,314 10 6 |
| „ Education Section Expenses .. | | 10 0 0 |
| „ Social Section Secretary's Expenses .. | | 20 0 0 |
| „ Mrs. Seva Singh Gill as subscription towards Education Fund Association .. | | 5 0 0 |
| „ Indigenous Industries' Section .. | | 25 0 0 |
| „ Miss Bhalerao's Travelling Expenses, etc. .. | | 115 12 6 |
| „ Kamala Nehru Fund .. | | 525 0 0 |
| „ Turkish Earthquake Relief Fund .. | | 1,407 0 0 |
| „ Affiliation Fee to International Alliance of Women's Suffrage .. | | 27 3 3 |
| „ Honorary Treasurer's Expenses .. | | 22 8 0 |
| „ Bank Commission and Charges .. | | 14 10 0 |
| „ Bank and other balances :— | | |
| Fixed Deposit in the National Bank .. | 5,680 0 0 | |
| Fixed Deposit in the Bank of India .. | 2,931 12 0 | |
| With the National Bank .. | 2,276 9 3 | |
| With Mrs. Mehta (Social Section) .. | 15 15 6 | |
| With Mrs. Doctor (Social Section) .. | 36 12 0 | |
| With Personal Assistant to Hon. Gen. Secretary .. | 50 0 0 | |
| With Hon. Gen. Secretary .. | 114 13 6 | 11,105 14 3 |
| Total .. | | 18,571 3 3 |

*Details of the Office Expenses of the Hon. General Secretary :—

| | |
|---|------------|
| Salary of Personal Assistant | 1,581 11 0 |
| Travelling Expenses of Personal Assistant | 230 4 6 |
| Office shifting expenses | 210 1 0 |
| Printing and Stationery | 329 10 9 |
| Postages, Telegrams, Telephones, Registration Charges | 372 10 9 |
| Furniture Hire | 33 0 0 |
| Repairs to typewriter and Miscellaneous expenses | 26 12 0 |
| House Rent | 15 0 0 |
| Bank's Commission | 4 3 3 |
| Total .. | 2,803 5 3 |

DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1940-41.

| Receipts. | | | Expenditure. | | |
|--|---------------|------------|---|---------------|------------|
| | Rs. | a. p. | | Rs. | a. p. |
| Balance on 1st November, 1940 .. | 11,117 | 9 3 | Reception Committee .. | 805 | 0 0 |
| Registration Fee .. | 1,610 | 0 0 | Hon. General Secretary's Expenses | 2,990 | 0 0 |
| Donations .. | 1,080 | 0 0 | Printing and Stationery .. | 1,320 | 0 0 |
| Affiliation fees .. | 875 | 0 0 | Education Section Expenses .. | 25 | 0 0 |
| Proceeds of Dramatic entertainment by the R.C. | 400 | 0 0 | Social Section .. | 25 | 0 0 |
| Subscription for extra copies of circulars .. | 60 | 0 0 | Hon. Treasurer's .. | 25 | 0 0 |
| Sale of Annual Reports .. | 70 | 0 0 | Indigenous Industries' section .. | 25 | 0 0 |
| Interest on Bank Account .. | 15 | 0 0 | Affiliation Fee to International Alliance of Women's Suffrage | 27 | 0 0 |
| Miscellaneous Receipts .. | 30 | 0 0 | Bank Commission and charges .. | 15 | 0 0 |
| Interest on Fixed Deposit .. | 315 | 0 0 | Expenses on Roshni | 600 | 0 0 |
| Roshni Subscription .. | 300 | 0 0 | | | |
| | | | Total .. | 5,857 | 0 0 |
| | | | Balance .. | 10,265 | 9 3 |
| Total .. | 16,122 | 9 3 | Total .. | 16,122 | 9 3 |



The Standing Committee of the A.-I. W. C. and members of the Reception Committee at Bangalore.

MESSAGES.

Messages wishing the Session success from prominent people and numerous friends and organisations in India and abroad received were from :—

- Mrs. Bakulabai Abhyankar.
- Her Highness the Princess of Berar.
- Miss Shantabai Bhalerao.
- Mrs. Annapurnabai Deshmukh.
- Dr. G. V. Deshmukh.
- Her Highness Maharani Chimnabai Gaekwad.
- Mahatma Gandhi.
- Mr. Hamid Ali and Miss Vera Brittain.
- Miss Harrison and Mrs. Grace Lankester.
- Elizabeth Leader Winifred Iles.
- Shrimati Kamala Devi and Miss Mary Dingman.
- Miss Anandidevi Khemchand.
- Maharani Lalita Kumari Devi of Vizianagram.
- Rani Laxmidevi of Phaltan.
- The Liaison Group in Great Britain.
- Secretary, Mahila Samaja, Hariyur.
- Mr. E. G. Mc. Alpine.
- H. H. Maharani Sucharu Devi of Mayurbhanj.
- H. H. the Dowager Maharani of Mysore.
- H. H. the Maharaja of Mysore.
- H. H. the Maharani of Mysore.
- Mrs. Sharadaben Mehta.
- Sogra Humayoon Mirza.
- Mrs. Manoramabai Mudholkar.
- Mrs. Sarojini Naidu.
- Lady Vidyagauri Nilkanth.
- H. H. Princess Niloufer.
- H. H. Maharani Setu Parvati Bayi of Travancore,
- Miss Piggot.

Shrimati K. Ramasubbamma.
 Mrs. Renuka Ray.
 Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi.
 Rogers.
 Diwan Bahadur Harbilas Sarada.
 Col. Shamsher Singh.
 Miss Meliscent Shephard.
 Women's Peace Movement, Edinburgh.
 Society of Friends' Llandrindonwells
 Vera Brittain.
 Churulata Mukerjee.
 Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh.
 Diwan Bahadur K. Ramaswamy.
 Sir C. Y. Chintamani.
 "Wish Conference success under Mrs. Nehru."

Mrs. Bakulabai Abhyankar.

"At the critical moment in World's history I wish your Conference success in arriving at wish and unanimous decision on all matters of vital importance."

Her Highness Princess of Berar.

"Best wishes for the Conference".

Miss Shantabai Bhalerao.

"Wish Conference every success."

Mrs. Annapurna Deshmukh.

"I hope the Conference will make strenuous efforts to remove the special disabilities of Hindu Women regarding marriage and property laws. Wish the Conference every success."

Dr. Deshmukh.

"Wish the Conference a great success in its deliberations and hope this Conference will tackle all problems confronting the women of India."

Her Highness Maharani Chimnabai Gaekwad.

"I hope the All-India Women's Conference will stand for unadulterated non-violence,"

Mahatma Gandhi,

"Believe contribution of Indian women is vital in present world situation for it will be from our conception of human brotherhood that men and women must strive to build a better world for our children."

Miss Vera Brittain.

"Special greetings to Conference."

Miss Harrison and Mrs. Lankester.

"Greetings and best wishes."

Elizabeth Leader Winifred Iles.

"Greetings Conference."

Shrimati Kamala Devi and Miss Mary Dingman.

"Greetings best wishes success Conference."

Miss Anandidevi Khemchand.

"Please convey hearty congratulations to Shrimati Brijlal Nehru. Praying for Conference's great success."

Maharani Lalita Kumari Devi of Vizianagram.

"Wish session all success under your able presidentship. Please convey apologies to all sisters."

Rani Laxmidevi of Phaltan.

"We send to our sisters in India our greetings and best wishes for a fruitful Conference. We know that you and we have the honour and responsibility of living at a great formative period of history. Now we suffer the birth pangs, later we shall welcome the new birth. We see our men and women courageous and gay, determined and tireless under daily and nightly dangers, and we hope that, forged in this furnace, we shall emerge resolute to wage war, not on moral foes, but on poverty and disease, and that we shall widen our liberties and broaden our responsibilities. Without that hope we could not go on. To you we send our fervent wishes that you may gain the same liberties and responsibilities without war, that you may wisely guide your great country into unity and peace and prosperity, and, linking hands and hearts with China, lead Asia to spiritual victory."

Liaison Group in Great Britain.

"Wish Conference every success."

Secretary, Mahila Samaja Hiriyur.

"I very much regret that my absence from Bangalore during the Christmas holidays has prevented me from being present at this session of the All-India Women's Conference—the first to be held in Bangalore. The invitation of the Conference to me to speak on the opening day is an opportunity which I am sorry to have missed. I feel sure that your deliberations will be fruitful, and the Department of Public Instruction in Mysore will be particularly interested in those subjects which concern Women's Education—subjects which are fundamental, and lie at the root of almost all other questions affecting the general position of women.

Mr. E. G. Mc Alpine,

Director of Public Instruction, Mysore.

"Though far, my thoughts, sympathies and prayers with you. May God bless the noble endeavour. Greetings and goodwill."

H. H. Maharani Sucharu Devi of Mayurbhanj.

"It is particularly gratifying to me that the All-India Women's Conference is being held in Bangalore this year. I wish it all success."

H. H. the Dowager Maharani of Mysore.

"I wish the All-India Women's Conference every success."

H. H. the Maharani of Mysore.

"I wish every success to the Conference. I hope the deliberations will lead to definite results. My greetings to all our friends."

Mrs. Sharadaben Mehta.

"I wish the Conference every success."

Sogra Humayoon Mirza.

"Wishing successful session."

Mrs. Manorama Mudholkar.

"Please accept my sincere good wishes for the success of the session. I hope this year's deliberations would be as useful as the past years and would give good impetus to the workers in the cause of women's uplift."

Lady Vidyagauri Nilkanth.

"Wish Conference success. Women must stand united for progress and peace in the world".

H. H. Princess Niloufer.

"Greatly regret my inability to be present at the All-India Women's Conference. Wish it all success."

H. H. Maharani Setu Parvati Bayi of Travancore.

"Greetings. Wish success. Remember Sind's medical need."

Miss Piggot.

"I wish the Annual Conference a success."

Shrimati K. Ramasubamma.

"Extremely sorry . . . unable attend Conference. Wish Bangalore Session every success."

Mrs. Renuka Ray.

"Regret inability to attend. Wish success Conference."

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi.

"A group of English women send friendships, greetings and goodwill. Love conquers all."

Rogers.

"Hearty goodwishes. Women's work essential for salvation of India."

Diwan Bahadur Harbilas Sardar.

"Cordial good wishes for success Conference. India expects her leading women to play increasingly active and purposeful part in moulding country's political and socio-economic structure. May your inspiring leadership point true way."

Col. Shamsersingh.

"Cordial greetings New Year to all friends."

Miss Meliscent Shephard.

"We send greetings."

Women's Peace Movement, Edinburgh.

"Your effort warmly appreciated."

Society of Friends' Llandrindonwells.

"My thoughts with you all wishing the Conference every success and prayer that the united front of the women of India will succeed in attaining our and our country's rightful place."

Charulata Mukerjee.

“The All-India Women’s Conference has done valuable work for Indian women and through them for India. It has consistently made a stand against communalism and for this reason alone deserves the support of every patriotic India. I hope it will continue to lay stress on social work for which there is immense field in India. I wish all success to the Fifteenth Session of the Conference.”

Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh.

“I wish the Conference unqualified success. The uplift of women is a pressing problem of great national importance and the Conference should be congratulated on undertaking this noble task and accomplishing much in the progressive direction during the last so many years of its useful existence.”

Diwan Bahadur K. Ramaswamy.

“I wish the Conference the best success. I have a lively sense of the immense service the Conference has done to the cause of India’s daughters and I wish it to grow from strength to strength.”

Sir C. Y. Chintamani.

APPENDIX II.

List of Branches and Units total Membership.

1. Andhra :—

| | | |
|------------------|----|-----|
| 1. East Godavary | .. | 400 |
| 2. West Godavary | .. | 200 |
| 3. Guntur | .. | 100 |
| 4. Vizagapatam | .. | 50 |
| 5. Cudappah | .. | 300 |
| 6. Krishna | .. | 200 |
| 7. Kurnool | .. | 60 |
| 8. Anantapur | .. | 40 |

Total .. 1,350

2. Assam :—

| | | |
|----------------------------|----|----|
| 1. Shillong | .. | 50 |
| 2. Sylhet | .. | 46 |
| 3. Silchar (not available) | | |

Total .. 96

3. Baroda :—

| | | |
|-------------|----|-----|
| 1. Baroda | .. | 160 |
| 2. Navasari | .. | 75 |

Total .. 235

4. Bengal East :—

| | | |
|--------------------------|----|----|
| 1. Dacca (not available) | | |
| 2. Comilla | .. | 52 |
| 3. Faridpur | .. | 80 |

Total .. 132

5. Bengal West :—

| | | |
|------------|----|-----|
| 1. Bankura | .. | 115 |
|------------|----|-----|

Total .. 115

6. Berar :—

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|----|
| 1. Yeotmal | .. | 60 |
| 2. Akola | | |
| 3. Amraoti (Figures not available.) | | |
| 4. Buldhana | | |

Total .. 60

7. Bihar :—

| | | |
|----------|----|----|
| 1. Patna | .. | 62 |
|----------|----|----|

Total .. 62

8. Bombay :—

| | | |
|--------------------|----|-----|
| 1. Bombay | .. | 195 |
| 2. Dadar-Matunga | .. | 250 |
| 3. Khar-Santa Cruz | .. | 217 |

Total .. 662

9. Calcutta :—

| | | |
|-------------------|----|-----|
| 1. Calcutta | .. | 225 |
| 2. Burra Bazar | .. | |
| 3. South Calcutta | .. | |

Total .. 225

10. C.P. North :—

| | | |
|---------------|----|-----|
| 1. Jubbulpore | .. | 120 |
| 2. Bilaspur | .. | 45 |
| 3. Saugor | .. | 35 |

Total .. 200

11. C.P. South :—

| | | |
|--------------|----|-----|
| 1. Nagpur | .. | 100 |
| 2. Chindwara | .. | 30 |
| 3. Bhandara | .. | 30 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| 4. Wardha .. | 30 | 17. Indore :— | |
| 5. Seoni .. | 30 | 1. Indore .. | 68 |
| 6. Saoner .. | 20 | 2. Mahidpur .. | 17 |
| 7. Chanda .. | 30 | 3. Karnod .. | 32 |
| 8. Arvi .. | 30 | 4. Maheswar .. | |
| 9. Balaghat .. | 30 | Total .. | 117 |
| 10. Gondia .. | 25 | | |
| 11. Katol .. | 25 | 18. Jath State :— | |
| 12. Umner .. | 30 | Jath .. | 101 |
| 13. Hinghghat .. | 30 | Total .. | 101 |
| Total .. | 440 | | |
| 12. Cochin :— | | 19. Karnatak :— | |
| 1. Ernaculam .. | 145 | 1. Dharwar .. | 200 |
| 2. Trichur .. | 60 | 2. Mangalore .. | 171 |
| 3. Trippunitura .. | 35 | 3. Karwar .. | 150 |
| Total .. | 240 | 4. Belgaum .. | 25 |
| | | 5. Bellary .. | 50 |
| 13. Delhi :— | | 6. Gadag .. | 28 |
| 1. Delhi .. | 150 | 7. Garag .. | 30 |
| 2. Muzaffarnagar .. | 49 | Total .. | 654 |
| 3. Narela .. | 30 | | |
| 4. Qaral .. | 100 | 20. Kolhapur :— | |
| 5. Simla (not available) .. | | 21. Konkan :— | |
| Total .. | 329 | 1. Alibag .. | 24 |
| | | Total .. | 24 |
| 14. Gujarat :— | | 22. Maharashtra :— | |
| 1. Ahmedabad .. | 90 | 1. Poona .. | 230 |
| 2. Surat .. | 95 | 2. Malshiras .. | 80 |
| 3. Broach .. | 125 | 3. Satara .. | 60 |
| Total .. | 310 | 4. Wai .. | 50 |
| | | 5. Karad .. | 50 |
| 15. Gwalior :— | | 6. Nasik .. | 50 |
| Figures not available. | | 7. Ahmednagar .. | 100 |
| 16. Hyderabad-Deccan :— | | 8. Kirloskarwadi .. | 60 |
| 1. Hyderabad .. | 320 | 9. Dhulia .. | 20 |
| 2. Aurangabad .. | 55 | Total .. | 700 |
| 3. Parbani .. | 100 | | |
| 4. Gulbarga .. | | | |
| 5. Warangal .. | 75 | | |
| 6. Mahboobnagar .. | 14 | | |
| Total .. | 564 | | |

23. Madras :—

| | | |
|-----------|----|-----|
| 1. Madras | .. | 116 |
| Total | .. | 116 |

24. Malabar :—

| | | |
|--------------|----|----|
| 1. Calicut | .. | 46 |
| 2. Cannanore | .. | |
| Total | .. | 46 |

25. Mysore :—

| | | |
|----------------------|----|-----|
| 1. Bangalore | .. | 105 |
| 2. Mysore | .. | 91 |
| 3. Chikmanglore | .. | 50 |
| 4. Chitaldrug | .. | 52 |
| 5. Tumkur | .. | 50 |
| 6. Devangere | .. | 40 |
| 7. Kolar | .. | 50 |
| 8. Kolar-Gold Fields | .. | 50 |
| 9. Mandya | .. | 50 |
| 10. Hassan | .. | 66 |
| 11. Shimoga | .. | 50 |
| Total | .. | 654 |

26. N.-W.F.P. :—

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. Peshawar | |
| 2. Abbottabad | |

27. Orissa :—

| | |
|------------|--|
| 1. Cuttack | |
| 2. Puri | |

28. Phaltan :—**29. Punjab (Central) Lahore****30. Sangli :—**

Sangli has five sub-branches.

31. Sind :—

| | | |
|--------------|----|----|
| 1. Karachi | .. | 58 |
| 2. Hyderabad | .. | |
| Total | .. | 58 |

32. Tamilnad :—

| | | |
|-------------|----|----|
| 1. Pollachi | .. | 46 |
| Total | .. | 46 |

33. Travancore :—

| | | |
|---------------|----|-----|
| 1. Trivandrum | .. | 150 |
| 2. Nagercoil | .. | 50 |
| Total | .. | 200 |

34. U.P. Agra :—

| | | |
|--------------|----|-----|
| 1. Allahabad | .. | 300 |
| 2. Dehra Dun | .. | 79 |
| 3. Meerut | .. | 46 |
| 4. Benares | .. | 300 |
| 5. Cawnpore | .. | 70 |
| Total | .. | 749 |

35. U.P. Oudh :—

| | | |
|--------------|----|-----|
| 1. Lucknow | .. | 46 |
| 2. Moradabad | .. | 76 |
| Total | .. | 122 |

Total No. of Branches .. 35

Total Units .. 125

Total Membership .. 8,607

N.B.—These figures were collected from the quarterly returns submitted by the Branches —(L.N.M.)

**MEMORANDUM OF
IMPORTANT RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS**

1. EDUCATIONAL

A. Primary Education

1. This Conference demands that the new Constitution of India should guarantee to every child within the country, free instruction in reading and writing up to a prescribed minimum standard, as fundamental right of Indian citizenship.

2. This Conference is strongly in favour of compulsory primary education for girls as well as for boys; it recommends all Local Governments and Local Bodies to take immediate steps to introduce compulsory education in urban, suburban and rural districts in such a way that at all district headquarters and towns the scheme shall be in full working order within five years and shall be universal within twenty years. This Conference is of opinion that this compulsory education should be made free in all schools provided by public authorities to all those unable to pay for it.

3. In order to carry out Compulsory Primary Education efficiently this Conference is of opinion that

- (a) More Rural Training Centres should be opened where teachers drawn from rural areas should be trained under conditions such as they will meet in their work. These teachers should, in every case possible, be of secondary grade, and the employment of all teachers of lower grade should ultimately cease.
- (b) Residential quarters for women teachers should be provided in all teaching centres.
- (c) In order to assist poor parents in compulsory areas crèches and nursery schools for the care of children under school-going age should be established near schools.
- (d) Only clean, dry, airy and well-ventilated buildings with adequate playgrounds should be used as schools.

- (e) The sanitary code for secondary schools should be extended to elementary schools and rigidly enforced in view of the high percentage of diseases borne by contaminated water.
- (f) School texts should be related to the psychology and environment of the child.
- (g) More women should be trained as specialist teachers in domestic science so that the teaching of the subject may be progressive and efficient. It is essential that the foundation of such teaching should be firmly laid in the elementary schools.
- (h) Nutrition Bureaus should be established in every Province where the much needed research work on the value of the food-stuffs available in the Province should be carried out and where all information regarding suitable dietaries could be obtained.

4. One of the first essentials for improving primary education is that the scale of salary for primary school teachers be raised. The standard required for the entrance examination for training institutions should also be raised and a better training should be provided. Well-educated men and women should be invited and given opportunities to act as honorary teachers while the supply of trained teachers is inadequate.

5. As far as possible women teachers should be engaged in the earlier stages of education, both of boys and girls; these early stages should in fact be wholly the concern of women.

6. Every educational institution for young children should make full provision for Kindergarten, Montessori or other similar classes.

7. This Conference feels that in the poorer districts a mid-day meal should be provided in the schools for those pupils who would otherwise have nothing to eat, and that the Government should be asked to make a special grant to such schools for this purpose. In these poorer districts ladies should come forward and by their own work and money organise the provision of meals.

8. This Conference is of opinion that:

- (a) Priority should be given to the claims of girls' education in every scheme of educational expansion.

- (b) Primary education should be made compulsory for girls as well as for boys.
- (c) It protests against the omission of girls from schemes of compulsory education.
- (d) It urges that compulsory education should be enforced wherever it has been established, and that public co-operation should be secured to ensure the regular attendance of pupils until their 12th year,

because it realises that educated mothers are a sure guarantee of the education of the coming generation and an essential factor in the advance of a nation.

9. Compulsory Education: This Conference is of opinion that girls should be included in all schemes of compulsory Primary Education and particularly supports the resolutions of Constituencies of Madras Presidency that the new Committee formed by the Madras Government to draft a Scheme of Compulsory Elementary Education should do so not only for all boys, as are its terms of reference, but for all girls and boys of elementary school-going age.

10. Primary Education: This Conference urges the universal introduction of free and compulsory Primary Education without further delay. With this purpose in view we request the authorities:

- (a) To provide for properly trained teachers the majority of whom should be women.
- (b) To request the Government of each Province and State to make adequate provision for this item in the budget for the next year.
- (c) To make provision for the re-orientation of such education with special stress laid on training in handicraft.
- (d) In order to effect economy, "the shift system" be introduced, where possible, and boys and girls be taught together.
- (e) In rural areas, where necessary, "seasonal" education be arranged for.
- (f) That buildings however simple, with playgrounds and adequate sanitary arrangements be provided in suitable localities.
- (g) That medical inspection and treatment begin at this stage and

be made compulsory by legislation, and care should be taken to appoint efficient and responsible doctors.

- (h) That all Primary Education should be on a non-communal basis. (Nagpur 1937.)

11. **Voluntary Service:** This Conference urges all educated men and women to further the cause of education on the following definite lines:—

- (a) To organise well-run Nursery Schools for children between ages of 3 and 6.
- (b) To form Care Committees to follow up in a practical manner the work of medical inspection and treatment.
- (c) To provide buildings, however simple, for schools.
- (d) To make special efforts to promote adult education individually and through organisations.
- (e) That Co-operative Societies be formed to raise money for investing in buildings for schools, the interest on the capital thus raised, being paid by the rent which in its turn must be collected by private effort if not contributed by Government.

(Nagpur 1937).

B. Secondary Education.

1. The Vernacular should be the medium of instruction. English being a compulsory second subject; Hindi or Urdu should be included in the curriculum as an alternative to the classical languages, one of which should be compulsory.

2. Alternative courses should be established to suit the needs of girls who do not intend to take up College Education. These should include Domestic Science, Fine Arts, Handicraft and Industries.

3. It is desirable that Sex Hygiene be taught in all Secondary schools and colleges, by competent teachers.

4. **Secondary Education:** This Conference is of the opinion that Secondary Education for girls be remodelled so as to include subjects such as Home Craft, Home Nursing, First Aid, Dietetics, Needle Craft, Cookery, Laundry, which should be made optional, one at least being compulsory. (Nagpur 1937).

5. Separate Middle Schools and High Schools for girls should be established in places where a demand for them exists and where there are no such schools,

6. Whereas in many parts of India the problem of obtaining suitable buildings for girls' schools is becoming more and more acute, the Conference calls upon its Standing Committee to consider.

(a) The advisability of launching a propaganda campaign in its many Constituent Areas in order that companies may be formed on the lines of the Girls' Public Day School Company in England whereby in that country a sufficiency of Girls' High Schools was established.

(b) The recommending of such a campaign to the All-India Women's Education Fund Association as part of its work in the coming year.

7. This Conference recommends that the inspecting staff of girls' schools should consist of women only, and that the Chief Inspectress should be considered as Deputy-Directress of Inspection.

8. This Conference supports the Resolution of Central Punjab Constituent Conference and draws the attention of the Government to the condition of women's education in the North-West Frontier Province and requests that a High School for girls be opened there at the earliest possible date.

C. College Education

1. The following subjects should be added as optionals to the present curricula: Fine Arts, Advanced Domestic Science, Journalism, Social Science, Architecture.

2. Special encouragement in the way of Scholarship should be offered to women students to attract them to take their Degrees in Law, Medicine, Fine Arts and Social Science.

3. **Hostels:** This Conference reiterates its demand that sufficient number of recognised Hostels should be established for women students by the authorities concerned and that they should be efficiently supervised by experienced and responsible women as Inspectresses.

(Nagpur 1937).

4. This Conference urges the Educational authorities in India to make adequate Hostel arrangements for women students in all important centres of education.

It further calls upon them to make such arrangements on non-communal lines.

(Ahmedabad 1936).

5. Lady professors should be appointed (to act as adviser) in all colleges where there are women students.

6. This Conference recommends the University of Bombay and to other Universities where such facilities do not exist :

(i) that vernacular should be allowed, optionally with classical languages in the curricula at *every stage* in the University course,

(ii) that Domestic Science, optionally with Physics, should be allowed in the First Year in the Arts Examination.

7. This Conference regrets that the condition of affiliation of colleges to Universities regarding the provision of lodging accommodation of students has in some instances remained a dead letter, so far as women students are concerned, and it requests the Senates to see that all colleges affiliated to their respective Universities are suitably provided with hostels or approved lodging accommodation of their women students and, to direct their Syndicates to ask the inspecting committees of the affiliated colleges to report as to whether this condition has been fulfilled.

8. This Conference is of opinion that, in view of the long hours and strenuous nature of the work which the Medical Course entails, hostels for women students in the *immediate* vicinity of the Medical Colleges are a necessity and this Conference recommends that such provision should be made by college authorities.

9. This Conference congratulates the A.-I. W.E.F. Association for having established in Delhi a Central College (Lady Irwin College for Women) to teach Home Science in all its branches. It calls upon all its Constituencies to collect funds for the creation of at least two local scholarships for girls who after completing the Home Science Course at the Lady Irwin College would be expected to teach that subject for a stated number of years. It also requests the public to extend financial aid towards this most useful and unique institution.

10. **University at Poona:** This Conference urges the Government of Bombay to take all necessary steps to give at an early date statutory recognition of the S. N. D. Thackersey Indian Women's University which has been doing useful work for the higher education of Women for the last 20 years.

(Nagpur 1937).

11. The All-India Women's Conference congratulates the S. N. D.

Thakersey Indian Women's University and thanks the Government of Bombay for recognising the degree of this University as equivalent to the degrees of other universities for the purposes of Government service. It urges other Provincial Governments to grant them similar recognition. (Delhi 1938).

12. **College for Girls in the N.-W.F.P.** This Conference supports the demand of the women of the North-West Frontier Province for a Girls' College and urges the authorities to take steps for its establishment at an early date. (Ahmedabad 1936).

13. And it further urges that Home Science be introduced as a compulsory subject in high schools and as an optional course in colleges for women.

D. Training

1. This Conference recognises the imperative need of a greater number of training Schools and urges upon the Government and the Local Bodies to take immediate steps to start such schools in every centre where they do not exist.

2. This Conference is of opinion that centres for special courses to train teachers for rural areas should be opened, and that courses should be arranged for teachers already working in rural areas.

3. This Conference recommends that branch committees similar to the Bengal Branch of the Indian Women's Education Society be formed in the different provinces of India to help the Bengal Committee in the selection of a scholar to undergo training abroad.

4. This Conference recommends that immediate steps be taken to carry into effect the repeated Resolution that Central College be founded to train graduates and matriculates in order to secure a higher standard of Kindergarten and secondary teachers and that the Fund Association be requested to allot money for founding and endowing such a college.

5. This Conference places on record its dissatisfaction with the policy of the Government in reducing the number of students admitted to the Training College and strongly desires that their numbers should be increased.

6. This Conference regards the standard accepted by the Government of 50 per cent. of trained teachers in primary schools as a very low one and suggests to all Municipalities and Local Boards to engage only trained teachers.

7. This Conference considers that the present course of training for Matriculate and non-matriculate teachers is very unsatisfactory, and that the standard of examination should be raised and better provision be made for the actual training.

E. Literacy, Mass Education and Adult Education

1. Literacy—

This Conference reiterates its former resolutions deploring the appalling illiteracy in the land, and believing that unless a concerted and intensive campaign is organised the moral and material progress of the land is bound to be hampered, appoints a Sub-Committee,

(a) To study the question in all its bearings.

(b) To keep in touch and co-operate with all work in the cause of literacy amongst adults.

(c) To initiate practical schemes of work.

(d) To report on all work done in this direction to the next Conference. (Trivandrum 1935).

2. Mass Education

As all claims to democracy and citizenship will fail to receive recognition so long as the masses of India remain illiterate this Conference emphatically repeats its demand for

(a) The efficient introduction of **COMPULSORY EDUCATION** throughout India.

(b) The extension of **ADULT EDUCATION** especially with a view to the expansion of vocational training and the general uplift of the masses.

3. University Extension Lecture Scheme should include special courses for women.

4. This Conference recommends that Industrial Homes for women be established where possible and that provincial Governments be approached to give sufficient grants to run such institutions in an efficient manner.

5. This Conference reiterates the importance of tackling the problem of Adult Education in every way possible and urges the Government, Municipal Councils, Local Bodies and Women's Associations to organise classes and centres for the promotion of literacy and general education among adult women and suggests the establishment of cinemas, moving

libraries and publication of suitable books and magazines in the vernaculars. •

6. This Conference, realising the vital need of educating the masses of the country, urges that the speediest possible measures be adopted for the spread of adult education and suggests the use of the Radio and Broadcasting as one of the means to achieve this object.

7. Adult Education—

(a) *Literacy*: With a view to intensify the campaign against illiteracy, this Conference recommends that each Constituency should appoint a special sub-Committee to carry on the work and to report progress every half-year to the Conference through the proper channels.

(b) *Mass-education*: This Conference views with satisfaction the work that is being done for the promotion of adult education, particularly in the rural areas of the country, by our constituencies and by other public and private organisations.

It urges the constituencies to make further earnest efforts to organise such work wherever required and to co-operate with other associations doing similar work.

(c) *Broadcasting*: This Conference strongly appeals to the Broadcasting authorities in India to promote mass education in every possible way through the medium of the Radio. It suggests the authorities concerned to have representative committees, with women, in every province to draw up practical schemes for this purpose. (Ahmedabad 1936).

F. Common Language

1. Recognising the urgent need of a universal language for India, this Conference appoints a sub-committee,

(a) To report on means and methods that could be adopted for the realisation of this ideal.

(b) To compile a comprehensive vocabulary of words commonly used in India in order of frequency of use.

(c) To co-operate with other associations engaged in similar work. (Trivandrum 1935).

2. **Common Language**: This Conference resolves that it is desirable that in order to promote cultural unity and harmony amongst the people of India, Hindustani be made the common language, the script used being either Devanagiri or Persian. With the purpose in view it calls upon

- (a) all Constituencies of the A.-I.W.C. to help by starting work in this direction,
- (b) that Hindustani be taught as an optional second language in Primary Schools. (Delhi 1938).

3. Hindustani :

- (a) This Conference recommends that earnest efforts be made in all constituencies to encourage the study of Hindustani so that it may soon become the common language of India.
- (b) It requests all educational authorities to promote the teaching of Hindustani in schools.
- (c) It further requests the Universities to include Hindustani in the syllabus for the Matriculation Examination and other University Examinations where it may not be so included.
- (d) It is the opinion of this Conference that the language should not be over-Sanskritised or over-Persianised, and that the script used may be the Devanagri, Urdu or Roman.

(Ahmedabad 1936).

G. General

1. This Conference defines Education as training which will enable the child or the individual to develop his or her latent capacities to the fullest extent for the service of humanity. It must therefore, include elements for physical, mental, emotional, civic and spiritual development. The course of study arranged for this purpose must be so flexible as to allow of adaptation to the conditions of the individual, the locality and the community.

2. At every stage of education the spirit of social service should be inculcated.

3. Moral training, based on spiritual ideals, should be made compulsory for all schools and colleges.

4. In all education of girls, teaching in the ideals of motherhood, and in making the home beautiful and attractive, should be kept uppermost.

5. Agriculture should be included in the curriculum as a compulsory subject in schools in rural areas and as an optional subject in all other schools and colleges.

6. Girls' schools should be inspected both by women having general and also by those having technical qualifications.

7. This Conference is of opinion that the undue importance given to examinations has greatly hindered the educational progress of pupils and it recommends that investigation be made into the problem of testing progress.

8. This Conference approves of Cinema Films being used for educational purposes in schools generally and in rural schools in particular.

This Conference in its Memorandum has emphasised the necessity of reforming and enlarging the conception of education in Universities, training colleges and schools. It views with interest the progress that has been made and joins with the Constituent Conference in reiterating the importance of the inclusion in the curricula of study of:

- (a) Sociology, Home and Domestic Science in all its branches.
- (b) Fine Arts, (Music, Painting, etc.).
- (c) Specifically Indian Culture, including the Vernaculars and Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian.
- (d) Physical Culture.

(i) This Conference reiterates the vital necessity for public parks and playgrounds for children in cities, and gives its whole-hearted support to all schemes for the extension of physical education in schools and colleges.

It hopes that the example of Bengal in the formation of a "Fresh Air League" will be followed by other Constituencies.

(ii) This Conference strongly protests against the recent cuts in grants-in-aid to educational institutions, particularly primary schools, and urges the educational authorities to see that all such grants are immediately restored.

10. This Conference reiterates its former Resolutions—

- (a) that in all educational institutions there should be compulsory physical training for children from the primary stages by qualified physical instructors;
- (b) compulsory medical inspection with after-care treatment;
- (c) and it also calls upon Municipalities and Local Boards to provide an adequate number of public parks and play-grounds for women and children.

11. This Conference requests the authorities of the Allahabad and Benares Hindu Universities to remove the bar against co-education and

urges those schools and Universities where co-education does not exist to introduce and encourage the same.

12. This Conference feels that there ought to be a re-orientation of the entire system of education in this country and is of opinion that Government and private institutions should introduce vocational training immediately in schools and colleges.

13. This Conference, mindful of the interests of the youth of this country, appeals to the Government of India to exercise rigid control over all cinema films and posters and requests it to appoint women on every Board of Censorship.

14. **Literature, Etc.:** This Conference lodges its emphatic protest against the publication and circulation of obscene literature, pictures and films throughout India and demands that instances be reported immediately to the authorities concerned who are urged to take drastic action.

In this connection this Conference proposes that sex education be imparted by suitable teachers.

15. **Health:** This Conference is emphatically of opinion that the health of children and specially of school children and college students is of vital importance to the well-being of the country. It therefore considers it essential that matters connected with,

(a) School hygiene and sanitation;

(b) Medical Inspection of school children;

(c) School Clinics and Care-Committees;

(d) Health education in schools;

(e) Physical Culture;

(f) Adult Classes for the study of Child Welfare and Child Hygiene, and,

(g) Dietetics, with special reference to children's food, should receive special attention, and appoints a Sub-Committee to study the questions and to report to the Conference at its next session.

16. **Medical Inspection.**—This Conference demands legislation for compulsory Medical Inspection and treatment in all schools.

(Ahmedabad 1936).

17. Special schools for defectives (whether physical, mental or moral) should be established and private enterprise in this direction should be encouraged and aided by the Government.

18. **Mal-Nutrition.** (a) That every person responsible for the education of children should study and understand the principles of dietetics and nourishment and spread knowledge in his direction.

(b) To combat the evil of mal-nutrition the authorities should make every effort to supply suitable nourishment to such children as need it.

(Nagpur 1937).

19. This Conference calls upon the Government to withhold its grant from any school which excludes any particular community from it, in all cases where no other provision for that community already exists.

20. This Conference recommends that Government recognition should be given to successful educational institutions which have been working on experimental lines advocated by this Conference (such as the Indian Women's University and others) which deserve such recognition.

21. This Conference recommends that women should be given adequate representation on all Educational Boards which control Primary, Secondary, and University Education and all Text-Book Committees.

22. This Conference reiterates the importance of educating girls of all communities in the same schools in order to promote mutual understanding and a common cultural unity.

23. This Conference is totally opposed to the infliction of corporal punishment in schools and institutions for boys and girls and it calls on every one to report instances to the authorities concerned and on the latter to see that the laws forbidding such acts are strictly enforced.

24. **Co-education.**

In the opinion of this Conference, the proper encouragement of *co-education* would help greatly towards the solution of various social and economic problems confronting the country. The Conference therefore urges strongly that:—

(i) Co-education be introduced in primary schools and colleges.

(ii) A large proportion of women teachers be always appointed on the staffs of Co-educational Institutions, particularly those of primary schools.

(iii) At least one of the supervisors employed by the Local Self-governing Bodies be a woman.

25. **Parental Co-operation.**

Realising how gravely the progress of Education in the country is

hampered by the lack of *co-operation* between teachers and parents this organisation of women appeals to all parents and guardians to help in this direction.

26. **Debating Society**

In support of the recommendation of the Educational Committee, this Conference advises the immediate formation in each Constituency of a *debating society* to serve as a training ground for:—

- (a) the stimulation of discussion on matters of public interest;
- (b) the efficient expression of thought and speech.

27. **Differentiation between the Matriculation and the School-Leaving Examination.** This Conference considers that the combination in one and the same Matriculation Examination of two different tests, one an entrance to the University, and the other a completion of Secondary Education, is not calculated to accomplish either of those two aims satisfactorily; and therefore calls upon all Departments of Education and Universities to take immediate steps for the separation of these two tests into two distinct examinations. (Ahmedabad 1936).

II. SOCIAL

A. **Child Marriage Restraint Act.**

1. This Conference emphatically condemns the unnatural and devitalising custom of allowing immature girls to become wives and mothers, as it robs them of their right to education and freedom and arrests their mental, moral and physical growth. This meeting demands that the legal age of marriage be fixed at 16 and 21 for girls and boys, respectively.

2. (a) This Conference expresses its satisfaction at the passing of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, and congratulates Rai Saheb Harbilas Sardas and those who helped in making it the law of the land on their achievements.

(b) It further urges that:

- (i) In order to make this Act effective, it is necessary to form Sardas Committees to prevent, and to bring to light, breaches of the Law.
- (ii) In order to give effect to the Child Marriage Restraint Act, it is imperative to take immediate steps to provide adequate machinery for the registration of marriages and

to ensure the correct registration of births, in accordance with the recommendation of the Age of Consent Committee.

- (c) It condemns the agitation started by certain classes against the Child Marriage Restraint Act and condemns the proposed Bills asking for exemptions from the operation of this Law.

3. This Conference once again condemns all attempts to repeal the Child Marriage Restraint Act and is opposed to the exemption of any section or community from its provisions.

It urges upon the Government not only to enforce the Act more stringently but also to amend it so as to make child marriage impossible.

4. This Conference views with dismay the frequent violation of the Sarda Act. It calls upon the Constituencies to educate public opinion against the custom of child-marriage.

- (i) by holding public meetings denouncing the evil results of child-marriage;
- (ii) by distributing leaflets containing information about the existing legislation and the necessity of drastic measures and effective amendments to the Act.
- (iii) by supporting Bills in the Legislatures amending the Child Marriage Restraint Act, *e.g.*, Mr. B. Das's Bill before the Legislative Assembly and the Bill before the Travancore Legislative Assembly;
- (iv) by appealing to the Indian States to introduce similar measures for the restraint of child marriages as soon as possible.

5. This Conference supports Sir Hari Singh Gour's Age of Consent Bill and demands that the age be raised to 16 and 18 for married and unmarried girls, respectively.

6. This Conference gives its support to the "Bill to further amend the Special Marriage Act of 1872."

7. This Conference is of opinion that marriage should not be made compulsory for every girl and urges upon parents the necessity of recognising the rights of sons and daughters to decide their own career in life.

8. This Conference recommends that unequal marriages of old men to minor girls should be forbidden by law.

9. **Polygamy:** This Conference strongly disapproves of Polygamy

and appeals to women not to marry, and to parents not to give their daughters in marriage to any man who has a wife living.

10. (a) This Conference is grateful to Sir Hari Singh Gour for having taken up the question of Hindu marriage and recommends that his Marriage Dissolution Bill may be amended on the lines of the Baroda Hindu Divorce Act.

(b) This Conference is of opinion that the prevalent practice of divorce among Mahommedans, in so far as it allows an arbitrary power to the husband to divorce his wife at his mere caprice, is not in accord with the true interpretation of Islamic teaching and places on record its considered opinion that the right to divorce as conceded by the Islamic Law to Muslim women be recognised by the British Courts.

11. In view of the fact that the **Child Marriage Restraint Act** has proved ineffectual so far, this Conference re-iterates its opinion that Mr. B. Das's Bill amending this Act should be passed into Law without further delay.

It strongly advocates that anti-child marriage propaganda work be redoubled throughout the country with particular emphasis in the villages. (Ahmedabad 1936.)

B. Inheritance

1. (a) This Conference places on record its opinion that there should be complete equality between the sexes in the matter of inheritance and control of property.

(b) As a step towards this goal the Conference supports the following measures which are pending in the Legislative Assembly.

(i) "A Bill to declare gains of learning by a Hindu to be his separate property." (Mr. Jayakar.)

(ii) "A Bill to make better provision for certain heirs under Hindu Law especially with regard to women regarding their rights of inheritance." (Mr. Jogiah.)

(iii) "A Bill to secure share for Hindu Widows in their husbands' family property." (Rai Saheb Harbilas Sardar.)

(iv) "A Bill to remove certain existing disabilities in respect of powers of adoption among Hindus." (Mr. Jayakar.)

- (c) In order to ensure the rights of inheritance to Muslim women in accordance with the laws laid down in the Koran, the current customary law as practised in some parts of India be not recognised by the Courts.
- (d) The Conference further extends its cordial support to the committees, appointed in Mysore and Baroda, for investigating the Hindu Laws of Inheritance with a view to making them more equitable to women.

2. **Legal disabilities of women**

- (i) This Conference strongly protests against the existing discriminations in Hindu Law against the rights of women; it demands that existing laws should be so amended as to make them just and equitable and that an All-India Non-official Commission be appointed to consider the removal of the legal disabilities of women as regards inheritance and marriage.
- (ii) **Legal disabilities**
 - (a) We give our whole-hearted support to all the bills introduced into the Provincial and Central Legislatures, such as the Bill on the Hindu Women's Inheritance Rights (by Hon. Mr. P. C. D. Charry, before the Council of State) and welcomes the bills passed by Sangli and Mysore Darbars on Hindu Widows' Property Rights, which seek to remove the legal disabilities of women in so far as they are in accord with our principles. We further support Rao Bahadur Kale's Bill in the Bombay Council, on the Hindu Widows' Property Rights.
 - (b) We record our strong protest against Mr. Desai's Bill to amend the laws of Adoption before the Bombay Council, as it is a decidedly retrograde measure.
 - (c) We urge once more on Government the necessity of appointing a Commission with an adequate number of women on its personnel to enquire into the whole question of the legal disabilities of women. We regret that Government has so far not acceded to a demand in which we have been united from the very beginning.

The recent public meetings all over India are conclusive proof that we have a large backing amongst our men and we confidently hope, therefore, that the Government will accede to our request.

3. (a) This Conference resolves that a Special Committee with power to co-opt lawyers and experts should be appointed to enquire into and suggest adequate remedies for the legal disabilities of women; the Sub-Committee to appoint Branch Sub-Committees in the different provinces and Indian States to consider questions of local interest.
- (b) This Conference records its sense of gratitude to the movers of the Bills in the Central and Provincial Legislatures which aim at improving the legal and economic status of women. Further it congratulates the Bombay Legislative Council for having rejected Mr. Desai's Adoption Bill.
- (c) This Conference urges the early enactment of legislation penalising the practice of polygamy. It recommends to our Special Committee to draw up a rational system of marriage laws which will include divorce.

4. This Conference strongly urges that the mother should have equal right of guardianship with the father over her children and that a widow should have preferential right of guardianship over them.

5. **Statement on Legal Disabilities of Women.** This Conference empowers the Special Committee on Legal Disabilities of Women to draw up a comprehensive statement of the lines on the Baroda and Mysore enactments which can later be introduced in the form of a Bill in the new Legislatures. (Ahmedabad 1936.)

6. **Removal of Legal Disabilities of Women.** This Conference urges upon the various Governments to introduce a bill making the following additions and alterations in the existing Hindu Law as it affects marriage and divorce :

- (a) That monogamy should be made compulsory.
- (b) That the custody of the child should be given to the mother unless there is just cause for withholding the same.
- (c) That the age of marriage should be raised to 16 for girls and 20 for boys.

(d) That there should be suitable provision in the Hindu Law for divorce on the following grounds:—

- (i) Desertion, (ii) Lunacy, (iii) Cruelty, (iv) Adultery,
(v) Drunkenness, (vi) Leprosy. (Nagpur 1937.)

7. Support of Bills Pending Legislation

(a) While this Conference lends its support to the following Bills pending in the Legislative Assembly,

- (1) The Hindu Inter-caste Marriage Bill.
- (2) The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Bill,
- (3) The Arya Marriage Validation Bill,
- (4) The Bill for the removal of social disabilities amongst certain classes of Hindus,

in so far as they help to improve status of women, the Conference feels that the time has come for such piecemeal legislation to be replaced by comprehensive legislation on equitable lines affecting the rights of the people of the country as a whole.

(b) This Conference regrets that Dr. Deshmukh's Bill on the Hindu women's right to property which has been referred to a Select Committee, has been whittled down in favour of widows only, ignoring the rights of daughters and other female heirs.

(c) This Conference regrets that none of the Social Reform Bills which were before the Legislatures for consideration last September has made any headway. It appeals to the Government as well as to all the members of the Assembly to try their utmost not to delay the passing into law of such measures as will constitute a real step forward in the life of the nation.

(Ahmedabad 1936.)

8. **Bills Pending Legislation.** This Conference supports Mr. Rajah's Bill for removing the disabilities of depressed classes.

(Nagpur 1937.)

9. This Conference supports the amendments proposed by Mr. B. Das and Mr. Lalchand Navalrai in the Central Legislative Assembly to the Sarda Act and expresses its opinion that an additional clause should be added to the Act, so that people who celebrate child marriages outside British territory in order to evade the consequences of the Act, though

residents of British India, may be punished and that this Act should be so amended as to declare all marriages performed in contravention of the Sarda Act null and void. (Nagpur 1937.)

10. This Conference congratulates His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad and Berar for having so graciously accorded his consent to the "Hindu Widow Remarriage Bill."

11. This Conference congratulates H. H. the Maharajah of Travancore for so graciously giving his assent to the Hindu Widow Remarriage Bill recently passed by both Houses of Legislature in the State.

12. This Conference congratulates the Government of H. H. the Maharajah of Travancore for appointing, for the first time in India, a woman to the Judiciary of the State.

13. This Conference congratulates the Government of H. H. the Maharajah of Gwalior for passing into law the Widow Remarriage Act.

C. PURDAH

1. This Conference condemns the custom of enforced seclusion of women and entreats all Hindus, Muslims and other communities which observe this custom, to take practical steps to educate public opinion towards abolishing it as soon as possible.

D. HEALTH

1. This Conference realises with great concern that drugs and medicines sold in India are generally impure and of inferior quality as disclosed by the evidence of eminent doctors and chemists before the Drugs Inquiry Committee.

(a) It therefore supports the proposition that an All-India Drug Act be enacted for the proper control and check over the import, sale and manufacture of all drugs and chemicals.

(b) It urges all Constituencies to use every means in their power to discourage and prevent the indiscriminate use of opium and other detrimental drugs.

2. This Conference strongly recommends to Municipalities the need for the strict enforcement of the Food Adulteration Act.

3. **Compulsory Registration of Dais and Midwives.** With a view to check the inordinately high rate of Infant and Maternal Mortality in India, this Conference urges the need of Legislative measures

for compulsory registration of *dais* and midwives and periodic supervision by qualified supervisors.

4. **Birth Control.** This Conference reiterates its former resolutions supporting the necessity for instruction in methods of Birth-Control through recognised clinics and calls upon all the Constituencies to make a special effort to induce Municipalities and other organisations for maternity and child welfare to open centres to impart such knowledge to those who stand in need of it.

5. **Birth control clinics.** This Conference believes that it is the duty of medical departments and local authorities to take immediate steps to put an end to the advertisement and sale of birth control remedies by quacks which ruin the health of women in many cases. It appeals to medical departments and municipalities to educate men and women in birth control methods from the point of view of their ill health, mental weakness and economic considerations. Such clinics should be specially opened in labour areas. (Nagpur 1937.)

E. STATUS OF WOMEN

1. This Conference reiterates its firm conviction that women should be adequately represented :

- (a) On the Central and Provincial Legislatures.
- (b) On District, Municipal and other local Bodies.
- (c) On Commissions and Committees affecting women and children.
- (d) In the interest of women and children this Conference recommends to the Government of India to include women in their delegations to the League of Nations and to other International Assemblies.

2. **Women in Departmental Services.** This Conference urges that no sex disqualifications should be shown for debarring women from services in any department of Government. (Nagpur 1937.)

3. This Conference fully adheres to the stand it has taken in regard to the question of Franchise in all its bearings as pertaining to the status of women in the future Constitution of India. It expresses its firm belief in perfect sex equality and demands that women shall possess equal citizen rights with men. No disability either legal or social shall be attached to women on account of sex, or in regard to public employment, office, power or honour and in the exercise of any trade or calling.

4. This Conference congratulates Mrs. Anna Chandy on her appointment as the first woman Munsiff in India, in Travancore State.

(Nagpur 1937.)

5. This Conference stands united :

- (i) in its protest against the Communal Award as touching the womanhood of India, and
- (ii) in its demand for a system of Joint-Electorates, and further resolves
 - (a) that a representative Committee of ten persons including the Chairman and the Organising Secretary of 1932 be appointed and authorised to formulate detailed proposals in regard to the enfranchisement of women and their representation in the future Constitution of the country;
 - (b) that the above-mentioned Committee of ten or a lesser number chosen from amongst themselves shall be its representatives at the joint meetings of the three Women's Organisations (A.-I.W.C., N.C.W.I. and W.I.A.);
 - (c) that the National Council of Women in India and the Women's Indian Association be requested to appoint their similar Committees and that the Joint Franchise Meeting be postponed until after the return of the members of the Round Table Conference and publication of the decisions of His Majesty's Government on the subject.

6. Franchise

- (a) This Conference reiterates its demands regarding franchise and the status of women in the future Constitution of India as placed before the Joint Parliamentary Committee in London by our elected representatives, and fully endorses the statements made by them before the same Committee.
- (b) A cable to the above effect be sent to the Secretary, Joint Select Committee, and the Secretary of State for India.
- (c) A special Session of the Conference to which representatives of the National Council of Women in India and the Women's Indian Association be invited, shall be called after the publication of the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, to determine what the attitude of the representative woman-

hood of India should be in case their repeated demands are ignored.

7. This Conference expresses its profound indignation and disappointment at the omission of the right of Franchise or of candidature for election to the Legislatures of the following Provinces :—

Bengal, Assam, North-West Frontier Province, Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara, and strongly recommends that these omissions be removed forthwith.

8. **J. P. C. Report:** Whereas the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report on the White Paper, as a whole, and in particular where its recommendations concern the status of women in the new Constitution fall far short of our demands, we do hereby state in unequivocal language our strong disapproval of and inability to accept the same. We give reason for our dissatisfaction in the appended statement.

Statement

We feel that the Joint Parliamentary Committee was animated by a genuine desire to bring women in greater numbers on the electoral roll and give them a definite place in the legislatures of the new Constitution. For this spirit of sympathy with us, as also for their unqualified recognition of the part the women must play in the public life of the Country, we place on record our sincere appreciation. At the same time, however, we feel constrained to express in no uncertain terms our inability to accept the recommendations, as they stand, for the following reasons :

- (a) We claim that there should be a declaration of rights in which the removal of sex disabilities should be clearly stated. We draw attention to the fact that the word "Sex" has been omitted from "Eligibility for holding Public Office, etc." *vide* para 367, Vol. I (Part I). While feeling keenly this omission as a grave injustice to us in spite of our repeated demands in this connection, we hope that the same may even now be rectified.
- (b) The greater number of women enfranchised under the recommendations are going to be the wives and widows of property holders and to this number have also been added the wives of men with the military service qualification of the vote and the pensioned widows and mothers of military officials and sol-

- diers. Our reasons for our strong objection to this method of enfranchisement have been stated in clear language on more than one occasion. They still hold good and we regret that in spite of our protests the qualification wholly unacceptable to us is being sought to be imposed on us. We reiterate our belief in equitable methods of election and attach equal importance to the quality as well as the quantity of the women's vote. We object strongly to the doubling of the vote for any vested interests as being against all canons of justice for the poor who constitute India's main population and against all democratic principles. We again urge the acceptance of our proposals for the introduction of adult suffrage in urban areas for purpose of increasing our electoral members.
- (c) In our opinion far too much weight has, from the outset, been laid on administrative difficulties where women are concerned. This opinion is practically strengthened by the numbers of "Pardah" women who went to the polls in the recent Legislative Assembly Elections. We protest strongly against the invidious differentiations that have been made between the provinces in regard to literacy and property qualifications. "Application" conditions and other details including the omission of the wives and widows of those holding the educational qualification if the "Wifehood qualification" is unreasonably persisted in.
- (d) We have not swerved from our conviction that we do not, on principle, approve of reservation of seats in Legislatures for ourselves or for any particular interest. Nevertheless, seeing that this expedient may unfortunately be imposed on us during the transition period, we deplore the entire omission of women from the Assemblies of several Provinces and the total exclusion for whatever reason of women of the North-West Frontier Province, from all citizenship rights including Franchise. We feel very strongly that in the case of these provinces where women may be said to be less vocal, the exclusion of their representatives from the Legislatures constitutes a grave omission and neglect of the very causes for

which we stand. We also claim that no disabilities shall be attached to women in any province that may be newly created.

- (e) If certain selected Provinces are definitely to be burdened with Second Chambers we see no reason whatsoever why women should not be accorded a *definite* place in all these as well as in the Council of State. We regard such as our inherent right and must, therefore, protest against this omission.
- (f) With Lord Lothian we are "Unrepentant believers in a system of direct election" and we, therefore, object with all possible emphasis to indirect election at any time and for any one. We refuse, likewise to accept nomination for the Legislature for ourselves, knowing by bitter experience that the "safeguards of nomination" have been ineffective and useless in the Legislative Assembly.

Conclusion

"While mentioning the above details we wish to make it quite clear that if we had secured or secure for ourselves all that we had wished or wish to secure, and if, at the same time, we felt that the recommendations, as a whole, were not in the true interests of India, we would, as women, the natural guardians of future generations, feel it our bounden duty to deny all special privileges for ourselves for the sake of the common good. In the light of general criticism of the Report we know that the recommendations are not acceptable to all shades of representative opinion in the country. We therefore join in this widespread protest and still hope against hope that a new Constitution may eventually be created such as will meet with general approbation.

9. This Conference reiterates its disapproval of the following franchise qualifications for women provided under the Government of India Act and urges their modification in accordance with its previous memorandum at an early date (a) Wifehood qualification; (b) Application condition.

10. In recording once again its sense of disappointment at the electoral proposals, this Conference continues to stand by its former demands for:—

- (a) Direct Election;

- (b) No separate electorates for women;
- (c) Non-reservation of seats on a communal basis. It further notes with regret the discrimination made between the different provinces as regards the literacy qualification, *e.g.*, Bengal, N.-W.F.P., and Orissa.

11. While we are convinced that the new powers given to women by the India Act are not adequate, this Conference exhorts all women to use to the fullest advantage such powers as they have obtained at present.

12. (a) This Conference is emphatically of opinion that the time has come when woman should take her legitimate share in the Government of her country, Central, Provincial and Local.

(b) While we are opposed on principle to the reservation of seats for women in the Legislatures, we emphatically protest against the differentiation made in this matter in the Frontier Province and Assam and suggest that this error be rectified forthwith. (Ahmedabad 1936.)

13. **Women in legislatures:**—This Conference congratulates all women M.L.A.'s and members of the Upper Houses, and hopes that they will work for women's cause and sponsor bills on urgent social reform in the legislatures. It feels particularly gratified that the U.P. Assembly have taken the lead in appointing Mrs. Pandit as the first woman Minister and also congratulates other Provincial Legislatures who have appointed women as Deputy Presidents and Parliamentary Secretaries.

(Nagpur 1937.)

14. **Representation of Women:**—This Conference requests the British Parliament to safeguard the interest of women by making provision in the Instruments of Instructions that are to be framed for the Governor-General and the Governors, that women should be given chances of association in the administration of every province as well as in the Central Government especially in the departments of Health, Education and Labour. Provisions should also be made for at least one woman to be appointed to each Provincial Public Service Commission. It calls upon the Government to establish Women and Children's Bureaus in every province.

15. This Conference reiterates its demand for an Indian woman elected by the principal Indian Women's Organisations to be included in the Government of India Delegation to Geneva,

16. In view of the fact that the Council of the League of Nations has decided to invite the Government of India to be represented on the Advisory Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People for a period of five years and as this is pre-eminently a sphere where women can make a valuable contribution, the Government of India should be approached by the A.-I.W.C., the N.C.W.I., and the W.I.A., jointly with a view to the appointment of an Indian woman of our choice on this Commission.

17. **Status of women in India:**—This Conference is of opinion that the status of women in India should be included in the inquiry on the status of women by the League of Nations.

18. This Conference places on record its high appreciation of the truly enlightened action taken by H. H. the Gaekwad of Baroda in passing Hindu Women's Divorce Act and also for legislating for the removal of the Legal Disabilities of Hindu Women.

19. (a) This Conference is of opinion that for any enactment concerning the welfare of women and children, the Government should consult representative women's organisations in India with a view to ascertain the true merits of such enactments.

(b) It is also of opinion that women's organisations should be similarly consulted by Government in the matter of Memoranda, etc., bearing on matters affecting women and children, sent abroad or published by them.

(Ahmedabad 1936.)

F. PREVENTION OF TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

1. In view of the legislation pending and affecting the education of girls—such as Child-marriage and Devadasi—this Conference urges Government to nominate without delay at least two women to the Central Legislature.

2. This Conference supports all efforts that are being made in the country to suppress immoral traffic in women and children, and in particular it supports the Madras Brothels Bill and Prevention of Devadasi Dedication Bill and all other Bills on similar lines. It is also of opinion that women should be equally penalised with men for keeping brothels.

3. This Conference congratulates the States of Travancore and Cochin on the abolition of Devadasi service in temples and gives its whole-hearted support to Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty's Bill for the

prevention of dedication of women and girls to service in Hindu temples. It calls upon all Constituencies where this practice exists to educate public opinion against it.

(a) This Conference congratulates the Portuguese Government on passing a law forbidding *Shesh Vidhi* (i.e., a mock marriage which initiates girls into an immoral life) and urges the Government of India and all Provincial Governments to take similar steps immediately.

(b) This Conference appeals to its own members and to the public to aid in every way in establishing:

- (i) Rescue Homes for each Province;
- (ii) In educating public opinion against traffic in women and children;
- (iii) In taking steps to bring in legislation where necessary for the closing of brothels and in asking Government to appoint women officers for the proper enforcements of the Acts already in existence.

4. (a) This Conference requests the authorities to take more rigid steps towards the prevention of traffic in women and children and urges the necessity of a much larger number of rescue homes.

(b) This Conference views with grave concern the increased number of cases of abduction of women and as a practical measure to check this evil urges, the Railway authorities to appoint women officers at Railway Stations who may render assistance to women travellers.

5. **Immoral Traffic:**—This Conference whilst appreciating the efforts already made to suppress the traffic in women and children in India, calls upon its Constituencies—

- (i) To study the legal, moral, educational and rescue questions concerned, in their local areas,
- (ii) to promote, where necessary, adequate and effective and legal penalties against brothel-keeping and procuration and legal protection for women and children; where the local bills are not satisfactory, to introduce and secure wide support for the needed amendments.
- (iii) to urge upon parents the duty of giving graded instruction as to the moral and social uses of the creative instinct so that

boys as well as girls may be adequately taught and thus helped to make right choices in life.

- (iv) that where rescue work has not yet been started, a real attempt should be made to secure and train workers and start homes, using the help of experienced women already serving in the moral and social hygiene field for such training.
- (v) The urgent need of women to offer for service as probation officers, moral welfare workers and magistrates is also emphasised by the Conference.

6. **Abduction of women:** In view of the appalling number of cases of abduction of women and children, this Conference strongly urges the Government and the general public to take vigorous steps to eradicate this evil.

- (a) **Legislation.** This Conference supports all bills and amendments which, in every Province of India, aim at the prevention of immoral traffic in women and children.
- (b) It strongly urges upon its Constituencies the study of local conditions in connection with cases of trafficking and segregated brothel areas.
- (c) When facts have been obtained, a vigorous protest against such crimes, by approach with the facts to the Governments, Municipal or Local Government Authorities or persons concerned in responsible positions. Where legislation does not exist, the same to be promoted, with adequate punishments effectively enforced.
- (d) **Moral Education:** Realising that the survey above suggested and adequate legislation against trafficking in women and children will not, of themselves, effectively remove the danger to health and morals arising from commercialised vice, this Conference stresses that the education of individuals in their moral and social responsibility is essential.
- (e) This Conference urges that in each Constituency a co-operative attempt shall be made during the coming year, to secure such progressive health and moral welfare education as shall tend to a higher standard of personal conduct as well as a high standard of public opinion in these matters.

7. (a) This Conference requests the authorities concerned to take more rigid steps towards the prevention of traffic in women and children and urges all Provincial and Local Governments and the public to make immediate provision for Rescue Homes where such do not exist.

(b) **Brothels at Fairs:** This Conference expresses its emphatic protest against the practice of opening brothels in Sind and elsewhere during Melas (fairs) as these have a degrading effect on the morals of the people, and urges the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to suppress them. (Ahmedabad 1936.)

8. **Traffic in women and children.**—This Conference is of opinion that Acts for the suppression of traffic in women and children be introduced in all Provinces and Indian States, where they do not exist, and to provide for suitable amendments to such Acts in the provinces, where they are in force, to make them stricter and more effective, and urges the Legislature to introduce such Acts and amendments at an early date, for establishment of Remand and Rescue Homes for Women and Children, so that the Acts can be effectively enforced. (Nagpur 1937.)

9. This Conference congratulates the Government of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore for having placed on its Legislature the "Act" for the suppression of immoral traffic in women and children.

(Nagpur 1937.)

10. **Crime against children.**—This Conference urges that separate Children's Courts should be established for trying juvenile offenders and in these courts at least one Magistrate should be a woman.

- (a) This Conference urges women to come forward to undertake this work.
- (b) It recommends that special provision be made for children sentenced for short periods.
- (c) This Conference is of opinion that an All-India Children's Act on the lines of the Bombay and Calcutta Acts is necessary to give protection to all children under the age of 18 and it further urges upon all women to study the question of Juvenile Delinquency in all its aspects and co-operate in establishing clubs, shelters and Homes for the reformation of these delinquent and destitute children.

- (d) This Conference expresses its keen regret at the attitude of the U.P., the Mysore, and the Frontier Councils towards the Bills for the care of neglected, destitute and feeble-minded children, and urges upon the members of those Councils to promulgate such legislation as will punish traffickers in vice and rescue minor girls from houses of ill-fame.
- (e) It congratulates the Madras and Bombay Councils for having passed and enforced the Act for the closure of houses of ill-fame and the Calcutta Council for having appointed a Select Committee to consider further amendments to the Bill in order to make it more effective

11. Protection of Children.

- (a) This Conference impresses upon the authorities the necessity for the introduction of Children's Acts in all Province of India where such Acts are not in existence.
- (b) This Conference urges upon all individuals and organisations engaged in Social welfare work to take all possible measures for the care of neglected, destitute and feeble minded children.

(Ahmedabad 1936)

12. **Child protection.** This Conference is emphatically of opinion that Children Acts should be introduced at an early date in places wherever they do not exist, both in the Province and the States. (Nagpur 1937).

G. Harijan Work:

1. This Conference supports all efforts that are being made in the country to remove untouchability and supports Mr. Jayakar's Bill to remove disabilities affecting the untouchable classes of Hindus, pending in the Assembly.

2. This Conference notes with profound sorrow that in spite of active propaganda, the treatment meted out to Harijans continues to be so inhuman, and calls upon its constituencies to co-operate with all agencies striving for the abolition of untouchability within the country.

3. This Conference gives its whole-hearted support to Mr. R. K. Shunmukham Chetty's Bill to remove disabilities affecting the untouchable caste of the Hindu community, and calls upon—

- (a) The members of each Constituency to educate public opinion in favour of the removal of Untouchability.

- (b) This Conference congratulates all the States that have opened their temples to the so-called untouchables and makes a special appeal to Travancore to follow their good example and thus give the lead to South India.
- (c) This Conference requests the Zamorin to open the temple of Guruvayur to the so-called untouchables.
- (d) This Conference whole-heartedly supports the Anti-Untouchability Bill to be introduced in the Assembly and the Madras Council by Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer and Dr. Subbarayan respectively, and appeals to His Excellency the Viceroy and the Government of India to give their immediate assent to the same.

4. This Conference congratulates H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore on the noble step taken by him in the cause of the freedom of the Harijans. It also conveys a special message of joy and gratitude to H. H. the Maharani Setu Parvati Bai that this step should have been taken during her tenure of office as our President. It earnestly appeals to all other Indian States and those in authority over temples in British India to follow the courageous lead of Travancore. (Ahmedabad 1936).

H. Indigenous Industries and Rural Reconstruction.

1. This Conference urges that in view of the poverty of the country the public be requested to encourage and support indigenous industries and calls upon the Government to open industrial centres and to give special grants to such institutions as provide industrial training for girls and women.

2. This Conference while reiterating all its former Resolutions on Indigenous Industries, is firmly of opinion that the encouragement of such is essential for the industrial and economic development of the country and appeals to the public to use Swadeshi.

3. Swadeshi.

This Conference is strongly of opinion that it is essential for the industrial and economic development of the country to encourage indigenous industries and appeals to the public to use Swadeshi articles in particular Khaddar (hand spun and hand woven fabrics).

4. **Village work and Swadeshi.** This Conference strongly appeals to every one of its members to take an increasingly active part

in rural work and to restrict all their purchases to Swadeshi and products of cottage industries. (Ahmedabad 1936).

5. **Encouragement of Swadeshi.** It is the firm belief of this Conference that women can help tremendously the economic progress of the country by using and advocating the use of Swadeshi articles.

(Nagpur 1937).

6. This Conference views with grave concern the conditions of life in general in Indian villages particularly in regard to education and sanitation and exhorts its Constituencies and other Women's Organisations throughout India to form Local Committees to consider practical projects for rural reconstruction.

7. (a) Inasmuch as on the economic, hygienic and moral uplift of the villagers of India depends the real progress and prosperity of our Country, this Conference welcomes the formation of the All-India Village Industries Association and resolves to co-operate whole-heartedly in this work. We call upon all, and in particular women, to devote as much time and energy as lie in their power to the work of this Association and we confidently hope that the Government will also do everything possible to further a cause which all well-wishers of India have at heart.

(b) Realising that our work in general suffers greatly owing to a lack of wholtime workers, we appeal to local self-governing bodies as also public spirited persons to form and maintain Training Centres in every Province for social workers and thereby recognise social service as a definite branch of work for the uplift of the masses.

8. (a) While we are glad that some of our Constituencies have taken practical steps for the amelioration of the condition of the rural population we feel strongly that our efforts should be redoubled in this direction. We exhort every Constituency to carry out a constructive programme of village reconstruction in one of its village at least during the year.

(b) Industrial development of the country is an essential factor in relieving the great problem of unemployment. It is necessary, therefore, for the Government as well as the people to help in every way to develop indigenous industries in the country. With this end in view, the Conference urges the women in India to encourage Swadeshi by using articles made in the country as far as they are available.

(c) As a means of implementing the popularisation of Swadeshi articles each Constituency shall appoint one member on its permanent Sub-Committee who shall in communication with the Secretary of the indigenous Industries Sub-Committee and with the similar member of the Committee in each Constituency to make a report every three months as to the Swadeshi articles available in each Constituency.

9. **Rural Uplift.** This Conference views with grave concern the conditions of life in general in Indian villages particularly in regard to education and sanitation. We confidently hope that the Government will do everything possible to further the cause which all well-wishers of India have at heart, and support the request of the Karachi Constituency to enable it to carry out the Constructive programme which it has in view about the Chanesar village by extending the help sought for by the local workers of the A.-I.W.C. (Nagpur 1937).

I. Miscellaneous.

1. **Beggar Problem.** This Conference, while strongly disapproving of the prevalence of professional begging, urges legislation for its prevention, and calls upon :

(a) the public to co-operate by diverting their charities in this sphere towards the creation and support of institutions and for the provision of Beggar Homes, Work Houses, Infirmaries and Leper Asylums;

(b) the local bodies to provide such Homes where they do not exist and to enforce any legislation for the eradication of this evil.

2. This Conference wishes to record its great appreciation of the munificent donation made by H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore, from his privy purse, towards the foundation of a home for the destitutes in Travancore.

3. **Legislation for Beggars.** This Conference strongly disapproves the prevalence of professional begging and urges legislation for its prevention, and calls upon the public to co-operate by diverting their charities in this sphere towards the creation and support of institutions, and for the provision of Beggar Homes, Work Houses and Infirmaries and enforce legislation for the eradication of this evil. (Nagpur 1937).

4. **Women in Jails.** This Conference draws particular attention of the various provincial Governments to the extremely unsatisfactory

condition of women in jails and calls upon them to take effective measures for their mental and moral uplift. (Nagpur 1937).

5. Abolition of Capital Punishment. This Conference wholeheartedly supports Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh's Bill now before the Assembly for the abolition of Capital Punishment.

6. **Cinema Films.**

- (a) This Conference reiterates the urgent necessity of a far more rigorous censorship of films and posters.
- (b) It resolves that it is essential to have rigid censorship of films relating to India manufactured in India or outside India and shown abroad inasmuch as some of these create a wholly wrong impression on foreigners of our civilisation and are detrimental to the interests of our Country.
- (c) It calls upon Local Governments to appoint at least one woman as member of every Board of Censors.

7. **Restriction of Sale of Opium.** This Conference strongly protests against indiscriminate sale of opium and suggests a register should be kept of addicts to opium, and opium supplied only on medical certificate—as it is done in other countries.

8. **Legislation Enforcing Prohibition.** This Conference wholeheartedly supports the policy of prohibition initiated by seven provinces.

- (a) It calls upon its branches and members to render all help they can towards the attainment of this desirable goal.
- (b) It appeals to the remaining provinces and all Indian States to follow this lead and bring in the necessary legislation in their areas also.
- (c) It is of opinion that the policy of prohibition should be enforced also in the case of *ganja*, opium, cocaine, and all other drugs of recognised harmfulness. (Nagpur 1937).

9. **Opium and other Harmful Drugs.**

- (a) This Conference resolves that the Government of India be asked to undertake an inquiry and find out the exact amount of opium needed for medical purposes in India with a view to the curtailment and gradual reduction in poppy cultivation, and also for reporting to the League of Nations which is preparing for an Opium Conference in 1939-1940,

- (b) Registration of opium addicts and smokers must be undertaken in each Province by a Provincial Government Department created specially for registration of opium addicts and opium smokers.
- (c) Each person desiring to be registered should be certified by a doctor appointed by Government.
- (d) A minimum dose to be fixed, and sealed packets of different weights to be made up by a Central Government Department administered in the same manner as the postal and revenue stamps department. No dose to be given to an uncertified person; any person wanting to have more than the standard dose—to be certified by a Board of Directors appointed by Government.
- (e) Licensed opium shops to be abolished and Government opium depots to be opened.
- (f) In case of smokers no prescribed dose of opium be given unless and until the dross from the previous dose is returned. Medicated Opium according to the League of Nations prescription should replace opium sold in its present form.
- (g) The allotment of the doses of opium to addicts should be under the direct supervision of a Medical or Health Department created specially for this purpose, with instructions to reduce the dose gradually and to refuse to give any more to those who have reached the minimum. Such persons may be kept under observation in a special central sanatorium for a prescribed time and prophylactic treatment may be given to them.
- (h) That each unit of the A.-I.W.C. should consult a panel of medical practitioners to find out the exact amount of opium necessary for medical needs for that particular area. That such information should be sent to the Convener of the Opium Sub-Committee of the A.-I.W.C. That Government should also undertake to register *charas*, *bhang* and other dangerous drug addicts and take the same measures for restriction of sale and gradual elimination of production of these drugs.

(Nagpur 1937).

10. This Conference demands that in future all Conferences and Commissions appointed to deal with questions of the national welfare of India should include women representatives well acquainted with Indian conditions.

11. This Conference call on the organised political parties to put up women candidates at each election.

12. In view of the widespread awakening in the outlook of women this Conference considers it imperative to form :

(a) Centres for the practical training of Social workers in both rural and urban areas.

(b) Centres for Social work.

13. **Hardships of Third-Class Railway Passengers.** This Conference notes with concern and extreme regret that in spite of repeated requests from the general public the condition of Third-Class Railway passengers, particularly women, remains, a matter of little concern to the Railway authorities.

It is high time that steps were taken to provide even an elementary standard of comfort for those passengers who constitute the large majority of the travelling public. (Ahmedabad 1936).

14. **Facilities for Third-Class Railway Passengers.** This Conference requests the railway authorities to add more third-class carriages to avoid unhealthy over-crowding of passengers in third-class compartments and appeals to the railway companies to make separate arrangements for issuing tickets for men and women 3rd class passengers on railway stations, especially on stations of pilgrimage where the necessity is very great. Besides, wherever it is possible, women ticket officers and ticket examiners should be provided for, and there should be separate entrance and exit for women on railway stations. (Nagpur 1937).

15. (a) **Protest against the drama entitled "The Rani of Jhansi."** This Conference records its emphatic protest against the attempt made by one Mr. Phillip Cox who in this drama entitled "The Rani of Jhansi" has cast serious aspersions on her moral character. This is in direct variance with all admitted historical facts. This Conference takes writings of this nature as an insult to the womanhood of India, and exhorts the Indian public to carry on country-wide propaganda against all such mean attempts so that foreign writers may not dare to distort historical facts to suit their malicious ends,

(b) This Conference emphatically protests against the statement made by Miss Sorabji in her letter to the *London Times* on the subject of child marriage. It considers it most objectionable as expressing views which are not held by Indians and regrets that Miss Sorabji continues to misrepresent her own country in a manner which is detrimental and degrading to herself and the nation.

(c) This Conference also calls upon the Government and the women of foreign countries in particular to use their authority and influence in disallowing unfair and nefarious propaganda from being used against us whether in the Press by way of news or articles in Journals or books or by the showing of films.

(Ahmedabad 1936).

16. **Obscene advertisements and publications.** This Conference emphatically protests against various newspapers and magazines publishing obscene advertisements and literature as these constitute an insult to womanhood. It appeals to the Press as a whole to see that this pernicious practice is abolished. It also urges the Government to take more drastic steps to make the provisions of the Indian Press Act sufficiently effective to put down this demoralising aspect of the Press.

(Ahmedabad 1936).

17. **Obscene literature and advertisements.**

(a) This Conference lodges its emphatic protest against the circulation, overt, as well as covert, to obscene literature throughout India.

(b) We have cause to believe that such obnoxious literature is provided by small bookstall holders for the younger generation, that is, to students of schools and colleges and of both sexes.

(c) We therefore request the authorities concerned to take drastic and immediate steps into the matter and stamp out the evil as soon as possible and give every encouragement to the publication of better literature.

(d) We further request the public and Government to censor all such journals and newspapers that continue to indulge in the pernicious practice of publishing obscene and outrageous articles and advertisements which constitute an insult to womanhood in general and violate all the laws of decency in a manner that cannot be tolerated by any civilised nation.

(Nagpur 1937).

18. **Compulsory Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths.** This Conference desires to impress on the Government of India and the States the necessity for the immediate introduction of Bills for the compulsory registration of births, marriages and deaths. (Ahmedabad 1936)

19. **Recording of Marriages, Births and Deaths.** This Conference recommends that all Municipalities and local authorities in British India and the States should pass rules and regulations for compulsory official recording of all marriages and deaths. (Nagpur 1937).

20. **Evil Social Customs.** This Conference expresses the emphatic protest against such evil social customs as undue expenses on occasions of marriage and death, sale of brides and bridegrooms, dowry, prejudice against widow remarriage, polygamy, intensive intercaste marriages, and purdah. (Nagpur 1937).

21. **Cruelty to animals.**

(a) This Conference expresses its disapproval and disgust at all forms of cruelty to domestic and other animals in India, not only on human but also on economic grounds, and because of the psychological effects such cruelty has on the minds and character of children, and recommends that some of the small books and pamphlets published by various Animals Welfare Societies in several vernaculars should be introduced as Readers in Rural Schools and distributed by Rural Reconstruction and Village Uplift Societies.

(b) This Conference urges Government to take legislative steps to protect milch kine in India, regard being had to the fact that India is mainly an agricultural country, and that sufficient supply of cow's milk is not available. (Nagpur 1937).

III. LABOUR

1. (a) This Conference recommends to its Standing Committee Members to inquire into the agricultural and indigenous industries of their areas and to get into touch with Co-operative Societies and in other ways to foster such industries and report to the Sub-Committee appointed by the Conference to deal with this question.

(b) This Conference recommends to its Standing Committee to inquire into the conditions of women and children employed in organised

labour areas and report to the Sub-Committee appointed by the Conference to deal with this question.

2. In all factories where there are a considerable number of women employed, this Conference resolves that the following are essential :

- (a) The employment of a woman doctor to ensure ante- and post-natal care and attention during child-birth for the mother and medical care of the children.
- (b) The establishment of Maternity Homes and an adequate supply of trained help.
- (c) The establishment of creches and nursery schools.

3. (a) This Conference reiterates the need for the immediate appointment of at least one Woman Factory Inspector for every large Industrial area, with full powers under the Act.

(b) This Conference considers that these Inspectors need not necessarily be doctors but should have a thorough knowledge of workers and requests agencies engaged in the training of social workers to consider the question of providing special training, at least until there is a body of experienced women Inspectors available.

4. **Housing Facility for Labourers.** This Conference is of opinion that the labouring population should have healthy dwelling-houses with plenty of air and light, facilities for water and its disposal and proper sanitary arrangements. (Nagpur 1937).

5. Since the whole standard of family life is dependent to so large an extent on housing conditions, mill-owners and local bodies in co-operation are urged to see that the workers are housed with adequate regard to health decency. This Conference considers that a separate cooking place and a verandah or courtyard besides the living room are minimum necessities and anything falling below this standard does not fulfil the above conditions.

6. In view of the urgent necessity of removing illiteracy from the industrial population in the shortest possible time this Conference urges :

- (a) That part-time education be made compulsory for all half-timers up to the age of 15 years, and where conditions make it desirable millowners should co-operate with the local authorities in the provision of such education.

- (b) Millowners are urged to give greater attention to adult education which should be specially suited to adults and need not necessarily follow the curriculum of ordinary schools.
- (c) Local authorities are urged to provide playgrounds in all industrial areas.

7. Since the States have often led the way in matters of social reform, the Princes and their Councils are urged to enforce in their territories at least as high a standard of factory conditions and legislation as that obtaining in British India.

8. This Conference desires that a thorough inquiry should be made into the condition of women mine-workers and urges the Standing Committee to take early steps in the matter.

9. This Conference calls upon the Government of India to take necessary steps immediately to implement the Report of the Whitley Commission with regard to labour conditions of women and children in India.

10. This Conference expresses its regret that the Assembly had failed to ratify the International Labour Convention to fix the minimum age of Indian children in non-industrial occupations and urges on the Government of India and the Assembly the need in India to legislate against the employment of Indian children under 12 in regulated non-industrial occupation.

11. This Conference fully supports the Bill prohibiting the pledging of child labour in regulated and unregulated industries and requests that persons besides guardians and parents who pledge child labour or act in collusion with parents and guardians be penalised.

12. The All-Indian Women's Conference approves of the provisions of the Bill introduced by the Government of India in the Legislative Assembly to regulate the payment of wages to classes of persons employed in industry.

13. This Conference approves of the provisions of the Bill to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act subject to the following modification that to the list of the dependents of a workman entitled to claim compensation be added widowed daughter-in-law and brother's widow.

14. This Conference is emphatically of opinion that a woman representative on behalf of the women workers in factories, mines, plan-

tations and other industries be deputed by the Government of India as a delegate or an adviser to the International Labour Conference to be held at Geneva.

15. This Conference draws the attention of the Government of India to the following recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour and urges for early legislative measures.

- (a) Rigorous action should be taken against those factories where conditions in regard to humidification are worst.
- (b) First aid boxes should be provided in all the factories using power and in departments of factories employing over 250 persons.
- (c) Comprehensive Public Acts should be passed in all Provinces.
 - (i) Where pipe-water supplies are not available, special precautions as to purity should be taken.
 - (ii) Where Industry begins to develop in a new area, it should be the duty of employers to provide suitable water to their workers.
- (d) Naikins (women jobbers) should be excluded from the engagement and dismissal of labour.
- (e) Every factory should be compelled to maintain separate and sufficient latrine accommodation for males and an adequate staff to keep them clean.
- (f) Creches should be provided for children up to the age of six years where considerable number of women are employed. This requirement should be statutory for places employing 250 women or more. The Factories Act should embody this with discretionary power to Local Governments in regard to factories with fewer women. The organisation of factory creches should be the duty of the women inspectors.
- (g) Women factory inspectors should be appointed in every province. They should be of Indian domicile and not less than 25 years of age and their pay should be adequate to attract the right type.
- (h) Maternity benefit legislation should be enacted throughout India on the lines of the schemes operating in Bombay and Central Provinces.

- (i) The scheme should be non-contributory.
- (ii) In the first instance, the entire cost of the benefit should be borne by the employer.
- (iii) The rate of benefit given by the Central Provinces Act is suitable for general application.
- (iv) The maximum benefit period should be 4 weeks before and 4 weeks after child-birth.
- (v) Administration of the Act should be entrusted to the factory inspection staff and wherever possible to women factory inspectors.
- (i) Maximum daily hours of work for children should be five hours.
- (j) Employers should arrange to give children at least one rest interval.
- (k) No child who has been employed full time in a factory should be allowed to work overtime or to take work at home after factory hours.
- (l) No child under the age of 14 years should be permitted to work in or about the mines.

16. This Conference strongly supports the Minority view of the Royal Commission on Labour in India as regards raising the minimum age of employment in factories from 12 to 13 years for a period of 5 years and thereafter to 14 in conformity with the standard laid down in Article II of the International Convention.

17. Owing to the increase of unemployment by the closing down of several mills and factories, the Conference feels the necessity of appointing a Committee to look into the hardships suffered by women and children in these areas and inquire and report as to what measures are advisable for relief especially in the case of children of unemployed labourers.

18. (a) We agree with the recommendations of the Investigation Committee that it would be a retrograde step to go back to employing women underground and as recommended by the Royal Commission on Labour this process of elimination be completed by 1939.

(b) We also urge that simultaneously, the women who are being deprived of work be found other employment on the surface, on the lines suggested in the report of the Committee,

19. Recommendations of the Mining Enquiry Committee :

- (a) We note with great regret that no action has been taken by the authorities in the mining area regarding recommendations made by the Investigation Commission of the All-India Women's Conference which visited the mines last year.
- (b) We regret that no action has been taken to discontinue the Outstill System in Bihar and urge that this system be abolished as soon as possible.
- (c) In continuation of the resolutions passed last year regarding the women in the mines we recommend that the Conference should support a woman organiser for one year to study the situation caused by the elimination of women from underground work, and the possibilities of alternative employment.

20. Women workers eliminated from mines. This meeting of the All-India Women's Conference strongly urges the Government and the authorities concerned to take immediate action for the provision of suitable employment for women workers eliminated from mines and the fixing of adequate minimum wage for men mine workers whose family income has been reduced by such elimination. (Nagpur 1937).

21. We regret that the recommendation of the League of Nations regarding the minimum age of child labourers has not been acted upon by the Government of India in the Factories Act, and record that in our opinion no child under 14 years should be employed as a labourer.

22. As the newly amended Factory Act does not make the provision of creches compulsory for employers of women labour and as it is now believed by authorities that much of the infant morality in India is due to the neglect of children of working mothers, we strongly urge the Government to remove this important defect so that creches are made compulsory throughout India.

23. As women are sometimes forced to carry heavy loads which is detrimental to their health, it is desirable that a maximum load should be fixed for them by the Government. We therefore recommend that investigations should be made regarding this maximum weight, and legislation enacted accordingly.

24. All-India Maternity Benefit Act. This Conference is of opinion that an All-India Maternity Benefit Bill on the lines of those passed in Bombay, C.P. and Madras be introduced in the Legislative Assembly.

It further recommends that the Constituencies in the different Provinces work for the passage of such a Bill.

25. (a) This Conference while advocating the introduction and passing of Maternity Benefits Acts throughout India regrets that, where such do exist, the application of them in practice is causing unemployment amongst women labourers. It calls upon the authorities concerned to look on this matter in a humane rather than in a mercenary spirit and upon those in charge of these measures to find ways and means of so framing the provisions that the danger of the unfortunate results now obtaining may be eliminated.

(b) The Conference further urges the immediate introduction of an All-India Maternity Benefit Act. (Ahmedabad).

26. This Conference also congratulates the Government of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore for passing the "Maternity Benefits Act" by which women working in factories are given leave on full pay for four weeks before and four weeks after confinement. (Nagpur 1937).

27. **Minimum age and hours of work.** This Conference wholeheartedly supports Mr. Bakhale's Bill introduced in the Bombay Legislative Council to prohibit the employment of children under 12 in shops and urges that All-India legislation on similar lines limiting the hours of work and fixing a minimum age of employment of children in non-industrial undertakings be introduced.

28. **Unemployment.** This Conference is of opinion that the relief of unemployment should invite the serious attention of the Government of India and that in formulating any schemes for the amelioration of this long-standing evil, an effort should be made to utilise the labour resources of India for the supply of the necessaries of life at a cheaper price to the workers themselves. (Ahmedabad).

29. **Social Insurance.** In view of the suffering, industrial workers undergo, due to loss of income on account of sickness maternity, death of wage-earners, occasional unemployment etc., this Conference recommends that schemes of Social Insurance should be introduced in British India and the States as early as possible. (Ahmedabad).

30. **Unregulated Industries.** This Conference urges upon the Government the necessity of introducing legislation to regulate the condition of hours of work in unregulated industries.

IV. GENERAL

1. Believing that the welfare of nations and classes depends on the building up of a new order :

(a) We lend full support to all efforts that are being made and will be made in the future for the surmounting of barriers of race, creed, caste, nationality and promoting the spirit of international reconciliation and good-will.

(b) We desire to express once more our condemnation of war as a crime against humanity and our whole-hearted sympathy with all those men and women who are striving honestly for world disarmament.

(c) We dedicate ourselves in our own homeland to the supreme task of creating around us a spirit of true patriotism and love of humanity so that rising above the narrow confines of communities and provinces we may see fulfilled the vision of a larger India ready to take her rightful place in the world comity of nations.

2. **International Peace.** In the name of humanity the All-India Women's Conference hopes earnestly for the establishment of a permanent World-Peace by the speedy restoration of international relations based on mutual tolerance and harmony.

3. This Conference, realising the vital importance of Disarmament for the peace and the happiness of the world, urges the women of India to give their whole-hearted support and sympathy to the World Disarmament Conference to be held in Geneva in February, 1932, and calls upon all Governments to reduce their Army and Navy.

4. **Protest against wars of aggression.** While the memory of the cruel rape of Abyssinia is still fresh in our minds, and the horrors of the fratricidal warfare in Spain continue to haunt us, Japan's ruthless aggression against China has come, as it were, as a further blow to shatter all our hopes of peace. We are bitterly disappointed at the incapacity and inability of all the so-called great powers of the world to put an end to the injustices consequent on the oppression of the weak and poor. We are convinced that increasing armaments of warfare by land, sea and air, and the harnessing of the knowledge of science for the purpose of destruction are not going to bring peace to a troubled and stricken world. We feel

that it is through the weapons of love alone that a new order can be ushered in. Standing on the threshold of another year we dedicate ourselves to non-violence in thought, word and deed, and appeal to women throughout the world to join hands with us, for we are confident that this doctrine alone can quell the desire for possession, can save the nations from racial jealousies and communal strife and protect humanity from oppression and exploitation. (Nagpur 1937).

5. This Conference calls upon all communities in India to live together in amity and work in harmony with one another for the common welfare of the country and appeals to all women to make special endeavours to achieve this object.

6. **Peace Resolution.** Conscious of the gravity of the situation to-day in the world and believing that a new order is an imperative need we wish to stress once more our abhorrence of war as a solution of any problem. We declare ourselves in utter and eternal opposition to all oppression and exploitation. We have been pained and horrified at the betrayal of Austria and Czechoslovakia, at the abetment from outside and continuance of the internal strife in Spain, at the merciless persecution of the Jews, at the deplorable interference and cruelties in Palestine and at the unjustifiable aggression in China. The inability of the so-called Great Powers of the world to put an end to all this woe and misery is proof enough of the futility of their methods of approach. We are convinced that it is only through the banishing of all greed for possession that the shadow of war and armed conflict itself can be removed. We, therefore, protest against the mad race in the building of armaments that continues unabated. We appeal to the women of the world to unite on the platform of non-violence and actively demonstrate that by this power alone can the forces of hatred and the desire for possession be brought under control and a real and lasting peace established. (Delhi 1938).

7. **Istanbul Resolution.** The Conference supports wholeheartedly the following resolutions passed at the Congress of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship at Istanbul 1935.

(a) **Legal Rights.** That a Woman unmarried or married should have full personal and civil rights, including the right to the use and disposal of her property; that she should not be under

the tutelage of her husband and should have the same rights over her children as the father; that she should have the same rights as a man to retain or to change her nationality.

- (b) **East and West Co-operation.** Where this Congress believes in the interest of true progress, the women of every country must advance on the lines of equality and justice, it pledges its hearty support to all the women of the West as well as of the East whether they struggle for the eradication of their special legal, social and economic disabilities and for the recognition of their rights to equal citizenship in their respective national units or whether they are in danger of losing these legal, political, and economic rights which they have achieved.

Welcoming the co-operation of the women of all parts of the world, the value of which has been strongly emphasised by this Congress, it expresses the wish that the women of the East and of the West be linked by ties which will grow closer and consequently serve the interests of Universal peace.

8. (a) This Conference endorses the decision of the Standing Committee for the establishment of a Permanent Central Office at Delhi at the earliest possible opportunity.

(b) It therefore makes a special appeal to the general public to contribute liberally and to the constituencies to do all in their power to raise funds for the early realisation of the project. (Ahmedabad 1936).

9. This Conference puts on record its appreciation of the recent circular issued by the President of the Indian National Congress directing the Parliamentary Committees to put up women candidates for the general seats. (Ahmedabad 1936).

STATEMENT REGARDING REGISTRATION

The All-India Women's Conference has been duly registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 on the 18th July, 1930.

Memorandum of Association of the All-India Women's Conference

1. The name of the Conference shall be "The All-India Women's Conference."
2. The Conference shall not engage in party politics but unite on such points as affect women and children.
3. The objects of the Conference shall be:
 - (a) To promote in India the education of both sexes at all stages;
 - (b) To deal with all questions affecting the welfare of women and children.

Signature of Witnesses.

(Sd.) Sarojini Naidu
„ Sushama Sen
„ Margaret Cousins
„ Rameshwari Nehru
„ A. L. Huidekoper
„ Sharifah Hamid Ali
„ Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya

4. The Standing Committee Members become the Governing Body of the Association.

THE CONSTITUTION OF A.-I.W.C.

ARTICLE I.

Name :

The name of the organisation shall be "The Association of the All-India Women's Conference," hereinafter to be called the "A.-I.W.C."

ARTICLE II.

(a) Policy :

The A.-I.W.C. shall not belong to any political organisation nor take an active part in party politics, but shall be free to discuss and contribute to all questions and matters affecting the welfare of the people of India with particular reference to women and children.

(b) Aims and Objects :

1. To work actively for the general progress and welfare of women and children.
2. To inculcate in women and children the ideals of true citizenship.
3. To promote education along right lines.
4. To work and press for social reform.
5. To strive to establish equal rights and opportunities for all.
6. To work for a united India.
7. To set and demand a high moral standard in all departments of life.
8. To stand for international goodwill and world peace.

ARTICLE III.

Composition :

(a) Patrons.

(b) Office-Bearers.

(c) Standing Committee.

(d) Branches.

(a) Patrons :

(i) Past Presidents.

(ii) By special invitation of the A.-I.W.C.

(b) Office-Bearers :

(i) President and Chairwoman.

(ii) Six Vice-Presidents.

Note: A Chairwoman of the Standing Committee shall be elected for the year from amongst the Vice-Presidents in case the President does not desire to fill the office.

- (iii) Treasurer.
- (iv) General Secretary.
- (v) Organising Secretary.
- (vi) Sectional Secretaries (if required).

Note: No paid officer of the A.-I.W.C. shall be entitled to vote.

(c) Standing Committee :

- (i) The Office-Bearers.
- (ii) Member-in-charge of Special Subjects.
- (iii) Branch Representatives.
- (iv) The Liaison Officer in India.
- (v) The Secretary of the All-India Women's Education Fund Association.
- (vi) Conveners of Sub-Committees whenever such Sub-Committees are appointed.
- (vii) Members co-opted for special purposes.

(d) Branches :

Areas in Provinces and States, as decided on by the Standing Committee from time to time.

Note: Patrons shall be entitled to attend the Conference of the A.-I.W.C. and to vote at the open sessions.

Life Associates under the old Constitution will have the right of attending the open sessions of the Conference and voting as hitherto.

ARTICLE IV.

Agencies of Work :

The work of the A.-I.W.C. shall be carried out through :

- (i) The Standing Committee and its Executive;
- (ii) The Branches, Sub-Branchees and their Committees, by means of :
 - (a) Conference.
 - (b) Meetings.
 - (c) Correspondence.
 - (d) Publications.

ARTICLE V.**Conferences :****1. The All-India Conference :**

- (a) Conferences of the A.-I.W.C. shall be held periodically, at a time and place fixed by the Standing Committee.
- (b) The following shall be entitled to attend :
 - (i) Patrons.
 - (ii) Standing Committee Members.
 - (iii) Branch Delegates.
 - (iv) Reception Committee Delegates.
 - (v) Special Delegates (by invitation by the Standing Committee).
 - (vi) Visitors (not allowed to participate in the deliberations).

Note : Life Associates under the old constitution will have the right of attending the open Sessions of the Conference and voting as hitherto.

II. Branch Conferences :

Public Conference shall be convened annually by all the Branches and Sub-branches of the A.-I.W.C.

ARTICLE VI.**Branches :**

- 1. Each Branch shall carry out the ideals of the A.-I.W.C. and work under its direction.
- 2. Each Branch shall frame its own Rules and Regulations in conformity with the Articles, Bye-Laws and Regulations of the A.-I.W.C. such Rules and Regulations and any alterations thereto being subject first to the approval of the Standing Committee.
- 3. Each Branch shall be responsible for its own finances.

ARTICLE VII.**Finance :**

- 1. All moneys received shall be held in deposit by the Treasurer. at a Scheduled Bank, in the name of the A.-I.W.C.
Cheques shall be signed by any two of the following Office-Bearers.
President, Treasurer and General Secretary.

2. Each Branch shall send annually to the Treasurer, before July the 1st, a minimum affiliation fee of Rs. 25.

ARTICLE VIII.

I. Bye-Laws :

1. The Standing Committee shall have power to make Bye-Laws and Regulations for carrying out the work of the A.-I.W.C. and to alter them and add to them from time to time as occasion may require.
2. These Bye-Laws and Regulations may not be altered or added to except by the Standing Committee, at one of its meetings, by a two-thirds majority of the members present, and provide that :
 - (a) notice of such proposed alteration or addition shall have been sent in writing, by registered post, to every member of the Standing Committee at least three months before the meeting, and
 - (b) the Bye-Law in question has been in existence for at least a year.

II. Alteration of Constitution :

The Constitution of the A.-I.W.C. may not be altered except at a Conference Session by a two-thirds majority of the members present, provided that a notice of such proposed alteration shall have been sent in writing, by registered post or under certificate of posting to every member of the Standing Committee at least three months before the conference.

THE ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S EDUCATION FUND ASSOCIATION

(As the All-India Women's Conference is strongly represented on the Governing Body of the All-India Women's Education Fund Association, which came into existence through the Conference after its first Delhi session, it recommends this Fund to all those interested in the development of girls' education along the lines of its Memorandum).

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION

1. The name of the Association is "The All-India Women's Education Fund Association."

2. The objects for which the Association is established are:—

(1) The management of the Fund known as "The All-India Women's Education Fund."

(2) The promotion of the education of women and girls of India including—

(a) The aid of any schemes for the furtherance of education in all its branches, of the women and girls of India as may from time to time be recommended by the Conference known as the All-India Women's Conference or under such other name as the Conference may hereafter be registered (hereinafter and in the Rules and Regulations of the Association referred to as the All-India Women's Conference).

(b) The institution of propaganda for the education of the women and girls of India.

(c) The increase of the supply of better trained teachers, having particular regard to the inclusion of training in domestic subjects.

(d) The encouragement of the production of better text-books and attractive and suitable literature in the vernacular.

(e) The exploration and initiation of schemes for the education of children of Kindergarten age, for the extension of suitable education amongst children in rural areas, for the support where possible of approved schemes which already exist, and for the provision of suitable housing accommodation for women teachers, especially in rural areas.

- (f) The extension of facilities in existing educational institutions for courses of training in home-craft, fine arts, domestic science, physical culture and other suitable subjects.
- (3) The purchase or acquisition on lease, or in exchange, or on hire or otherwise, of any real or personal property, and any rights of privileges necessary or convenient for the purposes of the Association.
- (4) The erection, construction, alteration and maintenance of any buildings necessary or convenient for the purpose of the Association.
- (5) The sale, improvement, management and development of all or any part of the property of the Association.
- (6) The promotion and establishment of branches and of other societies or associations with similar objects particularly in the constituent areas of the All-India Women's Conference, and the affiliation or amalgamation of such societies or associations with this Association.
- (7) The doing of all other such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

I. MEMBERSHIP

1. There shall be the following grades of members of the Association:—

- (a) President. (b) Patrons. (c) Vice-Patrons. (d) Life Fellows.
(e) Life Members. (f) Members.

2. The President shall be elected at a General Meeting for a period of three years.

3. The Patrons of the Association shall be donors of sums amounting in the aggregate to not less than Rs. 20,000, and such other distinguished persons as the Governing Body may think proper to appoint. Every patron shall be at liberty to appoint a representative to attend and vote at the General Meetings of the Association on his or her behalf.

4. Vice-Patrons shall be donors of sums amounting in the aggregate to Rs. 10,000. Life Fellows shall be donors of sums amounting in the aggregate to Rs. 500. Life members shall be donors of sums of not less than Rs. 100.

5. Members shall be persons who pay an annual subscription of not less than Rs. 5, such subscription shall be due in advance on the 1st November in every year.

6. The Governing Body may elect any person to honorary membership of any grade in recognition of services rendered to the Association.

7. The Honorary Secretary of the Association shall maintain a register of members of the Association and this register shall be open to inspection.

II. GENERAL MEETING

8. (a) The Annual General Meeting of the Association shall be held once a year at Delhi at an interval of not less than 10 and not more than 15 months. The Executive Committee, however, shall have power to alter the venue for any especial reasons. (Notice of such Annual General Meetings shall be given at least one month before the date fixed, and such notice shall specify the business to be transacted. Members of all grades shall be entitled to attend and to vote on any question that may be submitted to the meeting for determination.)

(b) At such Annual General Meeting the report and balance sheet for the past year, and the budget for the next year, shall be presented and an Auditor appointed for auditing the account of the next year. Any other business may be brought forward with the assent of the Chair.

9. (a) An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association may be convened at any time by the President for any purpose connected with the Association and shall be convened on the written requisition of at least 30 members stating the object of such meeting.

(b) At least 18 days' notice shall be given of such meeting, with the agenda to be brought before it, provided that accidental omission to give such notice to any member shall not invalidate any Resolution passed at such meeting, and no business other than that specified in such agenda shall be transacted.

10. (a) All General Meetings of the Association shall be presided over by the President or in her absence by the Chairwoman of the Governing Body, or in absence of both by some other person elected by those present.

(b) All questions shall be decided by the votes of the members present, taken by show of hands, but anyone present may demand a division which shall forthwith be taken and the result declared by the officer presiding.

(c) In case of equality of votes, the officer presiding shall have a second or casting vote.

THE GOVERNING BODY

11. (1) The Governing Body of the Association for the purpose of the Act XXI of 1860 shall consist of the President and 21 members including an Honorary Secretary and an Honorary Treasurer, all of whom with the exception of the Honorary Treasurer, shall be women.

(2) From and after the Annual General Meeting of 1938 the Governing Body shall consist of:—

(a) the President, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer.

(b) nineteen members of the Association elected triennially as follows:—7 elected by the Association and 12 elected by the Standing Committee of the All-India Women's Conference of whom 2 shall be from Indian States.

(3) The members of the Governing Body shall all be members of the Fund Association.

(4) Casual vacancies among office-holders or members of the Governing Body shall be filled by the Governing Body and any person so chosen shall retain his or her office so long as the vacating member would have retained the same if no vacancy had occurred: In the event of a vacancy or vacancies occurring among those members elected by the Standing Committee of the All-India Women's Conference, the Governing Body shall fill it or them from among names submitted to them by the said Standing Committee. No action of the Governing Body which may be otherwise valid, shall be rendered invalid by reason of any such vacancy remaining unfilled, provided, however, that the number of vacancies so remaining unfilled shall not at any time exceed 3 (three). An absence of 12 months out of India shall constitute a vacancy.

(5) The Governing Body shall have power, when necessary, to co-opt persons having expert knowledge in any Branch of the Association's work. The number of persons so co-opted shall not at any one time exceed five. Any co-option shall cease at the will of the Governing Body.

12. The Governing Body shall hold their Annual Meeting on the same day and at the same place as and immediately after the Annual General Meeting of the Association or at such other place and time as the Executive Committee may decide. The Governing Body shall, at the Annual Meeting, elect from among themselves a Chairwoman who will preside in the absence of the President and a Vice-Chairwoman who in the absence of the Chairwoman shall conduct her duties and exercise her powers. In the absence of both at any meeting, such meeting may elect its own Chairman from those present. Any vacancies in these offices shall be filled up by the Governing Body.

13. Ordinary meetings of the Governing Body shall be held at such place and time as may be fixed by the Executive Committee. The annual budget and report of the Association shall be considered at one such meeting in each year.

14. An extra ordinary meeting of the Governing Body may be called at any time by the President or Chairwoman.

15. Upon a requisition in writing made by any five members of the Governing Body stating the object the President or Charwoman shall call an extraordinary meeting.

16. Eightee days' clear notice of any meeting of the Governing Body, specifying the place, day and hour of the meeting and the general nature of the business to be transacted shall be given to every member of the Governing Body by notice sent under postal certificate, provided that the failure to give such notice to any of the members shall not invalidate any resolution at such meeting.

17. At a meeting of the Governing Body in members must be present in person to from a quorum.

18. if no quorum is present within an hour of the time fixed for a meeting of the Governing Body, the meeting shall be hcl'd after an interval of 24 hours. If there again be no quorum, only urgent business may be transacted, and at such meeting three members shall form a quorum.

19. In the event of an equality of votes at any meeting, the presiding officer shall have a second or casting vote.

20. (1) The Governing Body shall at their annual meeting elect the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer. They may also appoint an Honorary Assistant Secretary and an Honorary Assistant Treasurer.

These shall not, *ex officio*, be members of the Governing Body but in the event of the absence from any meeting of the Secretary or Treasurer they shall act in their respective office as members of the Governing Body. Persons holding these Offices shall be eligible for re-election. Any vacancies in these offices occurring during the year shall be filled up by the Governing Body.

(2) All other appointments shall be made by the Executive Committee.

21. The Governing Body, subject to these Rules, shall have general control of the affairs of the Association with authority to make standing orders regulating its own procedure, the procedure of the Executive Committee, and the powers and duties of its officers. In particular it shall provide for a proper record of all proceedings, and for an accurate account of all receipts and payments to be opened to the inspection of the auditor.

22. In addition to the powers and authorities conferred on them either by Statute or Rules of the Association, the Governing Body shall have power to do all such acts as are to be done by the Association, with the exception of those which by these Rules or by Statute are expressly directed to be done by the Association in General Meetings.

IV. COMMITTEES

23. The Governing Body shall at their annual meeting elect an Executive Committee of eight members besides the office-bearers. Any vacancies in the elected members of the Executive Committee occurring during the year shall be filled by the Executive Committee.

This Executive Committee will perform the current duties of the Association and such other duties as the Governing Body may prescribe. The transactions of the Executive Committee shall be duly recorded and laid before the Governing Body at its next meeting for information or confirmation. In case of emergency the Executive Committee may perform any duty and exercise any power of the Governing Body. The Executive Committee may appoint any sub-committee and delegate to it any powers which may be necessary, but the proceedings of such sub-committees shall in every case be reported for information or confirmation to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall meet at such time and in such places as they think proper and at all their meetings four shall form a quorum.

24. The Chairwoman, Vice-Chairwoman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer, shall be ex officio members of the Executive Committee. The Honorary Secretary shall be ex officio member of all Sub-Committees (In the absence of either Honorary Secretary or Honorary Treasurer their Assistants, if any, act as members of the Executive Committee and any of Sub-Committee).

25. (1) All matters affecting the finance of the Association shall be referred to the Executive Committee before being determined by the Governing Body.

(2) The Executive Committee shall scrutinise the accounts of the Association and shall consider the Report of the Auditor. It shall also prepare the annual budget and submit it through the Governing Body, the General Meeting of the Association.

26. When a Branch of the Association is formed, or any other body having for its objects the purposes for which the Association is established desires affiliation, the case shall be examined by the Executive Committee before being submitted to the Governing Body, and no such branch shall be recognised or body affiliated without the vote of the Governing Body. It shall be a condition of recognition or affiliation that each such branch or body shall have a regularly constituted committee, and shall pay an annual affiliation fee to be fixed by the Governing Body, and that its accounts be audited by an auditor approved by the Governing Body.

27. Unless otherwise desired by them, branches and affiliated bodies shall remain independent in the administration of their funds and in the conduct of their operations but they shall furnish to the Governing Body such reports and information as may be required by the Governing Body and shall assist by correspondence and conference in the furtherance of their common objects. The Governing Body shall have power, subject to the Rules to assist branches and affiliated bodies in such manner and to such an extent as it may consider to be conducive to the objects of the Association.

28. The Governing Body shall be at liberty to appoint sub-committees for such purposes and with such powers as they may think proper.

V. GENERAL

29. All moneys at any time standing to the credit of the general account which shall not be required for current expenses, and which the

Governing Body shall not determine to transfer to the Building or any other accounts, shall be invested by the Honorary Treasurer, with approval of the Executive Committee in securities authorised by law for the investment of trust funds.

30. The Bankers of the Association shall be the Imperial Bank of India and also if necessary the Central Bank of India Ltd.

31. The Executive Committee shall provide a seal and also provide for its safe custody, and the seal shall never be used except by the authority of the Executive Committee previously given and in the presence of two Members of the Executive Committee who shall sign every instrument to which the seal is fixed, and every such instrument shall be countersigned by the Honorary Secretary or some other person appointed by the Executive Committee.

32. If any corporation, firm, school, college or body of trustees makes any subscription or donation to the Association, the privileges which such subscription or donation carries shall be exercised by a person whom the above-mentioned may from time to time nominate for a period not exceeding ten years to be determined by the Governing Body.

33. (1) None of these Rules shall be repealed or altered and no new Rules shall be made except by Resolution passed by majority of not less than three-fifths of the members of the Governing Body present at an ordinary meeting and confirmed by Resolution passed by a subsequent General Meeting of the Association.

(2) Interpretation of these Rules shall be vested entirely in the Governing Body.

Bye-Laws for the Election of Members to the Governing Body.

1. The Executive Committee shall conduct all elections to the Governing Body.

2. Every candidate for election to the Governing Body shall be a member of the Association and shall be nominated by a member of the Association. Nomination forms for membership for the Governing Body shall be posted to each member of the Association in such form and at such time as the Executive Committee may think proper. No person can nominate herself or himself.

3. The nomination forms must be returned to the Honorary Secretary of the Association by the date fixed for that purpose.

accompanied by the consent in writing of the candidate nominated.

4. All nominations shall be scrutinised by the Executive Committee who shall have absolute discretion to reject any nominee. Notice of the names of all candidates so nominated together with voting papers in the form approved by the Executive Committee and instructions as to voting shall be posted to each member of the Association. The voting papers must be returned to the Honorary Secretary in special envelopes provided only for this purpose by the date fixed in the notice.

5. The voting papers shall be opened and scrutinised at a meeting of the Executive Committee or by the Honorary Secretary and two scrutiners appointed by the Executive Committee. The votes for candidates will be counted separately and the candidate or candidates, as the case may be, receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. In the event of two or more candidates for one vacancy heading the poll with the same number of votes, the chairwoman of the Executive Committee shall exercise a casting vote.

6. The declaration of the Chairwoman of the Executive Committee declaring the candidates elected shall be final, and shall be reported to the Association at the Annual General Meeting. Successful candidates shall be notified immediately of their election.

7. If, during the interval between the posting of the nomination papers and the counting of the votes, a candidate, nominated by a member of the Association, is elected to the Governing Body by the Standing Committee of the All-India Women's Conference her name shall be removed from the voting paper.

8. The Standing Committee of the All-India Women's Conference shall have power to nominate not more than 3 (three) names for each vacancy occurring during any year in the Governing Body among its representatives. In the event of these nominations not being sent in to the Honorary Secretary of the Association within one month of the request for such nominations, the Governing Body shall fill the vacancy or vacancies themselves.

9. In order to simplify elections for office-holders of the Executive Committee nominations for these should be sent in by the members of the Governing Body to the Honorary Secretary at least 3 (three) days before the Annual General Meeting.

HISTORY OF THE ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

1. Origin of the All-India Women's Conference.

The All-India Women's Conference owes its origin to a circular letter from Mrs. Margaret E. Cousins who, in the autumn of 1926, as Secretary of the Women's India Association, Adyar, Madras, addressed an appeal to women all over the country to form local committees and hold Constituent Conferences in each of the Provinces and in certain other clearly defined districts and Indian States, for the purpose of declaring their views on problems of education.

The original stimulus which gave rise to Mrs. Cousins letter was an appeal made by the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, at the Prize-Giving function of the Bethune College, Calcutta, in which he called on Indian Women to "*tell us with one voice what they want, and keep on telling us till they get it.*" Mrs. A. L. Huidekoper, an ex-Principal of the Bethune College (who, we are glad to say, is still one of our very active members), made use of this appeal as the basis of two articles which were published in *Stri Dharma*, the monthly magazine, of the Women's Indian Association, and it was after this that Mrs. Cousins took up the matter in the way just described. Her appeal met with a wide and enthusiastic response, and Constituent Conferences were held in 22 places during the months of September to December, 1926, and the First All-India Women's Conference was organised to take place at Poona, where it was duly held from January 5th to 8th 1927, under the distinguished Presidentship of Her Highness the Maharani Chimnabai Saheb Gaekwar of Baroda,—Mrs. Cousins being the first Honorary Organising Secretary. The Resolutions passed at that Conference related almost without exception to education, ranging from matters concerning Primary Schools up to those relating to College and Adult Education. The sole exception was a Resolution condemning the practice of early marriage, as it interfered with education and supporting Sir Hari Singh Gour's Age of Consent Bill, which was then about to come before the Legislative Assembly.

2. The Second Conference :

In 1928, the Second Conference was held in Delhi under the Presidentship of Her Highness the Begum Mother of Bhopal, the proceedings being opened by Her Excellency Lady Irwin (Lady Halifax). In addition to

reaffirming most of the Resolutions of the First Conference, notable Resolutions were passed relating to Rai Saheb Harbilas Sarada's Bill for the restraint of Early Marriage, which was at that time under consideration, as well as urging the Government to give representation to women in the Central Legislature, so that they might be able to express their views on pending measures affecting the interests of women and girls. The Second Conference was noteworthy also as the origin of All-India for Women's Education.

3. The Third Conference :

The Third Conference, that of 1929, was held at Patna, with Her Highness the Dowager Rani of Mandi as President. It was on this occasion that the scope of the Conference was definitely widened to include Social Reform and a separate Section for Social Reform was created to work on lines parallel to those of the Section concerned with Educational Reform. Three Sub-Committees of the Educational Reform Section were appointed to carry on work throughout the year in the following directions :

- (a) The drafting of a special curriculum for schools, based on the ideals underlying the Resolutions passed by the Conference.
- (b) The revising and creating of new text-books.
- (c) The investigation of the conditions of the training of teachers in all parts of India. Under the Social Reform Section also a Sub-Committee was appointed to carry on the campaign to raise the age of marriage.

4. The Fourth Conference :

By 1930, when the Fourth Conference was held in Bombay under the Presidentship of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the increased efficiency of the organisation had become very noticeable : and the Honorary Organising Secretary, Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, was able to report the accomplishment of a large amount of very effective work done by the constituent bodies in many parts of India. Prominent among the list of reforms effected through the support of the Conference and its members was the passing of the Sarada Act which, (while in the opinion of the Conference the age-limits specified in the Act were much too low, and the Act possessed some other obvious defects) was yet a bold step in the right direction. Following up that success the Social Reform Section of the Conference took a very active part in the agitation for Reform of the Laws of

Inheritance as affecting women, while on the educational side an immense amount of useful constructive work, in addition to propaganda, was done by local members and committees of the Conference and its Constituencies, in such directions as the opening of New Girls' Schools, Industrial Schools, Schools for children of the Deprssed Classes, Adult Education, Prison Visiting, Relief to Women passengers on the Railways, and Child Welfare and Maternity work. A new field of work, that in connection with female labour, was opened up through the opportunity of giving evidence before the Labour Commission, while by the delegation of distinguished members to International Conferences, such as the Berlin International Congress of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, the work of the Conference became known to women of other countries and *vice versa*.

It was in 1930, that the Committee of the Education Fund which had been registered the year before as "the All-India Women's Education Fund Association," decided to make a full inquiry about a suitable education for girls. An All-India Committee was appointed to investigate this matter. The members of the Committee made inquiries in their own provinces at first and then met together at Pachmarhi, C.P., in July and made their Report.

5. The Fifth Conference :

The Fifth Conference was held at Lahore, in 1931 with Dr. (Mrs.) Muthulakshmi Reddi as President. Although the year 1930-31 had been one of great difficulties owing to the pre-occupation of the country with political matters, it was nevertheless a year in which the work of the Conference made great forward strides. The number of Constituencies had by this time risen to 33, and many more schools, hostels and centres for adult education were reported as having been started through the efforts of members. The institution of the observance of March 1 as 'Women's day,' and the holding of meetings in almost all the Constituencies on that day to popularise and explain the work of the Conference, was another noteworthy innovation. Vigorous and well-timed propaganda was carried on with a view to safeguarding the Sarda Act from amendments designed to nullify its usefulness; work was continued, in the direction of getting the laws of inheritance amended, and new work was undertaken in Baroda towards getting the State to lead the way in putting on the Statue Book

a Divorce Act for Hindus. There were increasing signs all over the country that the propaganda of the members of the Conference in their various Constituencies was beginning to bear fruit in the changed attitude of the public towards the amelioration of the conditions of women in general, their better education, their proper representation in legislative and administrative bodies, and in the judiciary as Honorary Magistrate. The question of abolition of untouchability began to be tackled, too, in some Constituencies, notably in Madras, and while the attempt to deal with Labour questions (for which the formation of a special Conference had been contemplated) suffered a temporary setback owing to the disturbed conditions of the times, the keenness of members to tackle that among the other many difficult problems of the day, was intensified rather than diminished.

6. The Sixth Conference:

It was in 1932, when the Conference had Madras as its venue, and its President was Mrs. P. K. Ray, that it was clearly seen that although the constitution of the Conference debarred it from taking part in *Party* politics, it could not, if it were to perform its function of establishing women in their rightful position in the state and in society, avoid concerning itself with politics in the widest sense of the term. The status of women in the new constitution of India, particularly in relation to their fundamental rights, their representation in the various bodies and the conditions of their enfranchisement, was a matter of vital importance not only to politicians, but to the whole country: and it was overwhelmingly felt that every opportunity must be taken before the constitution was actually drawn up in details, to impress upon those concerned in framing it, views of nearly half of those who would have to abide by it when framed. To this end, in April, 1931, a representative meeting was held in Bombay, under the Presidentship of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the outcome of which was that the All-India Women's Conference, the Women's Indian Association, and the National Council of Women in India, conjointly drew up a Memorandum to be placed before the Franchise Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference. In May this Memorandum was submitted to all the Constituencies, with an invitation to them to give their considered opinion upon the views stated therein, and again in its final form, before it was actually submitted to the Franchise Committee, the Memorandum was

circulated to the Constituencies, from which no dissentient opinion was received. I need hardly remind you that the essential points which were decided to press in the Memorandum were as follows :

- (1) Equal rights and obligations of all citizens without any bar on account of sex.
- (2) No disability to attach to any citizens by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.
- (3) Adult suffrage.
- (4) Women to fight elections on equal terms with men, in mixed general electorates.
- (5) No reservation of seats for women as such, nor special nomination or co-optation.

A deputation of ladies belonging to the All-India Women's Conference also waited on His Excellency the Viceroy, in May, and presented a Memorial asking for women to be represented on the Round Table Conference.

The Social Reforms Section was kept busy again this year in agitating against the attempts to amend the Sarda Act. Rai Saheb Harbilasji Sarda's Bill to secure a share for Hindu Widows in their husbands' family property was very widely supported in the Constituencies. The year was also noteworthy for the number of laws passed in Indian States, safeguarding women's rights, or enhancing their status.

The work of the Education Section went forward with unabated vigour on the usual lines, progress being made with the scheme for opening a Women's College for Home Science, Educational Research, and Training of Teachers. The Text-book Sub-Committee made considerable progress with its arduous labour, as did also the Sub-Committees on Labour, and Indigenous Industries.

7. The Seventh Conference :

The Seventh Conference met at Lucknow in 1933 under the Presidentship of Lady Ramanbhai Nilkanth. In the work of the preceding year, that of representing the viewpoint of Indian Womanhood on the constitutional question had remained uppermost, owing to the fact that

the Indian Franchise Committee was occupied with its labours in India during the cold season of that year, and the Standing Committee of the Conference felt it obligatory that it should continue to press the views laid down in the Memorandum presented the year before to the Round Table Conference. Nine members of the All-India Women's Conference gave evidence at various centres, that of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (Chairwoman of the Standing Committee) being specially noteworthy for the firm stand which she made upon the principles laid down in the Memorandum in spite of the fire of searching cross-examination. From the point of view of immediate results however, those efforts were, alas! in vain, and the publication of the Communal Award was the signal for an outburst of protests from our Constituencies.

The work of the Social Section went on apace; in many Constituencies the earnest practical efforts towards the removal of untouchability and caste restrictions proved conclusively, to those who have eyes to see, that women are not—as they are usually supposed to be—the custodians of orthodoxy and conservatism. In many of the State Constituencies as well as those of British India there was a strong movement in favour of providing for divorce in Hindu society, and its equalisation for men and women among Muslims. The promotion of the cause of Swadeshi and of indigenous industries was also a very important feature of the year's work, as was also the number of instances in which members of the Conference were successful in contesting on terms of equality with men, elections for seats on Municipal Corporations and academic bodies of Universities.

The opening of the Lady Irwin College for women, at Delhi, on November 10, 1932, was the event of the year in the Educational Section,—concrete evidence of the value of the work which had quietly and steadily been proceeding since the starting of the Education Fund four years ago. Important as was that event, however one must not allow it to overshadow all the other less spectacular day-to-day work of members in the Constituencies, for without that real underlying zeal for the educational uplift of women, throughout the land, in villages as well as in towns in quiet and devoted care and service, as well as in laying of foundation-stones and presiding over public meeting, our Conference would have never grown into the solid organisation that it now is.

8. The Eighth Conference :

Our Eighth Session was held at Calcutta, Lady Adbul Qadir being the President on that occasion. The most prominent feature of the work of 1933 had again been the political one. Owing to the publication of the White Paper in which it was seen that the attempt made by our representatives in 1931 and 1932, to gain equal status had completely failed. It became necessary therefore to frame a second memorandum in which while it was reiterated that the proposals contained in the first Memorandum provided the only satisfactory solution, the White Paper proposals were examined and a clear statement made as to how far they could be regarded as even an adequate "second best" or not. This Memorandum was submitted to the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the British Parliament, and later, three elected members representing our Conference, as also the National Council of Women In India, and the Women's Association, were invited to London to give evidence before the Joint Parliamentary Committee. Suffice it to say here that through Memorandum II and the firm stand taken by our delegates in giving their evidence, we showed that, while willing to adopt an accommodating attitude in regard to details during the period of transition we stood immovably for the principle of equal status and against that of communal and special representation.

One very useful outcome of the political work outside India has been the many contacts that our delegates made with women's organisations of other countries and with institutions of international scope including the various organisations connected with the League of Nations.

Wider and wider through the scope of our activities has become, it must not be thought that this had the effect of making the current of local work flow more sluggishly. On the contrary, the work of the Educational and Social Reform Sections grows even more intensive as it grows extensive. As a whole our Movement gathers force every day from new streams of local enterprise.

9. The Ninth Conference :

The Ninth Session of the All-India Women's Conference held its sittings in December, 1934, at Karachi under the Presidentship of Mrs. Rustomji Faridoonji. Practical achievement was the key-note of the Conference in the year 1934—for, in spite of many handicaps particularly of funds and workers the reports of work in the various Constituencies

showed that a distinct advance was being made due to the unbounded enthusiasm of the members. For Bihar Earthquake Relief Fund the Constituencies of the Conference itself raised over thirty thousand rupees, apart from the fact that they helped in the collection of other Central Funds.

The extracts relating to women in the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee were studied in detail by the Conference, and deep disappointment was felt that the clear demands of Indian women were being ignored and it was decided that even at that eleventh hour efforts should again be made to impress on the British Parliament the united desire of Indian women for a non-communal electorate for women at least and their dislike of the wife-hood qualification which was being imposed on them. A resolution to this effect was forwarded to the Secretary of the Joint Select Committee and to the Secretary of State for India through the Liaison Officer, and this resolution was reiterated unanimously at the Half-yearly meeting.

A successful effort was made during the course of the year to create a widespread demand for the appointment of a Commission on the legal disabilities of Indian Women, which would suggest reforms in the light of modern conditions. An All-India Day was held on November 24, 1934, when meetings were held in every Constituency, and thousands of signatures were collected to support this demand. Until there is success in obtaining a more equitable system of laws, this work will be continued, as the members of the Conference feel that they cannot carry out their duties as citizens as long as they are hampered by legal restrictions both personal and civic.

The interesting report of the Committee appointed by the Conference to investigate the conditions in mines, and its suggestions regarding the women eliminated from underground work aroused a great interest in the conference and the desire there evinced to help the unfortunate women miners showed clearly how real was the claim that the conference aimed at improving the condition of women of all classes.

A notable feature of this year was that for the first time a permanent contact was made with the British Women's Organisations. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was appointed as the Liaison Officer for the Conference to keep in touch with Mrs. Lankester the Liaison Officer of the British Women's

Organisations appointed for the same purpose. The presence of distinguished Special Visitors like Dr. Maude Royden and Mrs. Corbett Ashby during the Conference session was a proof of the great interest evidenced by women in the ideals and problems of each other.

Year by year the activities of the Conference are increasing and the success with which it is tackling every new problem is abundant proof that the women of India are not only conscious of their duties but intend to contribute their due share in the task of nation-building.

10. The Tenth Conference :

The Tenth Session was held in Trivandrum in December 1935 under the presidentship of Her Highness Setu Parvati Bayi Saheba of Travancore. Her guidance and keen interest in the proceedings of the Conference and in the discussions made this one of the most successful sessions.

It was the first time that the Conference was held in an Indian State, a State where the percentage of literacy amongst women is higher than in any other part of India, where the purdah system is unknown and where women have equal rights and privileges,—in other words where women's rights are recognised.

An important feature of the year's work was the tremendous increase in the number of constituencies which have taken up village uplift work in earnest and have already achieved considerable progress. Rural-work, Maternity and Child welfare centres have been organised and systematic course of lectures on sanitation and health arranged.

The Sub-Committee on the Child Marriage Restraint Act did good work during the year. A Bulletin was issued giving the statistics of child marriages in our country. A good deal of propaganda was done during the year through the Press to create public opinion in favour of amending the Sarda Act. It is a matter of pride to note that Mr. B. Das was given permission to introduce a Bill in the Legislative Assembly to amend the Sarda Act and most of his amendments were based on the suggestions made by the Conference.

The immediate necessity for a common language for India was recognised by the Conference. A Sub-Committee was appointed to report on the ways and means that could be adopted for the realisation of this ideal. Another Sub-Committee was appointed for the spread of literacy in the country. It was realised that unless a concerted and intensive

campaign against illiteracy is organised, the moral and material progress of the land is bound to be hampered.

The work of the Liaison Group which was appointed for the first time last year had gone on well during the year. The establishment of this contact with the British women's organisations has been of great service to the Conference. The Group as a whole, worked increasingly to press the demand of the Conference concerning franchise and did their best to educate public opinion in England. The Group also arranged busy programmes for Conference members during their stay in England. This gave them an opportunity of speaking about the Conference. Ample publicity was given in English newspapers to all they said and did on behalf of the Conference.

The Constituencies had collected funds in the previous year for relief of people in Bihar stricken by the earthquake; this year also funds were raised in the same way for the Quetta Earthquake Relief. Special mention must be made here of the organised help that was given by the members of Constituencies in Central Punjab, Sind and North-West Frontier Province to the refugees in Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and other places.

With regard to franchise there was nothing much left to be done. All efforts to alter the qualifications for franchise mentioned in the Government of India Bill were of no avail; repeated demands, representations, and statements met with but little success and the Government of India Bill was passed into an Act. A resolution was passed reiterating the disapproval of the Conference of the franchise qualifications but urging on the women to use the powers granted to them by the Act, however inadequate they may be.

There was a lively discussion on the question of Birth Control during the proceedings of the Tenth Session. The Conference was fortunate in having Mrs. Sanger, one of the prominent workers in the United States of America, whose vast experience and knowledge was helpful. The Conference passed by a large majority the resolution supporting the necessity for instruction in methods of Birth Control through recognised clinics.

Notable visitors from foreign countries, U.S.A., England, Japan and China were present at this Session. It was a source of great encouragement and inspiration to all. The women's cause is the same all over the

world and it gave one an opportunity of exchanging ideas and learning one another's experiences.

The number of Constituencies and members had been increasing during the year. The report of the work done in the different constituencies show that women are taking a much great interest in social work. The activities had increased and most constituencies had undertaken practical work in some direction.

11. The Eleventh Conference :

The Eleventh Session of the A.-I.W.C. was held at Ahmedabad in December 1936, under the Presidentship of Mrs. M. E. Cousins. We entered this year into the second decade of our work. It is gratifying to note from the work of the past ten years that the A.-I.W.C. has now taken its rightful place as a representative and fully established women's organisation in India. This year more concentration was given to the need for medical inspection in schools and to the opening of hostels for girls and for the removal of illiteracy by starting even night schools. The year 1936 should be mentioned for the outstanding event of the year, *viz.*, the opening of the State Temples of Travancore to all classes of Hindus by H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore, when H. H. Maharani Setu Parvati Bayi, his illustrious mother, was our President. A great deal of propaganda work was carried out by our Constituencies by holding meetings and enlisting public support for the Social Bills introduced in the Legislative Assembly—*e.g.*, Dr. Deshmukh's Bill to amend the Hindu Law governing Hindu Women's Right to Property, Mrs. B. Das's Bill to amend the Sarda Act in order to make it more stringent, Dr. Bhagwan Das's Bill seeking recognition of inter-caste marriages, and Mr. Hafiz Abdullah's Muslim Personal Law Application Bill,—and to urge their adoption by the Assembly.

Our Constituencies also tried to introduce improvements with regard to sanitation, health and education in the villages and this year was also devoted to the uplift of Harijans. Leper relief, tuberculosis work, maternity and child welfare, encouragement of indigenous industries were dealt with during the year. The Special feature of this year was the work done by our Franchise Sub-Committee for the enrolment of women voters for the new Legislature, Municipalities and District Boards. At the request of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship,

a Memorandum on the Political, Legal, of Social and Educational Status of Women in India was submitted to the League of Nations and the Government of India. The question of a Central Office to meet the expansion of our work was also considered and a scheme for the same was also prepared. We had this year Special Visitors from England, Australia and other visitors from U.S.A. and Holland who attended the conference.

12. The Twelfth Conference :

The Twelfth Session of the All-India Women's Conference was held at Nagpur in December, 1937, under the Presidentship of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

The most notable of the year 1937 was the inclusion of about 60 women in the Legislatures of the various provinces, which was possible on account of the facilities given to women to contest elections held under the Government of India Act 1935. One of these, namely, the Hon'ble Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit was elected to be a Cabinet Minister which shows the gigantic strides made by the women's movements in the country. A few of our women have been elected as Deputy Speakers of various Legislatures and some have been appointed Parliamentary Secretaries.

More constructive work was undertaken by the Branches. The Standing Committee considered the draft curriculum of girls' primary schools in India, and the suggestions made by us were considered helpful by the Educational Commissioner to the Government of India. Some of the Constituencies have started conducting village schools and also other useful village work, such as, adult classes, night schools, etc. A scheme has been prepared by the Convener of the Common Language Sub-Committee, which is expected to be useful for solving the common language problem.

The Standing Committee prepared a programme of legislation for improving the social status of women and the same was forwarded to the Prime Ministers of the new Provincial Governments and to the new women members of the Legislatures. Also brochures dealing with such vital problems as child marriage, birth control, temperance, etc., have been prepared in different vernaculars and forwarded to local committees. Much propaganda was done and meetings were held regarding the legal disabilities of women and resolutions expressing public opinion in the matter were forwarded to proper quarters.

Mrs. S. C. Mukerjee, an ex-Chairwoman of the Standing Committee,

was appointed by the Government of India as Indian delegate to the Conference of the Central Authorities of the League of Nations in Eastern Countries for combating traffic in women and children, held at Bandoeng, Java, in February, 1937. An excellent report on the women suffrage movement was prepared by Rani Lakshmibai Rajwade, which is expected to educate women on the subject.

Mr. Ekstrand, Director of Opium Traffic and Social Questions Section of the League of Nations, visited India on his way back from Java and gave lectures under the auspices of the A.-I.W.C. stressing the work to be done for children suffering from physical and mental congenital defects and some of our Constituencies have started work on the lines suggested by him.

Propaganda against child marriage was vigorously carried on and steps were taken to file complaints and to prosecute cases against offending parents and priests, with some measures of success.

Mrs. Grace Lankester, our Liaison Officer in England, was present at the Nagpur Session. It is gratifying to note that our Liaison work is getting on satisfactorily. There has been increasing contact with other countries in the world and an invitation was received from British Guiana to attend the Centenary Celebration of the Indian Emigration.

Untouchability work has been pushed ahead, and as a result some Municipalities have thrown open tanks and wells to Harijans. One of our Constituencies is running free Harijan School. Following the example of the Travancore State, some other Indian States have allowed Temple entry to all Hindus. Some members of our Constituencies are paying regular visits to Jails and provincial and State Governments are being urged to taken steps to improve the condition of women prisoners, as also to provide suitable occupations for women labourers eliminated from the mines.

Swadeshi Exhibitions were held in many Constituencies and there was a large sale of Swadeshi articles. A directory of Swadeshi articles has been prepared. The Indigenous Industries Sub-Committee prepared a Scheme which was forwarded to the Director of Industries in various provinces and states. A Scheme for unregulated industries is in hand.

New Sub-Constituencies have been opened at Bhusawal, Kirloskerwadi, Bijapur, Belgaum, Patan, Mehsana, Visnagar, Navsari, Amreli,

Surat, Broach and Rajpipla. This brings the list of sub-constituencies to more than 100. There are now 38 working Constituencies.

The most important development this year was the Resolution tabled at the Session at Nagpur for widening the scope of the Conference by amending Article II of the Constitution so as to enable the Conference to take part in the progressive welfare of the people of India in all directions and not merely in educational and social spheres. To this resolution several amendments were tabled. For want of the necessary four-fifths majority required for changing the Constitution, the question remained undecided. But the discussion showed a keen desire amongst the members to widen the scope of the activities of the conference.

13. The Thirteenth Conference :

The Thirteenth Session of the All-India Women's Conference was held in Delhi in December, 1938, under the Presidentship of Rani Lakshuibai Rajwade. The Conference had distinguished visitors, Miss Mary A. Dingman, President of the Peace and Disarmament Committee of the International Women's Organisations, Mlle. P. Hage of the International Labour Office, Geneva, Mrs. Ali from Japan, Mrs. Harlow from the United States of America, Miss G. F. Greig of Australia, and Miss Agatha Harrison. Most active work was done in the removal of illiteracy and this was not restricted to towns but was extended to the villages as well. Schools have been started for Harijans and practical knowledge on subjects of sanitation and hygiene given. The Conference studied in detail the Wardha Education Scheme and a practical scheme of working Nursery schools was drawn up.

A Common Language Sub-Committee carried its work and suggested a constructive scheme which was followed by many Branches. The social work of the Conference has been extensive. Public opinion was created regarding bills introduced in the Provinces and in the Central Legislature in particular dealing with Divorce, Monogamy, Restraint of Polygamy and the Legal Disabilities of women.

Exhibitions of the products of agriculture and of various industries, such as home-craft, painting, leather-work, clay-modelling, needle-work, etc., were held.

Considerable attention was given to maternity and child welfare. Several of our Branches conduct maternity and child welfare clinics. The

Health Sub-Committee devoted itself to improving the sanitary conditions prevailing in the schools of their Province and persuaded the authorities to improve conditions of living of the workers. Indigenous industries were encouraged by helping the sale of the products of cottage industries by canvassing orders for them.

Another important feature was the promotion of inter-communal harmony by the formation of what is called the "Family Circle" which includes men and women of all castes and creeds and communities.

Propaganda against child marriage continued as before.

The Liaison Group in England continued its work of giving publicity to the work of the A.-I.W.C. abroad.

The newest venture however is the publication of a journal belonging to the Conference.

The work of the Conference has extended and there are now 40 Branches and 150 Sub-Branches. New Branches were opened in Jath and Kathiawad during the year. Work in several other Branches was reorganised through the services of an Organising Secretary.

14. The Fourteenth Conference :—

The XIV session of the Conference was held in Allahabad under the presidency of Begam Hamid Ali. Owing to the International situation overseas members were not able to come. The Conference continued its work but the horror of totalitarian wars and the insecurity of small states were too near and recent not to have brought out the wholesale condemnation of such wars by the Conference. The procedure followed in the previous conference held at Delhi was continued at Allahabad. The group discussions naturally reduced the time available for plenary sessions but it was felt that free and frank discussions and exchange of experiences were more valuable and educative than platform oratory.

A very significant feature of the year was the recognition given to the Conference by the National Planning Committee by appointing its President Rani Lakshmi Bai Rajwade as the Chairwoman of the Woman's Role Sub-Committee. Under her able guidance this committee with its groups scattered all over India did good work which was publicly acknowledged by no less a person than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Liaison group in Great Britain continued its work of not only giving publicity to the women's work in India but also of creating public opinion to recognise the just claims of this country in the political sphere.

The creation of a new liaison officer for South Africa was another feature of this session.

For the first time the General Secretary of the year was made responsible for the Bulletin of the Conference and with the help of the President and Patrons and other members of the Conference four issues of the Bulletin were published with two supplements, one on Education and the other on Health.

The appointment of an Organising Secretary for the United Provinces was followed by further activities in this direction and resulted in the organisation of a new Branch in Dehra Dun and the re-organisation of the Benares unit. The total number of Branches at present is 35, the number of units 121, and total membership is 8607.

ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

FIFTEENTH SESSION



BANGALORE:
December 27 to 31, 1940

ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

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Rameshwari Nehru
President, All India Women's Conference
Bangalore, Dec. 1940,

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| 1927 | Mrs. M. E. Cousins | Mrs. Kamala Devi Chattopadhyia |
| 1928 | Begum Hamid Ali | ” ” ” |
| 1929 | Mrs. Huidekoper | ” ” ” |
| 1930 | Mrs. Sushama Sen | Mrs. Kamala Devi, Mrs. Sushama Sen and Rani Lakshmibai Rajwade |
| 1931 | Rajkumari Amrit Kaur | Rani Lakshmibai Rajwade |
| 1932 | ” ” ” | ” ” ” |
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| 1939 | Rani Lakshmibai Rajwade | Dr. Mrs. Malinibai B. Sukthankar |
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Hony. General Secretary

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Bangalore Session—December, 1940.

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Mrs. S. Pradhan,
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Mrs. Dina Irani

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Shri Vidwan Karthiyani
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Mrs. Mehra N. Ginwala
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Mrs. Premlata Gupta
Mrs. Husain Ali Khan
Mrs. Amir Hasan
Mrs. Rahmatullah

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Mrs. Yusuf Mirza
Mrs. Mujtab Husain Naqvi
Mrs. Afzaluddin Lukmani
Beshirunissa Begum Bashir
Mrs. Abdul Hamid
Miss Leilamani Naidu

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Miss Premalabai Bhandarkar
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Miss Vidya Bhandari
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Miss Avabai Mehta
Mrs. Pirojbai Mehta

THE FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE.

For the second time during the fifteen years of its existence the A. I. W. C. met in a State, in Mysore. Fifteen years have seen changes not only in the work of the Conference, in the broadening of its aims and policy, but also in the growth of its influence as the leading women's organisation of India. At Bangalore, in 1940, the Conference was hardly the small band of educational enthusiasts who met in Poona at its first session. The scope of the Conference has widened to include all aspects of national life; it has further developed an international outlook, the inevitable consequence of the realisation of the unity and sisterhood of women.

The length of the session was cut down as an experimental measure. One often heard the comment that while the most important political organisation of the country only took a couple of days to arrive at momentous decisions, the A. I. W. C. took at least a week to reiterate their demands! The relative shortness of the session this year did take away some of the leisureliness of discussion. But it was just as well to learn to do the necessary work within the minimum time.

The Bangalore Reception Committee did not spare itself. The opening of the Exhibition, usually a prefatory function of the annual session became an affair of separate importance. Then there was the visiting delegation from Ceylon, a heartening feature in these days of mutual distrust between the two neighbours. Then there were visits to factories and institutions, that pleasant afternoon function at the Mahila Seva Samaj when the portrait of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi was unveiled by Begum Hamid Ali, the civic reception to the delegates, the various At Homes and last but not the least, the public meeting when the men demurely listened to all that the women had to say, a mutual exchange of courtesies no doubt, as the men were allowed to speak freely on the women's movement on the opening day.

The procedure also had slightly changed. The separate group system was tried for the first time. Although it is too early to gauge its success it was a time-saving device as it did away with the Findings Committee and gave more opportunities for discussion at the plenary sessions.

We thank the Bangalore Reception Committee and the Government of Mysore for the facilities afforded to the delegates to visit places of interest and the liberal hospitality provided for all the delegates to the Conference. We hope that the delegates have carried the message of the annual session to their various districts and would give additional impetus to the Conference work.

ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE.

Programme of the opening session.

December 27th, 1940: at 5-15 p.m.

1. Welcome Song.
2. Election of the President :—
Proposed by : Begum Hamid Ali.
Seconded by : Mrs. Rustomji Faridoonji.
3. Reading of the Messages.
4. Welcome Address.
Lady Mirza M. Ismail, Chairwoman of the Reception Committee.
5. Annual Report.
Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon, Hon. General Secretary, A.I.W.C.
6. Presidential Address.
Srimathi Rameshwari Nehru.
7. Other Addresses.
 - (i) Amin-ul-Mulk Sir Mirza Ismail, (Read by Rajamantrapravina N. Madhava Rao, B.A., B.L.)
 - (ii) Rajamantrapravina K. V. Anantaraman.
 - (iii) Dr. J. H. Cousins.
 - (iv) Mr. D. V. Gundappa.
 - (v) Miss Cissy Cooray, Leader of Ceylon Delegation.
 - (vi) Rajacharithavisarada Rao Sahib C. Hayavadana Rao.
8. Vote of thanks.

The proceedings began at 5-15 p.m. with a welcome song after which Mrs. Mandyam requested Begum Hamid Ali to open the Conference. **Begum Hamid Ali** in opening the Conference spoke as follows:—

Lady Mirza Ismail, Members of the Reception Committee, Sister Delegates, and Brothers,

It is a great privilege conferred on me, to declare this Conference open today. Before doing so I would like to give a very brief history of the All-India Women's Conference. I have no doubt that all our friends here to-day have some sort of an idea as to when the Conference was started and what it had been able to do for the past fifteen years. We are greatly privileged to have with us the mother of our Conference—Mrs. Cousins, amidst us today. (Applause).

We also have two of the active members on this dais and more than two patrons who are called the foundation members and quite a good number of standing committee members, who came to the first Conference at Poona, and some of the oldest and best workers who joined later on and among them, I should like to mention Rajkumari Amritkaur, and Mrs. Rustomji Faridoonji, the old friends of the Conference, who, with Mrs. Cousins first took very great trouble in attending these Conferences. With the blessings of the people around us, who started the Conference, I am sure that we shall carry this Session to a successful end. Although the work of the Conference began with educational reform only, gradually we included social reform. Then we found how necessary it was to take up political questions. In 1932 when the question of the New Constitution was on the anvil we took up the very large question of Franchise for women and other matters which dealt directly with civic life and well-being of the nation. Now the Conference has spread itself into all walks of life. We deal with questions, not only of educational and social reform purely, but with other things. Now we have a large number of committees which deal with every aspect of national life. With these few words I declare this Conference open. (Applause.)

In proposing Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru to be President of the Conference, **Begum Hamid Ali** again spoke as follows:—

I have very great pleasure in proposing you to the chair today. You have been a very staunch supporter and worker of the All-India Women's

Conference. We know the great work you have done in other spheres not only for women but for the uplift of the *Harijans*. We are honouring ourselves by honouring you. Now I request you to take the chair. (Cheers.)

Mrs. Rustomji Faridoonji in seconding the proposal said :—

Members of the Reception Committee, and Sister Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me extreme pleasure to second Mrs. Hamid Ali.

Mrs. Brijlal Nehru has been one of our silent workers from the second year of our Conference, and as most of you know she has made the cause of the *Harijans* her own, for the last few years and has devoted herself to it. She has never spared herself and few of us can realize what tiring work her long long journeys from North to South and East to West in India must have been. She was able to convince many with her sincerity and in the justice of the cause she has undertaken. We also hope that her intimate contact with them will bring more *Harijan* delegates to our Conference. We in this Conference who stand for freedom of the right kind, freedom from injustice, freedom to work, freedom to expand our activities, feel that Mrs. Nehru has done a great piece of constructive work for this Conference and that she has helped to get that freedom for some of our unfortunates is a matter of great gratification for the Conference. Her intense industry as she never spares herself, her great sympathy and her spiritual nature well befit her as a leader among Indian women. Her simplicity, geniality, and above all her sincerity has endeared her to all of us. We feel that at this critical time her advanced yet balanced views will be of a great help to our cause. We, the old guard, now on the point of retiring have faith that our baby growing up to adolescence, and having so many of our young, enthusiastic workers ready to carry on, *shall* and *will* thrive as years go by. I for one firmly believe that the regeneration of India will come through her women and our Conference is but the educative process for our women. (Cheers).

Dear friend, may God give you health and strength for the work that lies before you, and may you have the best of luck through 1941.

Srimati K. D. Rukmini Ammal then garlanded Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru amidst cheers.

Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon, the General Secretary of the All-India Women's Conference, next read out the messages* received from those interested in the work of the Women's Conference, distinguished men and women, friends and others.

Message of

His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore.

Mysore is proud today that in its turn it welcomes the All-India Women's Conference. It gives me great pleasure to join in this welcome and wish the Conference and its deliberations every success. I can do nothing better on this occasion than pass on to the Conference the saying of a Great man, Shakespeare, "Women are the books, the arts, the academies, that show, contain and nourish all the world."

Message of

Mahatma Gandhi.

I hope that the A.I.W.C. will stand up for unadulterated non-violence at this critical period of world's history.—M. K. GANDHI.

WELCOME ADDRESS

by

Lady Mirza M. Ismail

(Chairwoman of the Reception Committee).

Sister Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my most pleasant duty as Chairwoman of the Reception Committee of the Mysore State Women's Conference which is a constituent of the All-India Women's Conference, to offer a hearty welcome to you, the Office-bearers of the All-India Women's Conference and the Delegates from its constituencies, to this its fifteenth annual session.

We have long hoped that the time would come when it would be possible to have the inspiration of such a Conference in our midst. We know from delegates of our State to previous sessions in other parts of India, that such gatherings of earnest and capable women are fruitful in the interchange of experience and in stimulus to extended activity for the betterment of the lives of the women and children of the country. Yet, while we would have desired an earlier session of the Conference in Mysore

*See Appendix 1 for full list of messages.



Lady Mirza Ismail,
Chairwoman, Reception Committee, Bangalore.

State, we accept as compensation the fact that the enthusiasm of the Conference for its ideals remains fresh, also that the scope of its interest has widened from education only to the inclusion of everything that concerns women's affairs and the experience of the members has deepened not only in passing necessary resolutions but in organizing their application in life according to the needs and traditions of the different groups that make up the vast human unity of India.

Here, in Mysore, we have done what we could to put into practice the ideals of the All-India Women's Conference regarding the welfare of women and children of all grades of society and all shades of belief. Branches of the Mysore State Women's Conference in various parts of the country work for the spread of the spirit of service among their sisters and for the modification of circumstances that stand in the way of such service. They work also for the education of girls along lines that will help them to become both useful and happy human beings. The success of our work in this respect will be evident from the free intelligence of the women of Mysore, with whom the delegates will come in contact. I am happy to say that our work for the general advancement of women has had the sympathy and help of those in authority, and that substantial grants have been made by Government for the education of girls.

We look forward to a large accession of interest in our work and assistance in carrying it out, as a result of your session in Mysore State. We trust also that your presence in this ancient land, with its venerable tradition of high culture and responsiveness to the growing needs of human expression and organization, will afford enrichment to the knowledge of the Conference as a whole. From such interchange between the Conference and its constituencies there will arise clearer vision and more stable and continuous purpose in clearing the way for the bringing of the influence of women more fully into the general life of the country. In this way our work will become associated with the work of women all over the world for the fundamentals of human prosperity, happiness and peace. Today the world is threatened with ruin by circumstances that have been created outside the influence of women. Our deepest hope is that the deliberations and activities of this Conference may be guided towards the attainment of peace both in India and the world at large.

Again, I offer you our most cordial welcome to our State for your fifteenth annual Conference, and that you will carry away with you happy memories of your visit.

The Welcome Address of Lady Mirza Ismail was read by Srimati K. D. Rukmini Ammal. Srimati K. D. Rukmani Ammal before reading the address, spoke as follows:—

Madam, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lady Mirza Ismail, the Distinguished President of our Reception Committee, is *Purdah*, and so on her behalf I am to read out this Welcome Address. Gladdened and honoured I feel for this great honour done to me.

Srimati K. D. Rukmini Ammal supplemented the Welcome Address with the following words:—

One last word I am asked to say. Human efforts are not at all very complete, at any time. And so our efforts in making the stay of the delegates and the Reception Committee members in Bangalore, may have some shortcomings. Therefore I shall not apologise.

Mrs. Mandyam announced at this stage that Mrs. Nanjamma would be translating the Welcome Address for the benefit of the Kannada-speaking gathering present. Mrs. S. Nanjamma read the Kanarese translation of the Welcome Address.

ANNUAL REPORT 1940.

by

The Hon. General Secretary, Lakshmi N. Menon.

The year under report, notwithstanding the serious international outlook, has been for the Conference remarkably uneventful. The 115 Branches and Sub-Branched with a registered membership of 5,200, scattered all over this Continent, carried on their constructive programme unimpeded. The aid to war efforts, where such work has been included on the programme, has been an additional activity and not done in detriment to the normal activities of the Branch Committees. Almost every Branch has adopted the liquidation of illiteracy especially among adult women and girls as the main plank of its platform. The quiet determination with which the Conference units pursue this self-imposed task is the



Lakshmi N. Menon
Hon. General Secretary,
All-India Women's Conference, 1940.

most encouraging feature of our current activities. Its numerous other interests, such as conducting hostels for girls, maternity and child welfare centres, nursery schools especially for children of women employed in trades and industries, swadeshi exhibitions and popularising indigenous industries, continue with increasing keenness.

In the sphere of legislation a further attempt to ameliorate the condition of Hindu women is seen in the introduction of two Bills by Dr. Deshmukh in the Central Legislative Assembly, one to provide for judicial separation and divorce and the other to give Hindu married women a right to separate maintenance and residence under certain circumstances. The agitation carried on by the Conference during the last few years to get a committee appointed to enquire into the legal disabilities of Indian women has not yet resulted in anything tangible. The Home Member's recent announcement that the Government proposed to appoint a committee of eminent lawyers for advising it how the existing Hindu Law should be amended for removing certain hardships caused to daughters with regard to inheritance does not give us any hope, as even the idea of appointing a committee under Sir N. N. Sircar with such limited terms of reference as the consideration of separate residence for Hindu women had to be postponed because the Central Government could not spare the funds.

The Lady Irwin College has kept up its record of usefulness and efficiency. The examination results and inspection reports of the two committees are very encouraging. Additional accommodation has been built which has enabled the College to register over 100 girls as resident students this year. But the College stands in need of financial aid for further necessary expansion, in the matter of staff, accommodation and a Handicrafts and Arts Department.

The quarterly bulletin of the Conference, now edited by Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon, is gaining in popularity and has been received with approbation by the general public for its informative and interesting contents.

The idea of sending a Goodwill Delegation of Women to China on behalf of the Conference had unfortunately to be postponed for various reasons. We are glad, however, to welcome among us our Sister Delegates from Ceylon. We hope that they would contribute to our deliberations and help us to stabilise the friendly relations between the two neighbours.

We regret to note the absence of some of our office-bearers and active workers who are away in jail. The absence of our greatest Leader and Patron, Mrs. Naidu, owing to reasons of health is a source of anxiety to all of us. We hope that they will be able to rejoin us soon.

Although the Conference is a non-political organisation, it has among its members, we are proud to say, some of the leading political workers of the country. This only emphasises the non-sectarian and resilient nature of our organisation.

The general policy of the Conference is to work for the welfare of this country, especially of its women and children. It has consistently worked for communal harmony, national unity and national self-respect. Its aims and objects, its ideals and dreams are for the establishment of a free, happy and united India. In order to achieve this it has willingly co-operated with Governments and political parties in their constructive programmes and would do the same in the future as well. More than any other group in India, we feel that our aim should be not only to explain social facts but completely change the social, economic and political outlook of this country. We, therefore, agitate for compulsory education, provision of opportunities for women in all the services and professions, a uniform civil code for all persons living in India and abolition of personal laws which emphasise communal differences. While we remember with pride the ideals of the past, we dare not ignore the hard realities of the present or forget our responsibilities to the future. It was one of Thomas Henry Huxley's aphorisms "that the great end of life is not knowledge but action". We who belong to a less scientifically minded nation may, however, be allowed to insist that the great aim of life is knowledge leading to decisive action.

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

Sister Delegates and Friends,

I wish I could address you in Hindustani to-day. We have been advocating a common language for the country and our organisation has recognised the claims of Hindustani as the *lingua franca* for India. In a women's assembly of an all-India character, Hindustani is the only and the most suitable medium of expression. But, unfortunately, the time for its usage on an occasion like the present has not yet come. I still have to labour through a foreign language to make myself understood. I

beseech your forgiveness for the flaws in my language and hope that before long, we shall be relieved of this handicap and Hindustani will be generally understood and spoken even in the South.

We are meeting at a particularly critical time when gloom envelops the world and our hearts are heavy. Vice has taken hold of men's minds and the demon of violence has assumed a form which is threatening to engulf the whole human race. But the work of the world must go on and we have to be at our post of duty as ordained by Almighty Providence which knows best. And so you find me here before you in response to your call as your elected President for this year. I am deeply grateful for the honour you have done me and appreciate the love and confidence shown to me. My association with the Conference has been close and long. I have had the privilege of serving it in various capacities during the fifteen years of its existence. And though during these years there have been times when other objects claimed my attention more, my love for and interest in the Conference never flagged. At this time, when you have chosen to give me the highest office in your organisation, I feel a little diffident; for the responsibility of the President of a big All-India Organisation is great and it is greater when momentous events of far-reaching significance are happening. The consciousness that there are old and experienced co-workers who will be sharing the burden of responsibility with me gives me courage. I regret, however, that I am denied the privilege of the wise counsel of some of the old and trusted officers of the Conference. They are not present here today because they are serving India elsewhere. I am sorry for this personal loss, but I rejoice that these brave comrades have responded to the country's call and by their sacrifices have brought India a step nearer to its cherished goal. They are the soldiers of peace and we are truly proud of them. The cause of India's freedom is theirs as well as ours and it is a just and righteous cause which sooner or later is bound to succeed.

At this time, my thoughts go to sisters in the West as well as in the East who are facing the greatest misfortunes ever known in history. Had it not been for this terrible calamity which has overtaken the world, some of them would have been here with us today. I cannot help missing them and regret the circumstances which have caused their absence. I can assure them on behalf of myself and of the Conference that we share their

sorrow. The picture of the little children, of the men and women, old and young, who are constantly living under the threat of bombs, whose hearths and homes are broken, whose limbs are mutilated, whose lands are devastated, is ever present before our minds and fills us with grief. We cannot forget that those kindred peoples are living with death constantly hovering over their heads. Under the continuous rain of bombs, they know no sleep, no rest, no peace. I can tell them as long as these conditions last, there is no peace and rest for us either. We cannot sit quiet at homes when this terrible fire is raging around us.

Conditions at home are not less gloomy. They affect us as much, if not more. We are pledged not to take part in party politics, but as Indians and women, we cannot remain indifferent to matters of vital importance to our country. We may or may not agree with civil disobedience, but we cannot be indifferent to the principle of the freedom of pen and speech, for which brave sons and daughters of the nation are being sent behind the prison bars. Our hearts are sore at the imprisonment of these brave men and women of whom any country would be proud. (Applause.) The monstrous sentence of four years' rigorous imprisonment passed on Jawaharlal cannot but wring our hearts with pain. We as women struggling for our own freedom cannot help raising our voices against suppression or oppression in all spheres. I pray that wiser counsels may prevail and the impasse may soon be ended.

Our sympathies also go to those small nations of the world who are losing their independence one after another and are being trodden under the iron heel of despotism. Some of them put up brave fights against the onslaught of aggression. They counted no cost too great for the protection of their integrity and independence. They sacrificed freely their lives and money, but nothing availed them and they had to bow down before the superior force of violence. This fact fills us with horror and pain. More than horror and pain, it makes us think and cogitate. It is evident from these happenings that the methods of violence have become obsolete in defence of righteousness. They have lost their potency. They cannot protect small nations against bigger ones possessing superior physical force. Some other means, therefore, must be found to save the smaller peoples from the tyranny of the bigger ones. But to this subject, I shall refer later on.

Before proceeding further, it is my pleasant duty to offer felicitations to our sisters from Ceylon. Their presence here amongst us on a mission of goodwill, at this particular time of struggle and strife, is most welcome. Ceylon and India are not strangers. They are very close neighbours. Their contacts go back to pre-historic times. Their culture and traditions are common and there has always been between them a free exchange of goods, and of peoples and of ideas. From the earliest times, a spirit of friendship has existed between the two and both have learnt a great deal from each other. We appreciate, sisters, the trouble you have taken in coming all the way from home as special delegates to our Conference to take part in our deliberations, to cultivate our friendship and to understand our problems. We fully reciprocate your feelings and hope that, as a result of this visit, the friendship between the two countries will strengthen and the little misunderstanding which crept into our relationship will vanish. We are most grateful to you for coming to our land. (Cheers.)

I cannot help remarking at this moment that had times been normal, we might have had the good fortune of welcoming today Madame Chiang Kai Shek amongst us. In answer to our invitation of last year, she was good enough to say that when she got a little leisure from her pre-occupations in her own country, she would come to us. In the meantime, at our last session at Allahabad, we had decided to send a deputation of women from the All-India Women's Conference to China. Madame Chiang Kai Shek had very kindly sent us an invitation and had made all arrangements for our visit in last October. We were looking forward to paying our homage to that ancient land of great culture and to express in person our sympathy for the trials through which that great nation is passing and to say how genuinely we admire her for the brave stand her men and women have put up against the aggression of Japan. But uncertain political conditions in our own land made it impossible for us to leave the country at this juncture and we had to postpone the honour and pleasure of visiting China to a later date. We hope that we shall be able to exchange the proposed mutual visits before long under freer and happier conditions in both lands.

The All-India Women's Conference to-day completes fourteen years of its life. Much cannot be expected during fourteen years as, after all, it is a very short time in the life of a people. But in these abnormal times,

when scientific inventions have so accelerated speed that it defies all human calculations, living organisms are keeping pace with the machine. And so the progress of Indian women during this period, even measured according to the present standards, is not disappointing. I remember those days of the late twenties. We had just started agitation on various social problems concerning women. Till then, the work of women's educational and social advancement was mainly carried on either by men or under their direction. Women generally were unfamiliar with these problems and their Conferences on an all-India basis were a novelty. Women's participation in public work was rare and although there existed hundreds of women's societies in different parts of the country, there was no co-ordination or co-operation between them. The picture today is different. Amongst the well-to-do classes, the number of highly educated women has grown enormously. *Purdah* is fast disappearing, the age of marriage has been considerably raised, there is more freedom of movement and larger contacts all round. The number of women interested in public affairs is much larger. The women's movement is directed and guided solely by themselves. They are found working in all spheres of life. In the district boards, municipalities, education committees, legislatures, in the Government cabinets, in the national movements, though still in small numbers, they are making their contributions creditably. I am not vain enough to attribute all this progress to the Women's Conference. Various forces have been at work. Religious and social reform agencies, political and constructive work of the Congress, contact with the outside world, the spread of education and last but not least the spirit of the times have all contributed towards this emancipation. And now we see a new life pulsating through women who are thinking and planning and agitating for the removal of their wrongs. The desire for change, which was so far more or less confined to the educated sections of society, has gone beyond them and is affecting the comparatively backward classes of women also. The success of the Marwari Women's Anti-Purdah Conference, held in Calcutta the other day, initiated and organised by themselves, is an instance in point. The spirit of defiance shown by the *zanana* women who came out to organise their procession leading it on horse-back, was something to be marvelled at. It is a sign of the times and shows how imperceptibly the women's movement is penetrating into and transforming the various strata of society.

The special contribution of our Conference to the women's movement is the definite shape and colour that it has given to it. It has focussed public attention on women's problems. It has created a machinery for the formulation of authentic views on such questions, it has consolidated and presented women's demands to the public and the various authorities. It has decidedly succeeded in bringing under its banner a larger number of women than any other all-India women's organisation. (Cheers.) Its annual sessions bring into contact women workers from all parts of India. It has certainly established a spiritual family relationship between them which in itself is an invaluable gain. It has inculcated in women the habit of toleration of differences of opinion, of appreciating each other's good points of working together. It has given them their first lessons in democracy which, from the success achieved, seems to me more suited to the feminine temperament than to the masculine. (Applause). The annual conferences held in different branches and sub-branches, particularly in small towns, create a stir amongst women, draw them together, make them think and form opinions on different subjects. This has created a great awakening amongst women. (Cheers.)

The expansion of the scope of the Conference from merely women's problems to wider questions of human relationships has given it a new life. It is not possible for any organisation, even though it be of women, to live only on making demands for feminine rights. A living organization needs growth and no narrow limits for its self-expression are possible. It was, therefore, a natural evolution of the growing life of our organisation. And the wisdom of the decision taken at Delhi is proved by the dignity, self-restraint and the breadth of view of the various war and other topical resolutions passed by our branches and half-yearly and yearly sessions. The war resolutions show how deeply the war has touched the innermost recesses of our hearts. How grieved we are at the ravages perpetrated on humanity in which our people, though not on the front line of suffering, are none the less very much included. Indeed, it would have been tragic if at this juncture we were not allowed to give expression to the agony of our hearts. And something very good and glorious has come out of it. We have unanimously, with one voice, proclaimed our faith in non-violence and declared to the world that we consider it to be the only solution of the world's ills. May God grant that these resolutions, backed by

the strength of true determination, become a living force for the reformation of ourselves and the world. (Continued Cheers.)

You have already learnt, friends, about the details of our work from the report of the Secretary, which will soon be presented to you. I need not point out that our main field of work is social and educational and in our resolutions we have dealt with these questions exhaustively. It is evident that all the reforms advocated by us were not capable of being achieved in a short space of time by any agency, government or private. They are much too numerous to bear mention here. I shall mention only a few by way of example.

In the sphere of education, we have laid great emphasis on free and compulsory education both for boys and girls and we have advocated more expenditure on women's education. We have demanded better sanitary conditions, trained teachers and various other reforms for schools. Some of our suggestions have been taken up and acted upon. Fine arts, advanced domestic science, provincial languages are included as optional subjects for college courses by some of the Universities. Women's hostels have been started by others. These matters repeatedly formed the subject-matter of our resolutions. Some of our branches enthusiastically took up the work of the removal of illiteracy and achieved good results. Others are running Hindustani, English, Sewing, Music classes, of which hundreds of women are taking advantage.

The Lady Irwin College of New Delhi stands as an outstanding example of our efforts for giving domestic science a respectable place in the curriculum of women's education.

In the social sphere, we have made an humble contribution towards the removal of evil customs and the obliteration of unjust laws. Amongst the many reforms that we have urged are the removal of *Purdah*, of early marriage, widow remarriage, abolition of the dowry system, equal moral standard for men and women and economic independence of women. Our methods of work have been propaganda by means of meetings and conferences, but some of us have urged the necessity of legal enactments for the removal of these practices. I personally feel that conversion is a surer and better method of reform than compulsion. Compulsion even with the best of motives leads to bad results. In the matter of reforms, the law can be used only as an aid, helping the reformers to press in their

points where unnecessary obstinacy is displayed. Had the Child Marriage Restraint Act been backed by intensive and widespread propaganda, its success, in spite of all other drawbacks, would have been ensured.

We have advocated radical changes in the personal laws particularly of the Hindus, and have demanded that the law with regard to inheritance, marriage, guardianship of the children and other matters should deal equitably with the rights of women. We want that polygamy should be interdicted by law and divorce on specific conditions should be introduced amongst the Hindus. Bills embodying these reforms have become a normal feature of our legislatures but few have been destined to bear the test of the anvil and become the law of the land. A more drastic method of dealing with these unjust laws is indicated. I agree with the suggestion made by some of our members that an equitable comprehensive law based on the equality of the sexes should be enacted even though it is adopted by individuals in place of the present divergent laws of the community may be voluntary.

Acts for the suppression of immoral traffic, for the protection of children, for the abolition of the Devadasi system and for various other purposes of a similar nature have been demanded by us and are now on our statute books. We have tried to do some investigation and organization work amongst working women and have embodied their demands of better housing, ante-natal and pre-natal maternity benefits, creches, nursery schools, etc., in our resolutions.

From what I have mentioned merely by way of example of the nature of our work, it is evident that the scope of our work has become as extensive as life itself. Necessarily, therefore, practical work was done only in a very few instances. Most of the work consisted of preliminary investigations and consolidation and focussing of opinion on these subjects. This has exposed us to criticism from many quarters, which we must determine to live down by devoting ourselves afresh to the task before us.

Amongst the subjects chosen for discussion at the present session and for work during the coming year, I would like to offer a few remarks on untouchability and communal unity from the social group and cottage industries and housing from the economic group.

Removal of untouchability is my own subject and I can say from experience that work in that sphere is most elevating. It brings us nearer

to the realization of *Ahimsa*, it helps us to see ourselves in the true perspective as perpetrators of terrible injustices on a vast community for which each one of us is individually and collectively responsible. Harijan service, like the worship of God, lifts one morally to a higher plane. It is like the redemption of a crushing debt which relieves the soul of its heavy burden. A little contribution made towards the removal of untouchability, a little effort made to bring light and cheer into the dismal life of these victims of our oppression will lift us as individuals and as a nation to a higher level. (Applause). I invite all sister delegates present here and through them the women of the whole country to make the experiment and test the truth of my assertion. This is not the place for me to give practical suggestions for work. I have been making suggestions throughout the last many years. Not much direction is needed when the heart is given. It knows how to make its own way. I, therefore, make a general appeal for women to take up this work as their very own. Some of our branches are doing a little in that connection, and I am grateful to them. But much greater effort is needed and I am sorry to observe that women's contribution to the work is not anything to be proud of. We may not forget that the achievement of our freedom is impossible till we have rectified this great wrong. The awakening amongst the Harijans is growing very fast with the education they are receiving, but the prejudices of the caste Hindus are not dying out with the same rapidity. This breeds a resentful attitude amongst the Harijans which weakens the growth of the whole nation. Even from the point of view of national freedom, untouchability must go.

Communal unity is another allied chosen subject of the year. Its achievement for our national advance is as fundamental as the removal of untouchability. The nature of this problem bears affinity to the problem of untouchability. If anything it perhaps is more acute and requires more delicate handling. It is a mixture of political, economic and religious elements made complex and difficult of solution by the presence of a third and interested party. But we may not put the blame on the third party and seek absolution of responsibility for ourselves (Hear, hear). The very fact that the third party succeeds in creating or augmenting schisms amongst us shows our weakness. For the removal of that weakness ways and means must be found. The Women's Conference has done a considerable amount to bring the women of all com-

munities on a common platform. I can vouch for the fact that amongst us there are no distinctions of caste or creed. We do not even remember which religion or community we belong to. On the platform of the Conference we are just women serving the cause of women and the motherland (Applause). But we have not yet been able to take this amity and good-will further than the boundaries of our Conference. We ought to make an effort to do this. One point which I would like to bring to the notice of the delegates is that the number of our Muslim members and delegates is small. Great attention should be paid to increase their number and I request my Muslim sister delegates to make it their special concern for the next year. Without their earnest co-operation this work cannot be accomplished. The end of the year must show a large increase of Muslim members on our registers. That in itself will bring the two sister communities a step nearer (Applause).

From the economic group one of the subjects that I have chosen for comment is "Cottage Industries". We may not lose ourselves in academical discussions on the comparative merits and demerits of cottage versus large scale industries. We may only remember that under the present conditions, cottage industries in India are a necessity. It is through them alone that the starving millions can get their daily bread. Our time should, therefore, be spent in devising means for their promotion. The starting of training centres, of sales depôts, propaganda and several other ways are open to us; but the most effective way is personal patronage. *Khadi* of course is the centre of all village industries. There are not many *khadi* wearers amongst our members. I appeal for a respectable place for *khadi* in the wardrobes of our members (continued Cheers). *Khadi* is an acquired taste and its beauties can be perceived by cultivation. Even its roughness has a charm. It is life-giving to the poor and peace-giving to the rich (Cheers). An assembly of women, dressed in pure white *khadi* is a feast to the eye. *Khadi* is a symbol of our love for suppressed humanity, (Loud applause), it is an expression of our will to be free. Members of a nationalist organisation like ours should consider themselves morally bound to wear *khadi* (Hear, hear). And closely connected with *khadi* is spinning. Sacrificial spinning is as ennobling as Harijan *seva* (Hear, hear). Every turn of the wheel and every thread that is spun brings one nearer

to the masses. It breeds a mentality which smarts under the injustices of the current social and economic system and strengthens the determination to change it by non-violent means. I, therefore, appeal to our members to take to daily sacrificial spinning which will automatically make them supporters of *khadi* and of village industries (Cheers).

Now I come to the last subject, that of "housing". The paucity of houses in India is astounding. In a country of nearly four hundred million inhabitants, the poor have hardly any houses to live in. Only those who have travelled widely in the interior of the country and have closely studied the question can have an adequate idea of the sufferings caused to men and women on account of lack of houses. Over-crowding in cities is particularly deplorable. Hundreds of thousands of people spend their lives cramped up in hovels called houses by courtesy. It is not within our scope or within our power to make up for this deficiency. But we can do something in arousing social conscience against this evil. We can remind the governments and local authorities, the rich and the educated classes that it is their responsibility to take the dumb toiling millions out of this veritable hell. Lack of money should make no excuse. The need is so imminent that if no other means are available, money should be borrowed for building purposes by governments and local boards. Co-operative Housing Societies should be promoted by the people themselves and moneyed people should be persuaded to invest their money in housing schemes. House rents should be regulated by law to prevent the worst type of exploitation. I have seen landlords taking enormous rents ranging from Rs. 4 to 8 for tiny little dingy one-room tenements without any amenities. This sort of exploitation must be stopped forthwith. Owners of agricultural lands should be compelled by law to give decent houses to their tenants. The duty of our Conference is to bring these facts before the public and to persuade them to rectify these.

I must now say a few words about non-violence in which we have repeatedly declared our unflinching faith. An Indian women's organisation could do nothing less. Non-violence is inbred in an Indian woman. She carries its impress on her soul. The traditions in which she is brought up, the deprivations she has to go through in life, the *sanskars* with which she is born or her inherited genius all make her a suitable medium for the

expression of non-violence. But that which has been so far latent, has to be made patent. At present an Indian woman's non-violence savours of the non-violence of the weak and the helpless. As such it is worthless. It requires a conscious training to turn it into the non-violence of the strong, without which it cannot acquire the power to resist vice and violence. In the practice of non-violence in life Mahatma Gandhi expects more from women than from men. Let us by constant effort at self-purification make ourselves worthy of this trust. The best training centres for non-violence are our own homes. But a search-light has to be turned ever inwards and a constant watch kept on ourselves to make sure that from day to day the boundaries of our family are extending and the mother's heart is constantly getting bigger to bring within its compass the whole of humanity. (Cheers).

Our responsibility is great. We should never forget that lip service to a cause is worse than no service at all (Hear, hear). It weakens us as well as the cause. Truth and honesty demand that we practise what we preach. I, therefore, commend it to our members to give serious thought to the ways and means of realizing non-violence in their individual lives. I would suggest a serious study of Gandhian literature. The extension of non-violence from the individual to the group, its application to national and international matters is a new experiment with a technique evolved by Gandhiji in the laboratory of his life in which all through he has experimented with truth. It is a glory and a privilege to be born in his time and be his contemporary. We must do all in our power to deserve that privilege.

In the end I must say how happy I am to be here with you this afternoon. South India and particularly the State of Mysore is like a second home to me, where I spent several happy months a few years ago. I am grateful for the hospitality offered to the Conference by the women of Mysore amongst whom I have several old and beloved friends and whom I am so happy to meet again. I feel grieved that His late Highness the Maharaja Saheb whom I had the privilege of knowing, is no more in this world. But I know that he is still alive in the hearts of his subjects where he has made an abiding place for himself (Applause).

One last word and I have finished. To those of my brothers who do not agree with the policy of the Women's Conference, who see danger in our demand for freedom and sex equality, I say cast off these fears and have trust in us. We shall not fail you nor lose our balance (Hear, hear). And even if we do momentarily, I say, to err in freedom is better than to keep straight in slavery (Hear, hear, applause). The spectres of disintegration, of disorder, of sex war that haunt some of you occasionally are phantoms of the imagination (Laughter). There can be no war between the mother and son, between the father and daughter, brother and sister, husband and wife. And if there can be no war between them, there can be none between man and woman. We have no bitterness in our movement (Hear, hear). None is likely to come in. All that we want is to establish equity and fairplay between the relations of man and woman as well as man and man (Laughter). That is the only foundation on which a stable structure of civilized society can be built (Applause).

To my co-workers and sister delegates, I want to say this last word that more service is demanded of us, more dedication is called for. Work from where you stand, where destiny has placed you. Do your best to finish with the old world of tyranny and exploitation and lend your helping hand to bring in the new era of peace and goodwill (Prolonged Cheers).

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Mrs. S. Nanjamma mentioned that she was requested to translate the Presidential Address into Kannada. Mrs. Nanjamma informed the audience that as the translation was voluminous, and as only five minutes were given to her to speak on the salient points in the Presidential Address she requested the audience to go through the entire speech in Kannada, published in the local dailies. And Mrs. Nanjamma for her part gave in a nutshell the important things mentioned in the Presidential Address.

Other Addresses.

The President mentioned that the written address of Sir Mirza M. Ismail would be read by Rajamantrapravina N. Madhava Rao, B.A., B.L., First Member of Council.

Rajamantrapravina N. Madhava Rao before reading the Address of Sir Mirza M. Ismail said :—

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am sure you miss Sir Mirza M. Ismail who was to have read the Address at this Conference. He has been unable to come, but he has tried to mitigate the disappointment that this would cause by committing to writing the thoughts he wanted to communicate to this Conference and he has asked me to read his address at this Conference.

After expressing these few words he read the Address of Sir Mirza Ismail :—

Ladies,

I am not using the language of conventionality and formality when I say that I am deeply gratified at having the privilege of addressing this Conference. This is your first meeting in the Mysore State. Most heartily do I bid you welcome, both as the official head of the Administration and as an individual interested in the welfare and advancement of humanity.

You have chosen Mysore as the venue of your Meeting. That is an event of moment. Your Conference consists of a large and influential gathering of the most intelligent, alert and cultured women. Nothing crosses your attention without that most valuable aid to human progress, criticism, balanced criticism. But just as you are capable of balanced criticism, so you are capable of something which, in this imperfect world, is rarer and perhaps more valuable, appreciation. Women are ever ready to recognize and appreciate any advance, however small. And they are ready to render thanks for such advance.

Now since we know that you can appreciate, we are anxious that you should appreciate Mysore. You have put us on our best behaviour! Especially we want you to appreciate the things in Mysore State, in which you are particularly interested, for example, our hospitals and provision for medical aid for women and children.

My opinion and yours might not always tally in regard to the question as to what subjects it would be necessary and expedient to discuss. But apart from these occasional differences of opinion there is one thing about which there can be no possible difference of opinion at all. And that is the value of the work that you have done and are doing by these conferences. The value of that work is threefold. It is work on behalf of women. It is work for Indian women and it is work for the benefit of men and women conjointly.

Apart from the general value of your work, your Conference arose at a most critical time. The womanhood of India required leadership and guidance; the experience, the sagacity of highminded Indian women were required to guide their vast sisterhood through the maze of ideas, doctrines, policies and ideologies of the modern world. Guidance and sometimes restraint were needed in the case of those who felt the impulse to carry a new-found freedom to extremes. And you had to preach the sobering doctrine of service, in education, social life and public activities. In this sphere you have earned the garland of success. Since the advent of the parent organization, the Women's Indian Association, twenty-five years ago, the position of women, particularly in social and legislative activities, has undergone a revolution. The same may be said of the general attitude to the place of women in life. In your work you have had before you the inspiring examples of both Hindu and Muslim women whose names are renowned in the history of India, and to come nearer to our own times, you have been stimulated by the shining example of a number of your contemporaries, whose names will be carried with the passing of time into the lasting annals of high disinterested service.

What seems to me one of the most important features of your work is what I may call its cosmopolitan character. The purpose which the All-India Women's Conference has steadfastly kept before it is to become and to be the forum of all ranks of society and shades of opinion. Here are no air-tight compartments, no barriers of caste, creed, opinion or rank. Your view-point is the All-India view-point. Your fundamental principle of unity in this matter is close to my own conviction. For this adherence to an All-India view of women's work I offer you my cordial congratulations. Your assemblage today includes women of different

faiths, some born into that ancient faith held by the larger part of the people of India, others adherents of the faith into which I myself was born, and still others of different faiths from these. But here you meet on the basis of your essential sisterhood. As long as you retain this sense of fundamental human unity, whatever criticism you may meet, you cannot go far wrong. At a time when the infection of communal disunity is being carried into the remotest villages of India, yours is a great opportunity, I should say also a high duty, to carry far and wide the disinfecting gospel of the unity of womanhood. (Cheers).

In the complicated organisation of life today it may be that women will be more concerned with one department of life and men with others. But at the centre, at the centre of life itself, there can be no dividing line between man and woman. We must not confuse the unessential with the essential.

Now the centre of life is, has been, and ever will be the home. At that centre, the home, is woman. Man, by reason of the many necessities and complications of his life, often is impelled towards the outer circumference. But he also feels and responds to the inward pull of home. Woman, however, is at the centre all the time. Her pre-occupations are more with living beings and their essential needs than with the manipulation of useful and important but inanimate properties and interests. Woman is more concerned with life than with stock-markets and red tape.

We are all looking forward hopefully, anxiously, to the new world when the noise of battle shall have ceased and the din of political dissension shall have quietened. In the work of reconstructing that new world you and your sisters all over the world will be required. Your influence will be needed to help in the establishment of a world order based not on the flimsy pretexts of social or religious affinities or economic interest but on the unshakable foundation of common needs and experiences and aspirations. This is the field in which women can play an important and appropriate part.

Much of the credit for the entry of women into the public life of the country is due to the All-India Women's Conference, and I look forward with confidence to even greater efforts by it in the strenuous and testing years on which India, with the rest of the world, has entered.

I learn from Resolutions of former sessions of the Conference that it has expressed itself as against war. In doing so it is at one with all decent human beings whose ideal of their race is higher than that of predatory and man-slaying animals. We are all against war and in favour of peace, just as all doctors and all patients are against disease and in favour of health. But when disease comes we have got to meet it with all available means or perish, and it is not in the nature of the mass of human beings to connive at their own annihilation.

With your Conference, Ladies, rests the important work of seeking out the causes of the disease of war, and not merely neutralizing those causes by palliatives, but abolishing them by creating conditions of thought and feeling that will make their reappearance impossible.

In regard to the work which lies before you the value of this Conference is evident. Your thoughts are clarified and enriched by the interplay of sincere and well-furnished minds. The will is directed by thought and from will there comes action. So we may regard these proceedings as the main-spring of prime motive of those activities of yours which, I am confident, will have very beneficial results.

Ladies, to this session of the All-India Women's Conference, which meets not only for the first time in Mysore, but also at the happy beginning of the reign of His Highness Sri Jaya Chamaraja Wadhiyar Bahadur, to whom I know you offer your congratulations and blessing, I tender a most hearty welcome and every wish for the success of its deliberations.

Rajamantrapravina N. Madhava Rao was then garlanded.

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Rajamantrapravina K.V. Anantraman, Second Member of Council, made these preliminary remarks before reading the address:—

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am not in the programme, but I am demanded to speak. I really feel that after the excellent addresses that have been delivered to you

today it is rather superfluous for me to attempt to address you. But still as, "OBEY" is the order of the future regime, I have readily accepted the invitation.

I have been asked by the organizers of this Conference to address a few words to you. I am deeply conscious of the honour they have done me but I must say that I feel very diffident about my competency to undertake the task. I am also apprehensive lest my temerity to lecture to you should be interpreted as a trace of that alleged original sin of man to keep women in a position of inferiority and subjection. Our distinguished countrywoman who presided over last year's All-India Women's Conference, and whom we have the pleasure of having with us here to-day, described us as selfish and greedy, and anxious to get away with the whole cake. We were dubbed as "Hitlers of the home". In the presence of such scathing critics, you will realise how embarrassing it is for a mere man to face such a distinguished concourse of ladies who have gathered together from all parts of India to advance the cause of women in every department of life.

I have been watching the growth of the women's movement in our State and outside. The remarkable success that the movement has achieved in a comparatively short space of time augurs well for its future. You have received unstinted support from all sides. You have not had to resort to force to enforce your rights and obtain your demands as your sisters in England had to do. When your bugles were sounded the gates of the fortress have been thrown open. Women in our country have always occupied an honoured and respected position. Our sisters in ancient times were great votaries of the fine arts and learning. Women had a position equal in importance, dignity and influence to that of men. Saraswati is the Goddess of Vidya. In many parts of India, to millions of people the tutelary deity is a Goddess, whether she is called Chamundeswari or Durga, or Bhagavati or Kali. A man may not perform any *samskara* of importance without his wife by his side. This is not to say that women's position at present is ideal and that there is nothing more to be done. Historical causes, economical disturbances, obscurantist religious movements, conflicts between caste and caste and community and com-

munity have given rise to practices and customs which have gradually deteriorated the position of women. The deterioration has varied in intensity from place to place. May I assure you that in your examination of your difficulties and in your decisions regarding the methods you should adopt for removing them, you have our sincerest sympathy and that you have our whole-hearted co-operation?

If you will forgive me, may I point out that your propaganda is more efficient than even that of Hitler's Goebbels. With your fifth columnist in every home, your success will be as complete as it will be speedy.

Dr. J. H. Cousins, addressing the delegates, said :—

You have assembled here to hold the fifteenth session of the All-India Women's Conference. Fifteen years is a considerable time from the birth of an organization, and as I happen to have been an observer, even in some respects a helper, at the birth of the Conference, I should like to remind those of you who may not be aware of the fact, that its ancestry is a much more complicated matter than the simple name of the Conference would seem to indicate. It began when an English educational official in Bengal asked for a statement of what the women of India wanted in education, so that he and others engaged in the administration of education might be guided in their work. The request was heard by an elderly gentleman of French extraction who had accidentally attended the meeting at which it was made, because his daughter, then married to a Dutchman in Sind, has been Principal of the Women's College in Calcutta in which the meeting was held. He carried the request across the Continent to his daughter who transmitted it to the joint secretaries of the Women's Indian Association at Adyar, Madras. One of these was a Scottish Englishwoman married to a Cingalese. The other was an Irishwoman who was married to an Irishman. She has been referred to by a previous speaker as the mother of the Conference. Although the detailed preparations for the birth of the organization were concocted in my home, I do not aspire to the title of the father of the Conference. I should be satisfied with the humble designation of member-in-law.

Out of this French-Dutch-Scottish-English-Cingalese-Irish and Indian ancestry came the first All-India Women's Conference. It was intended to be the only one, and to present an authoritative statement

regarding women's education in India based on common needs and local variations. But the inspiration and happiness that the delegates discovered in their coming together in the service of an ideal led to the establishment of an annual Conference and to the development of activities into all that concerned the welfare of women and children, indeed of the whole humanity of India. And now the first experimental Conference has grown into this great gathering of women from all parts of India intent on the highest service of their vast sisterhood. You are now, as an organization fourteen years old, and there are no signs observable that you are approaching a termination. Like Tennyson's Brook you may say :—

We chatter, chatter as we flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But we go on for ever.

I am sure you all wish Sir Mirza Ismail to know how much we miss his presence this evening. We all wish him a speedy recovery from the accident that overtook him. Like all creators of good and beautiful things for the service of the people, Sir Mirza shares in a large measure the characteristics of constructiveness and human feeling that specially belong to womanhood. We are all, we men, an amalgam of manhood and womanhood, but only a very small percentage of us make any effort like Sir Mirza Ismail to live up to our hereditary maternity. We concern ourselves less with the essentials of life than with its accessories, and because of this, the world is in its present parlous condition. We need more men of the Mirza stamp, and we need more women fired with the same enthusiasm and work for the service of the people, if the world is to be changed from the domination of separating ideologies to the freedom of human unity and mutual service, from the destructiveness that is unhappily a monopoly at present of manhood, to the creativeness that is happily preserved by womanhood, and that, let us hope in the near future, will become common to man and woman.

I am very happy to have had the opportunity of saying these few words to you, and I wish your session every blessing and usefulness not only to the women of India but to the women of all countries who need your idealism and selfless service,

Woman's Role in Reconstructing our National Life.**Speech by Mr. D. V. Gundappa at the All-India Women's Conference, Bangalore, 27th December, 1940.**

I have been invited to make a speech and I greatly value this opportunity of speaking to you. I shall submit my points without much explanation or argument.

First of all, I regard your Conference movement as a vital part of our national movement, and therefore as one that ought to be supported and strengthened by every one—man or woman—who wishes India well. This Conference is an invaluable limb of the agency necessary to plan and prepare for the reconstruction of the whole of our National life. Your Conference has already won recognition as such an institution.

Secondly, I wish to offer my tribute of admiration for the wisdom and patriotism of your leaders in having kept the movement clear of all influences and tendencies that narrow down patriotism into spheres smaller than our common motherland and introduce divisions into the citizen-body. We men find among ourselves not a few who are unable to see their country outside a group or sect or caste or race smaller than the Indian nation; and to whom the part is greater than the whole. You as mothers are familiar with the quarrels of children. When half a dozen of them raise a howl over their claims for a toy or a packet of sweets, you know by instinct how to quell the riot, whom to befriend and whom to neglect, whom to coax and whom to admonish. I think there is sore need for the exercise of similar motherly offices of tact and sense of equity and all-round goodwill towards our men politicians. If Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah would refer their differences for arbitration to the All-India Women's Conference, I have every hope they will be enabled to see some way out of their present difficulties. I say this in all seriousness; for there is nothing abstruse or recondite in the Hindu-Moslem question. What its solution needs, above all other things, is common sense brought to the service of a large-hearted love for the motherland; and our sisters are surely not poor in these qualities. I pray and trust nothing will be allowed to happen which can interfere with the unity and integrity of patriotism among our womanhood or can lessen

the efficacy of the lesson in the sense of civic community and national fellow-citizenship which they are now happily in a position to teach us.

Thirdly, I should like to invite attention to the necessity for our making clear to our own minds what is meant by *modern progress* and thinking fearlessly about its implications. Too frequently, a formula is prescribed to us that in our progress we must combine the best of our country's past with the best of what the West has to offer. But this formula, beautiful as it looks at first sight, is not easy to understand in a definite and precise manner with reference to any concrete problem of life or conduct. Our women too should delve into the *Dharma Sastras*. Without a critical revaluation of our inherited social code and customs, there can be no sound and healthy adjustment between our past and our future. Let us remember that modern progress means, among other things, the growing industrialisation of the country's economic structure, the growing urbanization of towns and villages, and the growing complexity of social relationships. Women will have to take their place by the side of men as fellow-workers in factories and workshops, in warehouses and offices, as well as in educational institutions and public assemblies. With such increased occasions of companionship and proximity are bound to arise all sorts of complications; and the traditional ideal of a woman expressed in the Sanskrit phrase—"a-suryambasya"—"One who never looked on even the sun"—is simply and absolutely impossible for all except a microscopic minority who are the favourites of fortune. Life is the sovereign factor for our consideration; and its demands must not be ignored or suppressed even in the honoured name of tradition and religion. Not to adjust ourselves to changing environment is to enfeeble and impoverish life; and that is neither a fair nor a grateful way of dealing with the first of God's gifts. I would therefore appeal to you that you should participate with men in the work of thinking about our social problems and offer your own independent solutions for their consideration. Not only in questions pertaining to the civil and political rights of women like those of inheritance and franchise, but also in regard to legislation affecting marriage, welfare measures like workmen's compensation and maternity benefit, matter of social hygiene, divorce laws and so forth, I wish your Conference would insist on its being given special

opportunities to study and offer its opinion and also to assist in the work of the committees of the legislature.

But what our national progress requires is not the enunciation of new or profound ideas so much as the intelligent and steadfast practice of certain well-ascertained and widely endorsed principles. If this Conference should prove to be more than an annual show and a pastime, its members should make it a point to translate the principles and ideals it adopts into acts of daily observance. I give my sincere good wishes for the practical and realistic success of the Conference.

* * *

Miss Cissy Cooray, Leader of the Ceylon Delegation, said :—

Sisters,

On behalf of the Ceylon Delegation I beg to convey our thanks to you for your kind invitation to attend the Conference and make your acquaintance and maintain friendly relations with our sisters of India.

I am voicing the sentiments of my colleagues and myself in stating that we are honoured to be here in your midst as representatives of our country.

These friendly discussions between the representatives of different countries embody the high ideals of internationalism whose essentials are co-operation and understanding the other's points of view. I need hardly state how far the value of those ideals are stressed by the present trend of world affairs.

The years that are to come will also mark the growing importance of woman's place in the life of the country. We who have been entrusted with the care and attention of the rising citizens during very important stages of their development feel that our interest, and where required, active participation in matters of national and international importance augur well for the future of the world.

As I stand here among you, my sisters of India, my thoughts retrace their steps far back along the passages of history, over 2000 years, when the great Emperor Dharmasoka's children, Prince Mahinda and Princess Sanghamitta, both members of the noble order of the Sangha, carried to Ceylon the Buddha Dharma, the message of India's greatest son, which



Delegation from Ceylon

Mrs. Gooneratnam Cooke, Mrs. Marjorie de Mel, Miss Cissy Cooray, Dr. Miss Ratnam,
Miss Avarbai Mehta

Left to Right

shines with untarnished radiance there up to this very date. This is neither the first nor the last of our associations with Mother India but it occupies a place significant in the glorious cavalcade of contacts which dates back to prehistoric times in that it strengthened the fabric of our national unity and uplifted the spiritual and cultural standard of our people.

On these stable foundations has been built a civilisation which has been further developed by our subsequent contact not only with India but also with an ever-increasing range of countries and cultures. From the different lands and peoples with whom we have been associated, from the Northern Indians from whom we claim descent, from the Chola and Tamil hosts who invaded us, from the Portuguese, Dutch and English occupations during the last 300 years, we have imbibed influences that have helped us to form a culture that is peculiarly our own.

Buddhism gave us the background to our ideals and formed the very fabric of our national life. The later South Indian invasions brought in their train Hindu customs and the system of caste. This institution assumed a far milder form among the Singhalese than in India as it received no sanction from Buddhism. The Portuguese introduced Christianity and a new mode of thought by converting large numbers of the population. The Dutch largely influenced our architecture, furniture, language and above all our laws. The Roman Dutch law still remains the general law of the Island. And the English in their turn have also influenced our manners and ways of life. The coming of these various peoples have given Ceylon a population of diverse races and creeds who live in perfect amity and accord. The culture that has thus been evolved had given us many rights and liberties denied to many other nations. The Singhalese of Ceylon have never imposed upon their women purdah. Monogamous marriage has been the general practice. Divorce has been made easy for men and women and there has been no prejudice whatsoever to the re-marriage of widows. Sons and daughters inherit property in equal shares if the parent dies intestate. The Married Women's Property Act gives woman full control over their own property. For the last decade full and equal political rights with men have been enjoyed by women. Such is our heritage and culture; we come to you bringing a message of good-will and hoping by contact with you all and by an exchange of views

to strengthen the bonds of friendship and cultural unity between our two countries.

I would like to close with a message of good-will in Pali from the Buddhist scriptures.

Rajacharitavisarada Rao Sahib C. Hayavadana Rao :—

Madam President, Delegates of the All-India Women's Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen,

While I am thankful to you for this opportunity to address an audience, exclusively made up of women delegates, and called under women's auspices, I am not sure whether the time is not come for this organisation to stop this courtesy to more men speakers at women's meetings. I am more free to say this, as the one lady speaker who was to have come after me has spoken earlier and has left the field free for me.

Men are by nature, let me say with your kind permission, courteous especially to audiences of this kind. But in their trepidation, nay, in their desire to be kind, and indeed in their anxiety to be polite make mistakes, for which, of course, they are held liable. Think of a mere man facing the whole sea of faces made up of women! Even the most sedate and stately man could possibly go wrong, and say much, he never intended. It was some such feeling or foreboding of possible trepidation, I think, that made Mr. Bernard Shaw, not long ago refuse an invitation to speak at a women's meeting. Returning thanks courteously for good-will thus shown, he gently, but firmly, refused the privilege extended to him, saying that he was quite sure that women could look after themselves very well, and though he had every sympathy with their cause he had no desire to make a fool of himself on their platform. (Laughter.)

Speaking however, I should like to refer to certain recent admonitions to women generally. Addressing the women audience at a recent meeting at Delhi, Sir Maurice Gwyer, the distinguished Chief Justice of India, suggested that as women had not any large share of responsibility for the evils that now threaten to engulf the world, they might be expected to restore sanity and good-will to it. But curiously enough, he said that

they could do this only by keeping their movement—the women's movement—out of politics. The logic of this suggestion is not quite clear to my mind at any rate. The women ought to restore sanity. They can do so, only by taking full part in the determination of political and economic questions, no less than social and educational. If women have kept a level head so far, there is no reason why they should keep their movement out of politics. Sir Maurice, it is to be feared, has different standards of measures to judge men and women. Yet, he ardently pleaded for common standard for the purpose—which shows that he is on the road to conversion. Another speaker at the same Conference, Sir Mahomed Zafullah Khan, Legal Member of Council, stressed the spiritual identity of man and woman and justly ridiculed the suggestion that one was superior to the other. But it is remarkable that he naively added that it is the purpose of God that man has to-day harder work and the woman the more gentler. Theology is dangerous ground to tread and I should like to avoid it. The more we keep away from theology the better it would be for all parties concerned.

A third speaker, our good friend, Mr. S. Satyamurthi, speaking at the same meeting, made certain extraordinary suggestions which coming from him, seemed really of a kind which require consideration. While we conceded equality under the law, he suggested that none could abolish God-made distinctions. Are women so represented by this Conference asking for these? Grant equality, but stress difference! That is a new way to deal, I should say, with the women's questions in this country. But the worst suggestion offered by him was that women should do outside their homes what they are accustomed to in the home. That is just to call up the confusion, clatter, quarrel that men create around themselves inside or outside their homes. He suggested for work outside the house the following departments for women: Sanitation, public health, eradication of communalism, removal of suffering, ignorance and superstition, and soothing in a general way all the absurdities created by men, mostly in public life. The lesson in De'Tocqueville or Mill may not be amiss. I am not too delighted in suggestions such as these.

The fact of the matter is that men are still thinking of women in a manner, that is not justified by the age we live in. The movement in

favour of the juster few towards women began in 1869 when Mill issued his famous "Subjection of Women". He based his plea for their emancipation partly on the broad ground that modern conditions require a modern reorientation of views in regard to women. He held that women's position was the only exception to the peculiar character the world had assumed in his own time, *i.e.*, about the middle of the 19th century. The time was passed, he said, when human beings could be held to have been born of their place in life and joined down by an inexorable bond to the place they are born to. They are, he held, free to employ their faculties and such favourable chances as offer to achieve the end which may appear to be most desirable. It was, he said, over-stepping limits of authority to fix beforehand on some presumption that certain persons are not to do certain things. He was for joint self-development, for, true democracy meant that and that only. When he was told that people were not ready, and that, being ignorant they were likely to be led away by agitators, that women, they only in personal terms, were even more ignorant and liable to be led astray, his reply was prompt. He said frankly that they would learn, and could learn only by experience and practice. Mill was undoubtedly a believer in straight education. But he also held that the main branch of the education of human beings is their habitual employment, which must be their individual vocation, or some matter of joint concern, in which they are called to take part. Whatever acts on the mind of man or woman is properly his or her education. But his or her mind, like those of others, is acted upon by the whole of his or her social circumstance. Society educates those belonging to it for good or for ill by its contact to them, even more than by direct teaching. From this point of view Mill was a warm supporter of the cause of WOMEN as of LABOUR. From this point of view again he advocated fullest democracy—that is genuine democracy. But while he worked for political freedom for women and for the down-trodden of his times in his own country the question of economic freedom was left behind from the practical, realistic point of view. And, if the women's cause was lagging behind for a long time, for long after his time, it was due to the fact that woman in England was still economically not free. It required, I need not say, the passing of a number of Married Women's Property Acts to enfranchise women in their own household, to make them get beyond

the stage of mere domestic chattel. Indeed the question of economic freedom of women assumes larger proportions when we think of the work that yet remains, if democracy is to win through. Why has political freedom not emancipated the majority in England? Why has universal suffrage left power in the hands of upper and middle classes yet? Those orders of society have not accepted democracy in the sense in which Mill meant it as connoting genuine equality. Is it not because they have never seen the needs of women and of the poor in every matter as really on the same footing as their own? Is it not because they have preferred economic power and privilege for themselves, as opposed to the practical enslavement of their fellows. More than all is it not true that their system has largely been unfortunately accepted by poor? While women have shown better spirit and have fought for their rights as none else have done in western democratic countries, the history of the fight for the franchise by women in England since the days of Mrs. Fawcett and shows more than anything else the fight that was necessary to establish political equality in England. Mr. Asquith, the great radical leader, was the sternest and most violent opponent of women's rights in England during the height of the women's fight in that country. It is extraordinary, when we reflect upon it all, how one like him should have opposed to the expansion of women's rights of franchise as he did, especially considering the times he lived in. It required indeed two world wars to make Mr. Churchill—but he typifies the England of to-day—wish for

“The forward march of the common people in all lines towards their just and proper inheritance.”

Nor can women be forgotten in the changes coming off in this country. The equality that democracy inculcates is the equality of opportunities which Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru has so ardently pleaded in her address of to-day, the equality of opportunities for all men and women, for there can be no equality without equality of success as well in all departments of activities. When economic freedom in democratic society can exist, such freedom should be yours. First and foremost, if you are to progress, it should be your chief aim to secure it without delay.

One suggestion I would make before concluding. I would ask you to organise your work in such a way that you work throughout the

favour of the juster few towards women began in 1869 when Mill issued his famous "Subjection of Women". He based his plea for their emancipation partly on the broad ground that modern conditions require a modern reorientation of views in regard to women. He held that women's position was the only exception to the peculiar character the world had assumed in his own time, *i.e.*, about the middle of the 19th century. The time was passed, he said, when human beings could be held to have been born of their place in life and joined down by an inexorable bond to the place they are born to. They are, he held, free to employ their faculties and such favourable chances as offer to achieve the end which may appear to be most desirable. 'It was, he said, over-stepping limits of authority to fix beforehand on some presumption that certain persons are not to do certain things. He was for joint self-development, for, true democracy meant that and that only. When he was told that people were not ready, and that, being ignorant they were likely to be led away by agitators, that women, they only in personal terms, were even more ignorant and liable to be led astray, his reply was prompt. He said frankly that they would learn, and could learn only by experience and practice. Mill was undoubtedly a believer in straight education. But he also held that the main branch of the education of human beings is their habitual employment, which must be their individual vocation, or some matter of joint concern, in which they are called to take part. Whatever acts on the mind of man or woman is properly his or her education. But his or her mind, like those of others, is acted upon by the whole of his or her social circumstance. Society educates those belonging to it for good or for ill by its contact to them, even more than by direct teaching. From this point of view Mill was a warm supporter of the cause of WOMEN as of LABOUR. From this point of view again he advocated fullest democracy—that is genuine democracy. But while he worked for political freedom for women and for the down-trodden of his times in his own country the question of economic freedom was left behind from the practical, realistic point of view. And, if the women's cause was lagging behind for a long time, for long after his time, it was due to the fact that woman in England was still economically not free. It required, I need not say, the passing of a number of Married Women's Property Acts to enfranchise women in their own household, to make them get beyond

the stage of mere domestic chattel. Indeed the question of economic freedom of women assumes larger proportions when we think of the work that yet remains, if democracy is to win through. Why has political freedom not emancipated the majority in England? Why has universal suffrage left power in the hands of upper and middle classes yet? Those orders of society have not accepted democracy in the sense in which Mill meant it as connoting genuine equality. Is it not because they have never seen the needs of women and of the poor in every matter as really on the same footing as their own? Is it not because they have preferred economic power and privilege for themselves, as opposed to the practical enslavement of their fellows. More than all is it not true that their system has largely been unfortunately accepted by poor? While women have shown better spirit and have fought for their rights as none else have done in western democratic countries, the history of the fight for the franchise by women in England since the days of Mrs. Fawcett and shows more than anything else the fight that was necessary to establish political equality in England. Mr. Asquith, the great radical leader, was the sternest and most violent opponent of women's rights in England during the height of the women's fight in that country. It is extraordinary, when we reflect upon it all, how one like him should have opposed to the expansion of women's rights of franchise as he did, especially considering the times he lived in. It required indeed two world wars to make Mr. Churchill—but he typifies the England of to-day—wish for

“The forward march of the common people in all lines towards their just and proper inheritance.”

Nor can women be forgotten in the changes coming off in this country. The equality that democracy inculcates is the equality of opportunities which Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru has so ardently pleaded in her address of to-day, the equality of opportunities for all men and women, for there can be no equality without equality of success as well in all departments of activities. When economic freedom in democratic society can exist, such freedom should be yours. First and foremost, if you are to progress, it should be your chief aim to secure it without delay.

One suggestion I would make before concluding. I would ask you to organise your work in such a way that you work throughout the

year instead of holding an active session like this at its end and then go on waiting for another year to complete. If you can set up a good and stable Working Committee you can watch the progress achieved and help to garner the results on a larger scale. I wish you all success and thank you for your kindly hearing.

Then Rajacharitavisarada Rao Sahib C. Hayavadana Rao was garlanded.

Proposing a vote of thanks to the President, to the speakers of the evening and to the visitors to the meeting **Mrs. Cousins** said :—

Friends,

At this late hour of the evening, I will only very formally speak what is very much in our hearts as members of this Conference and simply say that our hearts are full of thankfulness and gratitude to the members of the Mysore State Women's Conference, Mysore constituency of the All-India Women's Conference, and we thank you from our hearts for the amount of work you have already put in, in getting this splendid meeting and in getting all the other arrangements made for the reception of delegates from other places and we also particularly thank you, in Bangalore, for having arranged this meeting for the first time, of our Women's Conference in your State open to men and women together. Here you have gone a step further and we thank you for taking that step and we thank all who are working for our happiness and for making this function a success.

With the singing of the Indian National Anthem and of the Mysore National Anthem the function terminated at about 7-45 p.m.

ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, BANGALORE.

First Sitting, 28th December, 1940.

9-20 a.m.—12-40 p.m.

The first sitting of the Conference commenced at 9-20 a.m., with Mrs. Brijlal Nehru in the chair. The proceedings of the Conference were conducted in the English language and at each step the reports were translated into the Kannada and the Hindustani languages.

The proceedings of the day commenced with the following two condolence resolutions:—

- (a) The Association of the All-India Women's Conference places on record its sense of deep regret at the passing away of Mysore's great and noble ruler, His Highness the Maharaja Sri Krishnarajendra Wadiyar Bahadur and of his distinguished brother His Highness Sri Narasimha Wadiyar Bahadur, the Yuvaraja of Mysore. It offers to the members of the Royal family and to all the people of this State their deepest sympathy and condolences.
- (b) We deeply regret the passing away of the Dowager Lady Cowasji Jehangir whose services to the cause of Indian women will be long remembered.

The following reports were then read and adopted by the Conference.

Message from the Liaison Group in Great Britain to the annual session of the All-India Women's Conference.

We send to our sisters in India our greetings and best wishes for a fruitful Conference. We know that you and we have the honour and responsibility of living at a great formative period of history. Now we suffer birth pangs, later we shall welcome the new birth. We see our men and women courageous and gay, determined and tireless under daily

and nightly dangers, and we hope that, forged in this furnace, we shall emerge resolute to wage war, not on mortal foes, but on poverty and disease, and that we shall widen our liberties and broaden our responsibilities. Without that hope we could not go on. To you we send our fervent wishes that you may gain the same liberties and responsibilities without war, that you may wisely guide your great country into unity, peace and prosperity, and, linking hands and hearts with China, lead Asia to spiritual victory.

Report from Liaison Officer in Great Britain.

The Liaison Group in Great Britain find it hard to draw up an annual report on any co-operation it has given to the A.-I.W.C. this year, as its activities have been greatly restricted owing to war conditions. We believe that our sisters in India will understand and forgive. The Committee has seldom been able to meet, as its members are dispersed, some on special war time active jobs and some tied to their own locality. Meetings and receptions have had to be abandoned, and all kinds of publicity have become very difficult. We are glad that Agatha Harrison has been able to carry on her work for India, and maintain her close links, and she has done much to make good where the Liaison Officer, through force of circumstances, has found it almost impossible to carry on. But, in spite of what may appear to be a sterile year as regards co-operation with the All-India Women's Conference we would assure all officers and members that our interest and sympathy are unabated, and that we look forward to the day, when vital contacts will again be renewed, with fresh vigour and enthusiasm. We know that when the agony of the war is over, we can never go back to the world as we knew it before, or attempt to reconstruct it on the old lines. Our one desire is that this time peace may be built on surer and more lasting foundations, and that a new sense of the need for co-operation, and mutual respect and the realisation of inter-dependence among the nations may develop, and we look forward already with confidence to the part that India, with new found liberty and unity, will play in helping to restore the world to sanity, decency and hope.

G. Lankester.

Liaison Report**Mrs. S. N. Ray, Liaison Officer in India.**

There is very little to report in regard to the Liaison work during this year. Due to the war and abnormal conditions prevailing in Britain and other European countries it has not been possible to keep in contact as before. There have been very few letters from Mrs. Lankester and these have been delayed in transit. The last letter received from Mrs. Lankester was August 1, and received in October and with this she has included Mrs. Cobbet Ashby's views regarding the British women's standpoint on the war. At the same time I also had a letter from Miss Agatha Harrison on the same question and the attitude to India. These letters are being attached for the consideration of the S. C. Mrs. Lankester also sent her impressions which has been printed in the "Roshni".

Earlier in the year, the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship sent an invitation to a meeting to be held in May and enclosed a questionnaire. A reply to this questionnaire was sent by our President, Begum Hamid Ali. The Social Affairs Committee of the League of Nations have continued to send their publications from Geneva, but there is nothing of particular interest.

Madam Chiang-kai-Sheik, wrote welcoming a delegation of Indian women to China in October and arrangements were made for at least two or three delegates to go on this Goodwill Mission. Unfortunately the plan has since had to be abandoned for the present.

Contact is being maintained with one or two women's organisations in the U.S.A. The "Business and Professional Women Organisation" of California send their quarterly bulletin to us. Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan and Kamala Devi have continued to do useful propaganda for the Indian women's cause and that of Indians in the U.S.A.

It is not possible for the Liaison group in England to maintain contact with us as before, due to the grim struggle they are facing, but among these friends of India they are making a valiant effort to induce the British Government to see the Indian point of view. Quoting from Mrs. Lankester's letter she says "one feels that the war is now getting to a very grim stage and one can only live from day to day. One thing is different, I think,

to the last world-war and that is that people are thinking very furiously about the sort of peace that should be made when this ghastly war is over. A great many study groups are formed and that is where I hope we will face up to the question of India". Miss Agatha Harrison writes "in spite of the preoccupation with events nearer at hand, there is persistent effort to bring about an ending to the deadlock between us. We now have the Poona resolution before us and we are hoping that some move will now be made from this end. I send you my love and to my other friends in the All-India Women's Conference. It is grievous to think we can hear so little of each other during these days; but the links that bind us together are firm. In happier days we renew them again".

Report of the A.-I.W.E. Fund Association and the Lady Irwin College for 1940.

I have great pleasure in presenting this Report at the 15th session of the All-India Women's Conference. In it I wish to record a few of the more outstanding events of the year and to say something in particular about our new activities.

In the early part of this year, when the College had completed barely seven years of work, a formal inspection, arranged by the Government of India at the request of the Governing Body, took place and it is with no little pride that I can refer to the highly appreciative Report submitted by the Inspection Committee. The Staff, the equipment, the standard of work, the syllabus and several other details were commented upon as being—to quote from the Report—"highly efficient," "most satisfactory," "excellent," "comprehensive and practical," "quite adequate." It might be pertinent to add that the Inspection Committee spent nearly a week at the College, residing on the premises. They made a searching investigation into all the departments and carefully scrutinised students' note books and charts, office reports and files as well as other records and papers.

The Annual Meeting of the Governing Body was held just before this formal inspection but copies of the reports were circulated among all the members. Fortunately, however, the Report of the Reorganization Committee, appointed in 1939, arrived in time to be placed before

the meeting. This Report, too, meticulously drawn up by experts also, evinced a deep appreciation and, if I may say so, an understanding of the nature of our achievements, and offered useful suggestions for future developments. We cannot but be sufficiently grateful to these two Committees for their interest and invaluable help.

The successful working of the College, as we had anticipated, attracted as before a large number of students. The accommodation proved to be insufficient; and, though seven four-bedded dormitories were added during the Summer holidays, approximately fifty candidates had to be refused admission again this year. Because of the addition of new rooms the number of students on the roll could be raised from 76 to 116. This naturally necessitated the employment of a larger teaching staff. Their extra salaries, however, were met from the fees of the additional students.

The increase in the strength of the staff proved to be of great assistance in the launching and expansion of our scheme of Extension Classes and Refresher Courses. These classes were successfully conducted and attracted several local women. We intend to make them a regular feature of our activities.

Much of what I have to say of this year's work would be but repetitions of paragraphs that appeared in my previous Report, and, therefore, I need only briefly reiterate some of the points.

1. The demand for Domestic Science teachers was again far in excess of the supply.

2. The students continued to be drawn from all the provinces and most of the major Indian States and about 50 per cent. of them possessed qualifications higher than the Matriculation, a fair proportion of these being graduates.

3. Extra-curricular activities and hobbies were as popular as before and interest in extra-mural lectures was maintained. Physical Culture and spinning were recently introduced.

4. The results of the Diploma and other examinations were again satisfactory.

The Social Service and Rural work of the students deserves special mention. As this aspect of their life at the College has figured in previous reports, I need only touch on its new developments. Literacy classes and elementary educational talks were arranged for servants and their families, including their children, and simple medical aid also was rendered regularly. Sunday morning in the College grounds rang with the laughter of children as they played games and took part in competitive sports. Thus were the students able to import into the lives of these children a little of joy and a little of that healthy training that playing-fields and team games afford.

Visits to the village during the year proved to be more effective and evoked greater response because a medical woman accompanied the students and placed her service and knowledge at the disposal of the rural women. The students, with their growing contact with rural life, have become more keenly alive to their responsibility, and, in the course of the year, raised sufficient money for constructing a well in a village where it was sorely needed.

I should like to end this Report by thanking the kind friends and the Governments for the financial help they have so generously rendered. Mr. G. D. Birla, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Sahiba, Mrs. Rustomji Faridoonji, Mrs. B. L. Nehru, Rani Sahiba of Vizianagram, the Governments of Bombay, Punjab, Jind and Indore are among those, to whose valuable co-operation we owe so much of our success.

B. Sewa Singh Gill,

Honorary Secretary,

All-India Women's Education Fund Association and

The Lady Irwin College.

REPORT ON INDIGENOUS INDUSTRIES.

The country is sufficiently awakened to the urgency of developing Indigenous Industries. It is superfluous to dwell upon India's past greatness in her arts and industries and deplore her present condition. The people are fully aware of the causes for the decline of these industries, some of them being foreign competition, cheap machine-made articles, ignorance and poverty of the masses.

The Government too has awakened to the necessity of developing Indian Industries. Numerous committees have been formed to investigate India's industrial condition and to suggest remedies for reviving old industries and starting new ones. The recent report of the Bombay Economic and Industrial Survey Committee is a valuable document giving practical suggestions for the economic development and promotion of cottage industries. These books and the reports of the various committees, one and all, agree that unless the Government takes immediate steps to revive Indigenous Industries, they are in danger of being completely ruined. If Indigenous Industries are to thrive, the Government has to alter its tariff policy and put a limit on imports. The Government should also pay attention to other matters vitally connected with the industrial development of the country such as removal of illiteracy, financial help to workers, improved methods of production, new and attractive designs, marketing and transport facilities, co-operative societies, etc. India is prepared to take up any industry but she cannot do so without the sympathetic support of the Government.

We have spilt enough ink on paper upon the subject of encouraging Indigenous Industries and passed resolutions enough numbers of times on this subject. It is of no use giving a long catalogue of Indian Industries or to mention a few haphazard and half-hearted attempts that are being made both by the people and the Government. We should show some results by our concentrated efforts.

Now is the time for A.-I.W.C. to do some practical work in influencing the illiterate and ignorant rural population by taking a centre and creating an ideal village, where compulsory education, employment for all, a good water supply, efficient housing, good roads, gardens, a co-operative society, a library and reading room, a club, last but not least a charkha class will be provided for the well-being of villagers and where peace and plenty reign.

The A.-I.W.Ch., as to its credit the Lady Irwin College to teach Domestic Arts to girls, but it is not within the reach of the poor. Now it will do well to start a centre for the poor and the uneducated on the lines suggested. This may seem at first to be impracticable but the way

is there, if we will. There should be a missionary-like effort and the A-I.W.C. has been in existence long enough to have an experimental centre to carry out its ideals. I hope the members of the A-I.W.C. will give serious thought to this question and create an ideal Indian village for others to imitate. Some one has said "Some countries have been saved by their men but India must be saved by her women".

The subject is such a vast and complicated one that it takes an international aspect. To give one instance, the growth of coffee in Brazil has affected the coffee market in Mysore. Similarly other industries also are affected. At the coming Conference in Bangalore all the details of the question will be fully discussed. I expect the full co-operation of all the members in this effort and invite their valuable suggestions.

"It is better to have tried and failed
than never to have tried at all."

Kamamma H. Dasappa,

*Member in-charge of Indigenous Industries,
All-India Women's Conference, 1940.*

Report on the problem of Legal Disabilities of Women (1940-41.)

It is a deplorable thing to consider that because of disturbed political conditions, the possibility of progress in the work of the removal of women's Legal Disabilities has become very little.

Law-making on this subject is almost at a stand-still. The Committee appointed by the Government of India according to the Hedge Resolution, with Sir N. N. Sircar as its Chairman, to consider women's rights to maintenance and residence, has never been able to meet, and has quietly passed into non-existence.

A bill was introduced into the Central Legislature this year by Mr. A. C. Dutta, to amend the Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act of 1937. The contention was that the passage of the Act of 1937 caused

injustice to daughters with regard to inheritance. Mr. Dutta's Bill sought to restore to the daughter the position she occupied prior to the passage of the 1937 Act. This bill was rejected without a division.

Dr. Deshmukh has again introduced two bills in the Central Legislature; (1) A bill to provide for judicial separation and divorce among the Hindus; and (2) A bill to give Hindu married women a right to separate residence and maintenance under certain circumstances It appears from these bills that Dr. Deshmukh has not considered it advisable to go into detailed drafting of all requirements at this stage. He has thus given no definition clauses, neither is the explanation of judicial procedure that would be required is given. It may be pointed out on the other hand, that proposals for a Divorce Bill should be correctly defined, so that there would be no confusion in the interpretation of the measure, and unanimity of opinion can be secured in favour of such legislation. A far more serious objection to Dr. Deshmukh's proposals is his suggestion that we should accept separate residence and judicial separation as measures of temporary relief in case the actual provision of divorce from the marital bond cannot get legal backing. It may be pointed out that there is danger, that this compromising is very mischievous, as it would deter desirable divorce legislation for an unnecessary longer period.

It is necessary to consider the attitude that the All-India Women's Conference should adopt on such attempts at legislation. It has been sufficiently proved by now that all kind of piecemeal legislation, however well-meaning it may be, leads nowhere; and creates difficulties more than achieving any good. The All-India Women's Conference has definitely expressed its distrust at all kind of piecemeal legislation for the last four years. It may be suggested that the Conference should take a lead in educating public opinion on this point. We have backed up one Divorce Bill before this,—that one also being sponsored by Dr. Deshmukh—, on its principle. One of the reasons for the failure of that Bill was its entire lack of any definite proposals. By backing up such bills even in their principle, as we have done before this, we encourage public distrust in such measures. Our propaganda in their favour bears no result, it would seem, than this.

On the other hand, it is necessary that our Conference should take up the responsibility of getting bills drafted on various subjects of Women's Disabilities; and get them introduced in the legislatures through members sympathetic to our cause. We can then lend the full strength of our organisation by doing propaganda in our branches throughout the country. A bill has been drafted by the Bombay Social Reform Association which was recommended for approval by Srimati Sharadabehn Mehta, our Member-in-charge for Legal Disabilities last year. I have to recommend that we should take up the proposal of getting this bill introduced in the legislature during the coming year, with any improvements that we might like to suggest.

As regards propaganda work done in our branches, it appears from resolutions passed in the Constituent Conferences, that the work of propaganda regarding removal of legal disabilities is being continued as usual. From experience of work in the Maharastra and Bombay branches, it appears,—though this remark may not be true in the case of many other branches,—that the demand for removal of legal disabilities is no longer a matter of contention among our members. Passing resolutions on this subject has become a mere matter of form. It appears that it would be of some practical use if a definite measure is being backed up that would create more faith and enthusiasm in the work of the Conference.

Shanta Bhalerao,

Member-in-Charge of Legal Disabilities.

LITERACY AND ADULT EDUCATION.

A fairly full questionnaire of nearly thirty questions asking for information about conditions of literacy education both for children and adults, and the cost of such, was sent out to all our Branches as well as the different Provincial Governments and Municipalities.

I have received replies from the following :—

| Director of Public Instruction. | States. | Local Boards and Municipalities. | Our Own Branches. |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Bengal | Jammu and Kashmir | Bangalore | Moradabad Guzerat |
| United Provinces | Patiala | Dharwar | Silchar |
| C. P. and Berar | Hyderabad (Deccan) | Belgaum | Phaltan |
| N.-W. Frontier Province | .. | Quetta | Hyderabad (Deccan) |
| Madras | .. | Ahmednagar | Madras |
| | | Bandra | Calcutta |
| | | Surat | Baroda |
| | | Rawalpindi | Indore |
| | | | Poona |
| | | | Nagpur |
| | | | South Bombay |

I have also received replies from the Literacy Officer, Bombay, Assam, and the Educational Expansion Officer, Lucknow, the Lady Irwin College, and the Rural Reconstruction Association run by Mr. S. R. Bhagwat, President of the Bombay Provincial Committee on Adult

Education. Thus it will be seen that it is not possible for me to present an accurate or comprehensive report about literacy in India. But, none the less a fair amount of information has been collected and the beginning has been made. This collection of information must, I feel, be continued during the next year to make it really worthwhile. The Director and others have, in many cases, given me names of others, who may be useful in our inquiry, but unfortunately these people have not yet all replied to my questionnaire.

As regards the percentage of literacy for adult women, the variation in different parts is very great. Thus it is in :—

| | | |
|--|------|-----------|
| Bangalore (Civil and Military Station) | 23 | per cent. |
| Bengal | 1 | ” ” |
| Assam | 2.3 | ” ” |
| C.P. | 0.93 | ” ” |
| Indore State | 2.3 | ” ” |
| Guzerat | 3.2 | ” ” |
| Hyderabad (Deccan) | 1 | ” ” |
| Madras | 4.3 | ” ” |
| Bombay Province | 2.9 | ” ” |
| Bombay City | 17.3 | ” ” |

Education is compulsory in very, very few areas. From the replies sent to me, it will be seen that education is compulsory only in a very few cities, as per details below :—

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Bombay | Since last year for girls as well as for boys. |
| Dharwar | A part of the city only. |
| Dhulia | For girls as well as for boys. |
| Ahmednagar | Only for boys. |
| Bandra, Bombay | |
| Suburban Dist. | For boys as well as girls. |
| Chittagong | |
| Municipality | Only for boys. |
| Calcutta | Ward No. 9. |
| Surat | Since the last 20 years. |
| Madras | In 28 Municipalities, but it is compulsory in four of these for girls. |

Education is compulsory in Baroda State. But all people, even where there is compulsory education, report that it is not strictly enforced for various reasons. None the less, in certain areas, without compulsion, a very high percentage of the girls and boys of school-going age are at school—from 80 to 85 per cent. in Bombay City and Bangalore City.

An enquiry was made about the salaries paid to primary teachers. There is a very considerable variation in the salaries paid to teachers in different provinces, even in urban areas—varying from Rs. 15 to about Rs. 40 as the lowest salary in different urban areas, and from Rs. 30 to Rs. 150 as the highest salary. The averages of salaries for vast and large divisions give very inaccurate ideas, and hence the lowest and the highest rates are given.

As regards the adult work that has been undertaken, first by Governments and other Departments, I have been able to get the following information :—

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| N.-W.F. Province | Has no class for women. |
| Central Provinces | Has about 100 adult and night schools. These are really in the nature of primary schools, rather than literacy centres. There are 2 classes for women with 263 women in them. |
| Assam | Has a thousand literacy centres for men and women. |
| Bandra Municipality | Has one class with 39 men. |
| Bombay | The Bombay Committee for Literacy set up by the Government of Bombay has literacy classes of the duration of 4 months, and since April 1939, has run 1,400 classes at which 24,000 men and 3,000 women have been taught; of these 78 per cent. men and 71 per cent. women, stay the full term and achieve literacy. Our branch has run some 80 classes at which some 1,200 women have been made literate. |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Hyderabad (Deccan) | 52 classes for educating adults. |
| Madras | Some local bodies and private agencies maintain night schools for adult women. |

The time taken, according to the answers, varies considerably. Thus Indore reports a period of 3 months, while Hyderabad (Deccan) speaks of a year and a half, and the C.P. 2 years and Assam one year. In the Bombay Constituency and in the Bombay Literacy Classes run by the Government Committee, we have found that four months of regular attendance is quite sufficient for making an adult man or woman of the cities literate.

The costs vary considerably according to the method of payment. Thus Assam pays 4 annas per literate on results, whereas the C.P. pays the teacher Rs. 5 a month, and Bandra pays Rs. 10 a month. In women's classes in Bombay City we have had to pay from Rs. 10 to Rs. 20 a month, for, as women's classes have to be held very often in the day time, it is not possible to make use of the primary teacher who, in other cases, is paid a small extra charge to add to his monthly earnings. The N.-W.F. Province pays from Rs. 3 to Rs. 15 per year. Thus no fixed rates or costs for large and varied areas, such as this country, have been worked out. Hyderabad (Deccan) says it costs Rs. 8 to make a man literate, while Madras reports only Rs. 2. In Bombay on an average it costs us Rs. 5 to make a woman literate.

Of the work actually undertaken by our Branches, as reported to me, Moradabad has been running classes in four Mohallas, where a few women have been made literate. At Silchar, there is one class for 20 women. Phaltan runs four classes for 50 women, and last year had 6 classes at which 60 women were made literate. The Ahmedabad Branch reports 4 classes, where the women are taught spinning as well. The attendance of these classes varies from 8 to 15. In Bombay City we do not run classes where the average attendance is less than 15 and the numbers on the rolls may be anything from 25 up to 30, but, unless the average attendance at a class is 15, we do not continue that class. Ahmedabad reports that they cannot run more classes for lack of funds. Poona has 17 centres at which 96 women have been made literate. The South C.P.

reports 2 classes, at which 25 women were made literate. Even Calcutta reports of a very elaborate plan of running adult Co-operative Centres for women, and, as this requires vast funds and as they have found difficulties in collecting any sort of funds just now, they say their plan is in abeyance.

Even at the risk of being considered as blowing our own trumpets, I must mention in detail the work that has been done in Bombay. In April 1939, the Social Service League of Bombay organised a very big campaign, the great success of which was due to the enthusiasm and drive of some of our members, particularly Miss Gokhale, who was the secretary of that drive. Some 500 classes, of which about 50 were for women, were started, and after a month these were taken over by the Committee appointed by Government and continued for some months until the adults had achieved literacy. The main value of the work of Miss Gokhale and her first Committee, on which practically all the members of our Executive were taking an active part, was that, now the question of literacy and the need for it has penetrated the working classes in Bombay City, and regular four months' classes, at which there is no trouble in getting attendance, have been going on ever since, according as the Committee has the funds. In this connection special literature was prepared, and the first batch of teachers were given instruction in teaching. All this work was done by members of our Committee. Thus though we ourselves as a Branch did not run this campaign, we have played a very important part in it. Since then our Branch has run some 80 classes, at which nearly 1,200 women have been made literate. Our policy has been to collect money. When we find we have enough money for the running of a class, then and then alone do we open the class. We alone in the Branch have collected some Rs. 4,000 and the Government gave us a grant of Rs. 2,500. The Bombay Government, it must be said, are really paying attention to this work of adult literacy and have spent since May, 1939, Rs. 60,000 on it, both by way of direct expenditure and grant to classes. Unfortunately, the population of Bombay is a very floating population, and hence despite these efforts, the total eradication of illiteracy will take a long time, but, there is this advantage that this message of literacy if for that same reason spread to the villages by this floating labour population.

The problem in Bombay is further complicated by the numbers of languages in which classes even in the same locality have to be conducted. Some seven distinct languages are being taught in our classes.

As regards the literature that I have received from various branches, I feel that in many cases it has evidently been produced in a hurry and hence needs much revision. Some of the literature sent to me from certain provinces is mere propaganda for war purposes. It was suggested by the last Finding Committee of the All-India Women's Conference that special books be written for these adults on matters of health, etc., but unless the writer has real contact with such people, it is not possible to write such books. There are on the other hand numbers of simple books of an informational character, and I would consider that efforts be made to find these and circulate them to different classes. In our Association, we are keeping teachers to visit our newly literate women, once a week, and give them such simple books which they find of great interest.

Urmila Mehta,

Member-in-Charge, Literacy and Adult Education.

CHILD LABOUR.

In obtaining the information regarding Child Labour employed in factories in India, I had sent a questionnaire to all the Branch Representatives of our Conference, but replies were forthcoming only from Assam, Indore, Kashmere and Bombay. As for Bengal, certain Government publications have been referred to.

A child is described by the Factories Act as a person above 12 years or under 15 years of age.

The average number of children employed in the place mentioned is as follows:—

| | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Assam : Tea Gardens | 548,516 |
| : Regd. Factories in 1938 | 7,062 |
| Indore | 672 |
| Kashmere | 4,000 |
| Bengal | 1,474 |

Taking into consideration the fact that Bengal alone employs about 56,458 labour in all her industries, the number of Child Labour, at least, in the above-mentioned four other places, is not very high. This low figure is, I believe, in conformity with the rest of India, although I have not been able to collect positive information.

The working hours prescribed for children in factories are more or less the same in all provinces as the hours during which children may be employed to work in factories are laid down by the Factories Act. These are from 5 to 6 hours per day. The answers to the questionnaires issued by me would go to show that the nature of work which children perform in the factories is not too arduous. It may be suggested that it should be enforced by legislation that children should not be allowed to work for more than 5 hours a day, which should not spread over for more than 7 hours. The minimum interval specified for rest should be 1 hour. The hours of work may preferably be fixed between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m.

It does not appear that there is at present any provision according to the law for the medical treatment, nursing during convalescence, recreation and educational facilities to children employed in factories. It is realised that small factories would find it difficult to provide for these, but the larger factories, *e.g.*, factories which employ more than 300 labourers or in which the number of Child Labour exceeds 10, should be made to comply with these.

These larger factories should be made to provide their Child Labour with free medical aid and medicine. Proper facilities should be afforded to children to receive nursing at the hands of trained nurses in cases of infantile and vocational diseases. In consideration of the fact that children are lowly paid in factories, the employers should be made to provide for adequate special diet in such cases. Proper recreation facilities in the shape of play-ground, suitable grants for the purchase of sports requisites should also come from the employers. As regards education, provision should be made for the establishment of night schools attached to these larger factories where suitable subjects both in the line of imparting a general education to the young people as well as for giving them a technical education which in the end might lead them to better positions. In case it is not possible for the factory itself to establish such

a school, arrangement should be made for the children to attend some neighbouring night schools.

It may also be enforced by legislation that a child employed in a factory for a period of 6 continuous months, would receive 15 days' sick leave with pay, and 10 days' casual leave with pay. This figure is suggested on the lines as followed by most factories in the case of adult labour who have to put in 12 months' unbroken service to earn correspondently longer sick and casual leave.

It is a fact that at the present moment the quarters for labour provided by the employers are in most cases insufficient and unsatisfactory. The employers should be made to arrange for accommodation for labourer and the construction of the same should be subject to the approval of the Government. It should be arranged for by legislation that especial attention be given to quarters allotted for Child Labour. Children with no guardians to live with, should be accommodated separate from other labour.

Sudha Mazumdar,
Member-in-Charge for Child Labour.

HARIJAN WELFARE.

Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru, Member-in-charge.

Harijan work both in the country at large and in our branches has been slack during the year. It was reorganised and consolidated by the Harijan Sevak Sangh in the Province of Sind where a tour for the purpose was undertaken by Thakkar Bappa, the General Secretary of the Sangh and myself.

Thirteen of our branches have made a mention of Harijan work in their annual reports. Of these, five branches, namely, Bengal East, Bihar, Calcutta, C.P. South, Punjab Central, have either started or are maintaining schools for Harijan children. Calcutta is maintaining a Bal Mandir and Night School for adults both of which were started sometime ago. Gujarat, Konkan, Maharastra are running adult schools. Konkan is giving a scholarship to one student. Maharastra, Phaltan, Central Punjab, Moradabad Sub-Branch mention creating social contacts

with the Harijans by means of paying visits and holding *kirtans* and inviting Harijan women on festival days.

Maharashtra tried to remove their water difficulties by approaching the Municipality. Madras only mentions that work for Harijan Uplift is carried on. Certain other branches have promised to take up this work in future.

This is the sum total of the work done by our Branches during the year.

REPORT OF THE HON. SECRETARY ON THE WOMEN'S INDIAN CLUB. ITS ACTIVITIES AS FROM JULY, 1939 TO JUNE, 1940.

Lady Rama Rau

Introduction.—

Members and Friends,

It gives me the greatest pleasure in submitting to you the report on the activities of your Club for the past eleven months.

Formation of Club.—

At a party held at the Hotel Edward, in July, 1939, the Women's Indian Club was initiated by Lady Rama Rau.

Club House.—

Lady Rama Rau made strenuous efforts to purchase or rent a house suitable for a Club and, with this purpose the Agent-General interviewed the City Council for a site suitable for the erection of a Club House. The Council promised to help but owing to the unsettled conditions in Europe the matter was deferred. But it is hoped that in the future the Club Officials will once again approach the Council.

Temporary Club Quarters.—

In the meantime it was decided that we hold our Club Meetings at the Ozone Club Durban North. Owing to the distance this suggestion was unsatisfactory. Matters were settled when Miss Slatter, Head-mistress of the Dartnell Crescent School, came to our aid and generously offered the School, Grounds and Tennis Court for the Club's use, which was enthusiastically accepted.

Club Days.—

The Club has met regularly twice a week on Mondays and Thursdays only a few days being abandoned owing to inclement weather. But I am happy to say that the attendance on the whole has been quite satisfactory.

Membership.—

I would like to place on record that the membership of the Club from its inception has been doubled although this does not in any way mean that we have a membership as large as we hope.

Periodicals.—

Mrs. Ridley has been very kind in placing at the Club's disposal copies of the Illustrated Weekly of India. Other papers are also received and I would urge members to take advantage of this.

Visitors Speakers.—

We have had very few Talks during the past few months but they were most interesting.

1. Mrs. Ridley gave a short talk on Girls in India.
2. Madame Douvern on Beauty Culture.
3. Miss Mildred Barrett on Physical Culture.
4. Mrs. A. Colly on Finland.
5. Mrs. D. F. Cawston on Indian Blind Welfare.
6. Miss Mary Barr, an associate of Mahatma Gandhi, spoke on Life in India, and the winding of Khaddar was performed by her.

Indian Blind Society.—

A Special collection was made and your Club donated to the above Society the sum of £4-0-0.

Finance.—

Donations and Subscriptions have been received fairly well, details are herewith submitted by Treasurer.

After expenses of

Badminton Court Racquets, etc.



Members of the Standing Committee of the A.-I. W. C. for 1940.

Club Stationery, Books, Boy's Wages, Milk, Tea, Sugar and Tennis Balls have been paid out.

Balance in Bank £77-2-0.

This includes Donations at the Foundation of the Club and balance of Club Subscriptions. We have also a balance of £2-7-3 on hand for running expenses in the Club.

War.—

Before I conclude I must in duty bound make reference to the War. These are dark and anxious days, and if in this Great conflict the Allied Cause is defeated it would mean the destruction of all Good that Man has tried to create and the Ideals that we know will descend into darkness. Therefore I appeal to you, the members of the Women's Indian Club and *all* who wish to help to place all your energies towards helping the War and responding to the Call by way of supporting the Funds and offering your services such as Knitting and Sewing for the benefit of soldiers and their dependents for the duration of war, and give assistance and sympathy to the unfortunate Evacuees in their sad plight. LET US CO-OPERATE AND DO OUR SHARE FOR THE MEN WHO ARE SERVING THEIR COUNTRY.

Vote of thanks.—

In conclusion I would like to thank our President and all other Officials of the Club for their assistance.

Our thanks are due to Mrs. Forth and Mrs. Leon for the services and interest in the Club which have been very much appreciated. I beg to accord your Club's thanks to Miss Slatter to whom we are very grateful for her kind permission in allowing the Club to enjoy the hospitality of the School.

I would like to convey to Mrs. Joseph, our capable and efficient Organiser in whom we have found a true friend, our heartfelt gratitude for her untiring services and support without which the Club would not have achieved the success it has made.

Indira Maghrajh,
Hony. Secretary.

After the Annual General Meeting we have been extremely busy owing to war work. We have collected about £80 and have completed many little garments for refugee children including woollen comforts for the troops overseas. During the last week the Club with the assistance of the Indian Schools has knitted 300 scarves for the S. A. Indian Transport troops. We are proud of this and I am sure you will be too.

* * * *

The Hon. General Secretary of the A.-I.W.C., Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon, then announced that the work of the afternoon would be divided into five groups namely:—

- (1) Civic Training, (2) Removal of illiteracy and Adult Education,
- (3) Laws affecting Marriage and Divorce, (4) Untouchability and communal unity, (5) Cottage industries in India, housing, expansion of opportunities for the economic freedom of women.

and requested the delegates to sign their names on any of the five lists pertaining to the five groups.

WAR RESOLUTION.

Then Mrs. Swaminathan read out the War Resolution which ran as follows:—

This conference views with the utmost distress the continuance of war in various parts of the world. It expresses its horror at the cruel suffering inflicted on innocent people, at the loss of human life, at the destruction of great centres of learning and priceless treasures of art, at the colossal waste of wealth and above all at the hatred engendered in the hearts of men.

It once more affirms its faith in non-violence as the best solution of the world's ills and appeals to the heads of all nations to put aside their weapons of destruction and seek peace in human ways. It appeals to the women of the world in particular to throw in the full weight of their moral force on the side of permanent world peace.

It expresses its keen disappointment at Britain's failure to recognise India's free status which would be the first and logical step towards the attainment of freedom of all nations and world democracy, for which Britain has declared she is at war.

In the course of proposing the above resolution she spoke as follows:—

“I have merely to explain that this resolution is the result of exhaustive discussions by all the Standing Committee members. It represents a synthesis of resolutions on the subject of war, passed by Constituencies all over India. This is really a reiteration of the resolutions passed at Allahabad, and also at our half-yearly meeting this year. It is but right that we should raise our voices again at this critical state, when the world is passing through great horrors. I feel very strongly that we, women not only of India, but of all nations, must unite and do everything we can to bring peace into this world. Again I request the delegates assembled here to pass this resolution unanimously.”

Mrs. Vidya Puri from Punjab seconded the resolution :

Lady Rama Rau proposed that the resolution had better be taken up for discussion and voting section by section.

The President desired to split the resolution into three parts namely:—

“This Conferencemen”

“It once morepeace”

“It expressesat war”

for the purpose of discussion and voting. The President wanted to take up the amendments to the resolutions as a whole, but Lady Rama Rau preferred to have even the amendments section by section.

The first part of the resolution was thrown open for discussion—“This Conferencemen”. There being no more speakers on that part, it was put to vote. 114 voted for the first part of the resolution and it was passed unanimously.

Mrs. Billimoria from Bombay in proposing an amendment to the second part of the resolution, namely, that the words, “It once moreways” should be deleted, read as follows:—

It may appear that I am against non-violence, because I am asking for the deletion of this clause, but Indian women have, for ages been non-violent in thought, speech and action. As a creed, non-violence may be an ideal; as a matter of fact, Gandhiji in his

wisdom formulated this creed, because difference of political opinion in India is apt to lead and has led to acts of violence. But to preach that creed to those who have war at their doors is simply inconceivable. Situated as we are, thousands of miles away, from the seat of war, it is very easy for us to pass the resolution saying that non-violence is the best or only creed. But I ask you, if tomorrow your homes were invaded, your daughters and mothers and sisters fell a prey to the lust of invading hordes, would you ask your men to sit with folded hands offering non-violence? I, for one, would be ashamed of a father or husband who left me alone to the lusts of unscrupulous invaders. What we really ought to do now is to help to overthrow the one enemy that people of all shades of political opinion have combined to condemn with a united voice. Having done that we can throw the whole weight of our moral force on the side of permanent world peace.

Only the other day we honoured the memory of Rani Laxmi Bai of Jhansi; a beautiful cultured woman, she donned a warrior's garb and rode at the head of her army to defend her kingdom and her people. We have held up people like her and Chandbibi as ideals to the younger generation. We idealized these brave heroines and now times seem to be so changed that we ask our men-folk to sit at home with folded arms when their country is invaded and their wives and children are at the mercy of unscrupulous pirates.

Lastly, I shall once again reiterate what I have said. We shall be non-violent in thought and speech and action so long as there is even an infinitesimal chance of our arguments being listened to, but when it is impossible, my only advice would be "defend yourself, and having overthrown the invader and established the sanctity of your homes, put in your weight for world peace."

Mrs. J. R. Doctor in seconding Mrs. Billimoria read as follows :—

The creed of non-violence had to be evolved because difference of political opinion in India were apt to lead and actually led to acts of violence. How we women in India could enforce this creed of non-violence to other countries of the world into whose politics we have no right to interfere, and who themselves would and could brook no interference in their politics?

Also we cannot demand of nations to be non-violent, that is, sit with arms folded, when their country is invaded, cruel suffering inflicted on the people and immense loss of life and destruction of property and everything that the people hold sacred are threatened with annihilation, and their women-folk are molested and subjected to shameful treatments.

Can we ever think of an Indian to take no notice of, and remain absolutely quiet when ruthless robbers commit atrocities in his home? Can you ever think of an Indian who would not rise up in arms to defend his home and his women-folk?

It is an indisputable fact that every woman is, and should be non-violent at heart, but women have beaten off and killed wild animals and snakes who came to threaten the life of their children. Show me a mother who would remain passively inactive when her child is threatened with destruction or harm. She would not be a mother.

We can preach non-violence when violence is in the atmosphere. We could and should do all in our power to abate inhuman feelings, passions for lust and might with our non-violent arguments, but at a time when the countries in Europe are subjected to cruel violence, it is beyond human understanding and intelligence to preach and enforce non-violence to those countries. In fact if it is preached, who will listen to him, where bombs and cannon balls fall all round them and mutilated bodies are hurtled through the air.

The creed of non-violence, therefore, could be promulgated in times of peace, but becomes a vague assertion in theory and not at all practicable.

Mrs. Shiva Rao proposed the following amendment to the second part of the war resolution:—

“It once more and appeals to the governments of all nations in ways other than War”.

Miss Renu Roy seconded the amendment.

Mrs. K. D. Rukmini Ammal supporting Mrs. Billimoria's amendment spoke as follows:—

“It is too big to expect human beings to live in perfect peace with each other. It is impracticable, human nature being what it is. When

great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal and others are sacrificing a good deal for the faith of non-violence, some of you might think it is impertinent on my part to speak against non-violence. It is impracticable to expect human beings to follow up non-violence permanently. In the GITA we are faced with this problem. Our Hindu religion asks us to go through the VARNASHRAMA DHARMA. When Arjuna was faced with doubts and fears Lord Krishna asked him to fight the battle. So long as life lasts there is strife and discontent. We are living in a world of opposites,—friendliness and enmity, vice and virtue and so on and so on. Even the League of Nations failed to bring about peace. It tried disarmament. It was not practicable. Where the League of Nations failed do you mean to say, that the resolution passed at our Conference will carry much weight and will be effective. There is something basic in this. It presupposes perfect equality in human beings, equality in temperament in physical fitness. All should be of the same pattern which is not possible, and which is impracticable”.

Miss Vilasini Devi Sheanoy in opposing Mrs. Billimoria's amendment spoke as follows:—

With due deference to the previous speaker, I do not agree with her. These are not Puranic days. What Krishna said in those days to Arjuna is not applicable to us this day. Then we did not have scientific discoveries in regard to warfare, we did not have bombs and poison-gas. In those days, there was a particular kind of chivalry. Ordered population did not suffer. But what do we see to-day? Bombs are dropped on the poor innocent population, women and children are dying without number. Industry is suffering, trade is ruined and fields are devastated. There is no meaning in appealing to men to vote for this amendment. To be non-violent is not an easy job no doubt. We must wait and raise our voices to see that non-violence is established. There is no use in saying that there is no use in non-violence. We must go one step further. Therefore I raise my humble protest against the speech of my predecessor.

Miss Thakuri Lakhani from Sind speaking in favour of Mrs. Billimoria read her speech,

Mrs. Kameshwarama opposing Mrs. Billimoria's amendment spoke as follows :—

If the amendment of Mrs. Billimoria is carried, then the spirit of the resolution would disappear. Krishna did not really and in the ordinary sense want Arjuna to take to arms. What was the motive behind Krishna asking Arjuna to fight? It was not for self-aggression or to deprive another man of this Empire. It was for the establishment of righteousness and Dharma. Mahatma Gandhi is trying this experiment in all seriousness. It has gone into the heart of every Indian and of every American. In South Africa this has had a great success. No poison gas can be as successful as non-violence. Non-violence is something spiritual. It is something which goes deep in the heart of every one of you. If we want to establish Dharma in our lands we should really support this whole resolution.

Miss Sharadamma supporting Mrs. Billimoria spoke as follows :—

We want our resolutions to be practical and workable. Non-violence is certainly an ideal and it is true that Mahatmaji follows non-violence cent per cent. But have we that amount of moral courage to carry out the campaign of non-violence? Since there are violent means going on in the world smaller nations are at the mercy of the bigger ones. Unless we exert our force we cannot live. We must perish. It is our duty to keep the invader at a distance.

Mrs. Amir Hussain spoke for the amendment of Mrs. Billimoria in Urdu.

Rajkumari Amritkaur opposing Mrs. Billimoria spoke as follows :—

I have come to oppose the amendment with all the strength at my command. This Conference has accepted non-violence on more than one occasion. We stand to-day under the shadow of a terrible happening in the world. It has been said that non-violence is a party political issue. I say it is a world issue. Because of violence to-day the world has come to a sorry state, which permeates every state and every country in Europe. I do not want this great land of ours to lose her heritage. Our land stands for love and for religion. Non-violence is not a new thing here. I ask you as Indian women to show a way to the world that is simply dying now. Is this war going to end wars? Will not Hitler's weapons be destroyed by

somebody more powerful than Hitler? Has war solved any war? Is not Hitlerism the result of the last War? We are here standing for something much higher and much nobler. He that killeth shall be destroyed. I ask you to believe this truth, this ancient truth of Hinduism, of Jainism, of Islam, of Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. Let us be killed, but let us not kill. I say to you that he who kills will be tired of killing. No man can destroy your soul; he can take your body. By supporting the amendment before our house you will be asking for the destruction of your own souls. Therefore my appeal to you in the name of religion, in the name of humanity, in the name of Indian womanhood, in the name of world as a whole is to stand by non-violence, and to see to it that we bring to this world an era in which every exploitation, every cruelty, and every war shall cease and that we shall live in love for each other. We must stand for non-violence if we are to live at all.

Mrs. Billimoria was given the final right of reply. She asked the delegates present what they would do if a war like the present one was brought to their very doors. Hitler and Mussolini were not going to listen to their voices. She reminded that their concern was to end the present war as speedily as could be done.

The President got up to speak a few words herself on the resolution. Mrs. Doctor was of the opinion that she could not do so from the chair. Begum Hamid Ali then took the chair.

Mrs. Nehru spoke as follows:—

“It is very sad that there should be discussion on this resolution. I am too full of feelings just now to say anything more. But I appeal to you not to allow your heritage to go to waste. I appeal to you as mothers, wives, and daughters to vote against the amendment, that is before you. You are the creators of life and therefore do not fight with the destroyers of life. Even for defence if we use violent means a time will come when we die on account of those very means, for, those who fight with the sword will die by the sword. Remember these words; the whole weight of women should be thrust towards amelioration of the country. I request you, therefore, to unanimously pass the resolution.”

At this stage Mrs. Shiva Rao's amendment was put to vote. 58 voted for and 22 voted against. The amendment of Mrs. Shiva Rao was passed by a majority of 36. Then Mrs. Billimoria's amendment was put to vote. 50 voted for and 70 against. The amendment was lost.

The second section as amended by Mrs. Shiva Rao was finally carried.

The President invited amendments to the third section of the resolution namely, "It expresses. at war".

Mrs. Billimoria proposed an amendment to completely delete this part of the resolution in view of unity in their Conference. Mrs. Doctor seconded this amendment.

Mrs. Shiva Rao proposed the following amendment to this section namely, "such peace for which Britain hasat war.) with the words that it was their intention to bring about such good changes which would be more lasting than the last war brought about. The world could not go on at its present rate. There would have to be a reorganization of social life and creation of a comity of all nations. It was not possible for any nation in the world to rule another nation and yet stand for national freedom in the world. There would never be any peace in the world as long as there was discontent. This Conference also must extend its sympathy to the sufferings of the peoples whose freedom has been taken away from them. No war had ever brought on as much suffering to the people behind the lines as the present war had done. Even innocent women and children were suffering from the present war. It must be our immediate duty to think out a way by which future wars can be avoided.

Miss Renu Roy supported Mrs. Shiva Rao's amendment with the words that permanent peace in the world was possible only when inequalities were done away with. A New Order based on equality of all nations must be our aim.

Mrs. George from Cochin continued in support of Mrs. Billimoria's amendment with the words that the Conference had little to do with the political activities, but it had everything to do with the social and educational questions. Moreover, at least some of the delegates, for reasons which need not be specified, could not take part in this part of the resolution which was political in nature. She proposed that the resolution might be made more comprehensive to enable all the delegates of the Conference to take part in the discussion and thus the resolution might be passed by a big majority.

Mrs. Cousins opposed the amendment of Mrs. Billimoria with the words that she desired India to have full freedom and that she was also a lover and admirer of Great Britain and all that it stood for, and added that England was going against her own reputation in not giving India the substance of freedom. To save India from bloodshed must be the aim of the Conference. She was keen on seeing India get her right quickly with all the consistency to England herself for the greater good of India and England and the whole world.

Lady Rama Rau opposing the amendment of Mrs. Shiva Rao was for keeping the words of the original resolution on the ground that those words were more concise, more comprehensive and more to the point and that any change would make the thing more diffused.

Miss Gadavari Gokhale brought to the attention of the delegates the policy laid down in the constitution of the Conference which was as follows :—

“The All-India Women's Conference shall not belong to any political organization, nor take any active part in party politics, but shall be free to discuss all questions affecting the welfare of the people of India with special reference to women and children.”

It was not wrong in the interests of the Conference to say that the women of India stood for the freedom of their country. Through exploitation the women and children of India were bound to suffer. There could not be any equality as long as the nations stood as the exploiters and the exploited.

Miss Bannerjea from Bengal appealed to the delegates to support Mrs. Billimoria's amendment.

Mrs. Nazir Hussain from Madras spoke in Urdu.

Mrs. Urmila Mehta in support of the amendment of Mrs. Shiva Rao drew attention of the delegates to the fact that although Miss Gokhale mentioned that the Conference was pledged to avoid party politics, it was the duty of the Conference to stand for self-respect and the only way of getting permanent peace in the world was to do away with exploitation and subjugation.

Mrs. Hussain Ali Khan read out her written speech the text of which is given below:—

It is not that we do not want freedom or that India does not need it—but I don't see any reason why a non-political organisation like ours should deal with something which is not the main aim of our Conference. For those who desire freedom and want to achieve it by active participation there is already the Indian National Congress which is extremely keen to have women Satyagrahis. This is not the platform for it. Many of the speakers who have made such stirring appeals to our sense of justice have quite misunderstood us and I am sure I am voicing the feelings of all the state delegates.

Mrs. Venkataraman from Nandyal—a Telegu District—remarked that the resolution as drafted by the Standing Committee should be accepted by the delegates in that it had been drafted along the line of non-violence, which was so dear to Mahatmaji.

Mrs. Shiva Rao by way of final right of reply on her amendment added that it was time to stress the fact that a new World was to be created and that women of all countries would have to take part in bringing about social justice and order in the midst of chaos. The point in bringing the amendment before the Conference was with a view to establish social justice and order throughout India.

Mrs. Billimoria in her turn of final reply wished to say that the time was not opportune to pass the third part of the resolution. The President read the third part of the resolution as amended by Mrs. Shiva Rao.

This part of the resolution was put to vote. 44 voted for and 32 against. The amendment was carried by a majority of 12.

Then the amendment of Mrs. Billimoria to delete the third part of the resolution was put to vote. 38 voted for, 63 against. This amendment was dropped. Then the whole resolution, as amended, was put to vote. 72 voted for and 29 against. The resolution was thus carried by a majority of 43.

Then Mrs. L. Menon announced that group meetings would be held at the National High School at 2 p.m., each group headed by a President and two Secretaries.

WAR RESOLUTION AS AMENDED BY

Mrs. SHIVA RAO.

This Conference views with the utmost distress the continuance of war in various parts of the world. It expresses its horror at the cruel suffering inflicted on innocent people, at the loss of human life, at the destruction of great centres of learning and priceless treasures of art, at the colossal waste of wealth and above all at the hatred engendered in the hearts of men.

It once more affirms its faith in non-violence as the best solution of the world's ills and appeals to the governments of all nations to put aside their weapons of destruction and seek peace in ways other than war.

It appeals to the women of the world in particular to throw in the full weight of their moral force on the side of permanent world peace.

Such peace is impossible without a new order, based on social justice and equality of all nations. It therefore recognises that there can be no world peace till India and all other subject nations attain their liberty, as the first and logical step towards the attainment of the ideals for which Britain has declared she is at war. This Conference cannot but deplore the sufferings of all peoples whose freedom has been taken from them. It reiterates that war can never solve any problem.

Second Sitting 29th December, 1940—11-25 a.m. 12-50 p.m.

The Plenary Session of the Conference met at 11-25 a.m., on Sunday the 29th of December, 1940, with Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru in the chair.

The report of Group No. 1 was read by Miss Renu Roy.

**REPORT OF GROUP No. 1.
Adult Education and Literacy.**

Whilst congratulating the many Branches who have achieved great success in the sphere of adult education and removal of illiteracy during the year, the Group was of opinion that effort should be redoubled so that by the next electoral roll a very much increased franchise will be exercised by women. It was also asserted that all Branches should approach the Government to take the literacy census according to language groups and not by religion.

The Group circulated the report and questionnaire of the Member-in-charge of Adult Education and advised all members to gather as many statistics of their province as possible and to submit it to the Member-in-charge. The recommendations made by the Group were as follows:—

Methods of Organisation and Teaching.

Mohallas and working class areas should be visited and sympathetic, understanding discussions held as a preliminary to establishing literacy centres. The first essential must be to establish contact with the people and to win their confidence. Only then literacy centres can come into existence and prove successful.

Teachers. The Group was of opinion that the teachers engaged should, if possible, be trained in the methods of teaching adults. Where this is not possible branches should follow the Laubach Method and adapt it to the special conditions of the Province. The students should not only be taught to read and write, but also be encouraged to enact dramas and organised debates and lectures on subjects such as Health, Hygiene, Mothercraft, debt alleviation and other subjects of everyday interest to them.

Text Books and Apparatus.

The Group was very strongly of opinion that adequate text books for adult literacy and post-literacy should be prepared. It suggests that a Committee be formed from the A.-I.W.C. to procure all available literature already existing in the vernaculars and to prepare new literature where necessary. Small bulletins and wall newspapers should be encouraged to aid the spread of literacy.

Post-Literacy.

The Group considered the large percentage of women that fall back into illiteracy and recommended that post-literacy classes and circulating libraries be established to make literacy permanent.

Responsibility of Government and Municipal Bodies.

The Group strongly urge the Government and Municipalities to immediately introduce free and compulsory primary education for all boys and girls as the surest and most complete way of eradicating illiteracy.

Further, it urges all employers, especially Government and Municipal Bodies, to insist and give every facility to make the employees literate.

The A.-I.W.C. The Group calls upon all A.-I.W.C. Branches to establish "Literacy Leagues" of members and non-members of the Conference, who will start and finance literacy centres as well as train teachers for the work. In these Leagues effort should be made to co-ordinate the work of all organisations doing the same type of work.

The Group further urged that the Government and Municipal Bodies should co-operate and give every financial and to the Literacy Leagues.

The President requested such of the delegates who liked to speak, to send up their names to her. **Lady Rama Rau** was of the opinion that appeals should be made to all authoritative bodies such as Municipal and Government. Mutual contact between *the adult education group official body* and *the private literacy campaign group* was desirable so that constant exchange of ideas and schemes of work would be possible between those two. The insistence on that contact would spread the campaign from urban areas to rural areas. In view of the general election which was

to come soon and since literacy is one of the qualifications for the enfranchisement of women and since also it was felt that a very much larger electoral roll was necessary in the country they could not do without the literacy campaign. She added that post-literacy should be undertaken to lessen congestion in education in India.

Mrs. R. Faridoonji wished to know a little more about the method of financing the scheme under consideration, for the help that would come from Government would be only in the form of a small grant-in-aid.

Miss K. Khandwala enlightened Mrs. Faridoonji that the scheme would not get on without private effort. Literacy Funds had been started and collections were being added to them from time to time. Boxes for collection had been sent to the examination halls so that even students put in their mite into them. Private effort subsidised by Government would be the chief method of financing. The speakers drew the attention of the delegates to various methods of literacy such as Laubach method, and Dakshinamurthi method and one other method very much prevalent in Bengal, and added that it was necessary for their purpose by a combination of these different methods to evolve a method suitable to their needs and the local conditions—regarding text books the speaker felt that it was very necessary to pick out good books from various languages and then compile set text books as would suit their local conditions and needs for, without adequate text books the problem could never be solved satisfactorily. The same would apply to post-literacy. Therefore it was for the Conference to produce the desirable and much-needed books.

Mrs. Hosain Ali Khan observed that a literacy census should be taken under the heads of communities for the express purpose of finding out which community was backward so that more effort could be made to bring it in line with other communities.

Lady Rama Rau agreed heartily with the observation.

Mrs. Velayudha Menon was of the opinion that it was very essential to let the different communities know where they stood as far as literacy was concerned. As the Governments were in the habit of granting aid and other concessions to communities according to the degree of their backwardness, it was advisable to have the census figures concerning literacy based on different communities,

Mrs. Gandhi while approving the report stressed the greater necessity for literacy in villages and suggested that the leisure period of the villagers should be particularly taken into consideration in view of their being mostly engaged in field work and added that more than making arrangements for post-literacy, effort should be made to retain that education in them.

Miss Renu Roy suggested night classes for villagers to meet the point raised by the previous speaker. Also consideration of local conditions in addition should not be lost sight of.

Mrs. Gandhi was not very hopeful of achieving good results by conducting night classes because the villagers were very much hard worked during the mornings and they needed sleep. She suggested that certain months in the year might be better.

Miss Renu Roy suggested that interested and intelligent women without many encumbrances should be employed to turn literacy classes into a sort of co-operative club so that literacy could be made more permanent.

At this stage the report was put to vote and passed unanimously.

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Then **Miss Leelamani Naidu**—Constitution Member—presented certain changes in the constitution made by the Standing Committee for ratification by the general body. The present rule made every ex-president *ipso facto* a patron who got a right to come to the Standing Committee. At that rate a time might come when the Branch representatives would be outnumbered by individual members of the Standing Committee. From that point of view she ventured to suggest that some sort of restriction should be placed by the General Body upon the number of patrons who would be on the Standing Committee. The recommendation of the Standing Committee in the matter was that there should be ten patrons of whom the retiring President would be *ipso facto* on the Standing Committee and the other nine would be elected.

Mrs. Menon seconded **Miss Naidu's** resolution.

The suggestion was put to vote and passed unanimously.

Miss L. Naidu's second point was with regard to limiting the number of Ordinary and Extraordinary co-opted members. While the Ordinary co-opted members had the right to vote, the Extraordinary co-opted members could not exercise that right. The recommendation of the Standing Committee was to limit the Ordinary co-opted members to 7 and the Extraordinary to 10.

Mrs. R. Faridoonji wished to have the matter further cleared up.

Miss L. Naidu drew the attention of the member to the bye-laws of the Association. As there was no more discussion on the matter it was put to vote and passed unanimously.

The President at that stage announced that other group reports would be taken up for consideration at 2 p.m.

Third sitting: 29th December, 2 to 4 p.m.

REPORT OF GROUP III.

Social: (b) Communal unity.

This Conference views with utmost distress the forces of communal discord which are disintegrating national life and calls upon the women of India to make a special contribution to the rebuilding of society upon permanent foundations of co-operation and good-will and peace.

The Conference makes a special appeal to its own branches to go into the hearts of cities and allay rumours that are likely to stir up strife, and restore calm and confidence if they happened to be in areas where communal relations are strained.

It recommends:

- (a) Personal contacts and the study of each other's literature and religion.
- (b) The desirability of making it compulsory for teachers of primary schools and adult education to know both *Devanagari* and *Urdu* scripts.

- (c) The use of simple language in text-books eliminating as far as possible Persian and Sanskrit words; common text-books or extra-readers may contain short sketches of the lives and teachings of the great spiritual teachers of different communities to teach them the unity of various religions.
- (d) The stressing of points of contact and the elimination from all text-books especially history books of all that may engender disharmony.
- (e) The elimination of separatism in any form in public institutions such as schools and college hostels and hospital wards, etc.
- (f) No Government and Municipal aid in future to be given to communal institutions that work amongst their community only.
- (g) Societies of social service such as seva samajas etc., should be inter-communal, for nothing binds people together so much as common service.
- (h) The encouragement by way of prizes for essays on the culture, religion and history of the different communities.
- (i) The abolition of communalism in sports.
- (j) The importance of newspapers doing their best not to indulge in communal propaganda.

This Conference calls upon our public speakers to take every opportunity to stress the common fundamentals of all religions.

Miss Ayesha Bibi who read the report of Group III social (b) supplemented the reading with the following words. Women were becoming feeble because they were not united. The All-India Women's Conference was the fittest organization to promote unity because it did not have any colour or caste distinctions. All the different communities must feel that they were the daughters of India first, and

then Hindus, Musalmans, Parsees, and Christians. In that event their goal did not lie far off.

A translation of it was rendered into Kannada by Mrs. Nanjamma.

Mrs. Parekh observed that communal disunity was cutting India into small pieces. The only way of establishing the whole body and the one body would be to be united. The factors that led to communal disunity had been—

1. Communal elections.
2. Communal games.
3. Communal dress.
4. Communal hotels and restaurants.

To remedy the evil there ought to be general elections, Indian games, national dress and Indian hotels. The Indian hotel might be divided into vegetarian and non-vegetarian. The women of India ought to know that they should unite for the sake of India's freedom.

Mrs. Ismail particularly pointed out that Hindus should stop suspecting Musalmans and *vice versa*. Hindu sisters must have the confidence in the Musalman sisters and *vice versa*. It should be remembered that the eight crores of Musalmans in India were the converted Hindus. The Hindus and Musalmans should not forget that there was the same bond of blood in them. The present compared with the past in the matter was unimaginable. Whereas in olden times gifts of fruits and flowers were being exchanged between the two communities, at present even an exchange of mere greeting between them was a wonder. The speaker stressed that more effort should be made to put into practice the pious resolutions passed at conferences.

Miss Malthe opined that real unity in a land meant no war, no conflict, no disaster and no disunity, but absolute harmony. She drew the attention of the delegates to the Presidential address "not much direction is needed when the heart is stable. It knows how to make its own way." She enlightened the delegates that the one thing that she saw in Bangalore, that struck her most was a pucca stone building not far from the Town Hall, with the words UNITED INDIA prominently carved on it and requested them to take that as their motto.

Mrs. Nazir Hussain spoke in Hindustani stressing the need for unity.

Then **Mrs. Chowbal** spoke in Hindustani that communal elections led them nowhere, that communal feelings would divide them into various parts and that Hindus and Musalmans must begin to trust each other, and that it must be their common goal to try to win swarajya.

Mrs. Hamid Ali spoke as follows:—

Friends, I am going to say a few words on Communal Unity because that is a subject which is very very close to my heart. We have started this Conference in the hope of achieving this object and some of us have worked very hard to bring it about. I am not despairing. We feel that we have sown the seed of communal unity in at least some of the places in India. The seed is growing now into a tree. We hope that those who come after us will sow more seeds and in a few years communal harmony will be an accomplished fact. We believe that for our country, for our children, and for ourselves if we have to be in a line with other advanced countries in the world we must have communal unity. It is true that in some places riots take place. But that is no reason for some to say "what is the use of all this? We never come to an end about this matter. Let us stop it." That is the defeatist attitude and it will bring us nowhere. I will assure you that every little effort that you make in your own house, in your dealings with the people who do not belong to your own community will always be met with a thousand-fold good. Seeds once sown can never get obliterated from the minds of the people in whom we sow them. Look at the bright side of things and be optimists. You must realise what good you have been able to achieve in these fifteen years. We take our happiness in your happiness. We should be able to inspire our women with these ideals. You are the mothers of the future generation. Keep a brave heart and if today five people are thinking like you, to-morrow 25 of your own circle will do so, and so it will go on developing and become a very great factor in the life of India. I have every hope that we shall achieve this end. Once more I ask you not to be pessimistic.

The President read out the few alterations made by Mrs. Velayudha Menon.

The report embodying the amendments made by Mrs. Velayudha Menon having been approved the report was put to vote and passed unanimously.

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Mrs. Cousins brought the following proposition before the house :

“The All-India Women’s Conference request the Government to grant Madam and Signor Montessori permission to hold Montessori training courses in other provinces under similar conditions to those which the Government has allowed them in Madras.”

This proposition was seconded by Mrs. Thamby. It was approved by Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru, Rajkumari Amritkaur, Begum Hamid Ali, Mrs. Urmila Mehta, Mrs. G. R. Billimoria Mrs. S. Majumdar.

Lady Rama Rao translated the text of the resolution into Hindustani.

There being no discussion on the proposition it was put to vote and passed unanimously.

Mrs. Billimoria read out the statement of accounts. None being against it was also passed unanimously.

The President then announced that there was only one nomination for the Office of Secretary that being Mrs. Urmila Mehta, that there was only one nomination for the office of the Treasurer that being Mrs. Billimoria and that there were ten nominations for the office of Vice-President, out of which—Mrs. Billimoria and Mrs. Menon withdrew—ultimately making the number eight—namely,

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|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Lady Rama Rau. | 2. Lady Mirza Ismail. |
| 3. Mrs. S. C. Mukerjee. | 4. Mrs. Shardaben Mehta. |
| 5. Mrs. Hussain Ali Khan. | 6. Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan. |
| 7. Mrs. Asaf Ali. | 8. Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. |

REPORT OF GROUP V.**Economic: (a) Cottage Industries.**

We live in what is commonly called the "machine age". In our opinion it is the cut-throat competition resulting from large scale industry and the fact that this large scale industry is in the hands of vested interests that the world to-day is in the throes of the cruellest war ever waged in the annals of the history of mankind. Therefore, we feel that the place of cottage industries in the life of not only India but of every nation is one that must be increasingly recognised. Ours is preeminently a village civilisation. We can boast of some of the finest artisans and artistic creations in the world. These must be revived. Women can play a great part in their revival and in their improvement. Women can also use articles made by hand to the exclusion of mill-made goods—in particular foreign goods. We realise that hand-made goods are more costly and cannot compete with foreign goods. In order to remove this handicap we appeal to the governments of States and of British India to give the necessary protection and marketing facilities to hand-made goods. Such large scale industry as must come into being should be controlled by the State, provided the State is really representative of the people. Cottage industries are absolutely necessary for the economic uplift of the masses—in particular while India has no economic independence. They can usefully and easily supplement the villagers' incomes during their leisure months. We specially recommend hand-spun and hand-woven cloth as being preeminently women's domain and congratulate the Spinners' Association on the lakhs of money they are putting into the pockets of the poor village women. We congratulate the Mysore Government for the support they are giving to Khadi and other cottage industries in the State. Women can help in the matter of suggestions as far as designs and productions of new articles of everyday use are concerned. We therefore recommend to our Branches to find out what cottage industries exist in their areas, help in reviving those which require assistance, keep a swadeshi stores at their headquarters and thereby find as far as possible a market for hand-made articles. The maintenance of a high standard of art and well-finished and useful articles lies to a large extent in the hands of women. We appeal to individual members of the Conference to use hand-made articles and cloth for their personal and home needs. We recommend the frequent holding of swadeshi exhibitions under the ægis of our Branches. We

are also of opinion that our members can do a great deal in the way of house to house sales as well as sales at the time of festivals and fairs.

We are of opinion that if cottage industries are encouraged the question of the economic independence of women will be solved to a large extent. We appeal to those who can afford to do so not to grudge the extra money they have to give for hand-made goods realising that their generosity means the alleviation of the distress of the starving masses of India.

(b) **Housing.**

There is no denying the fact that the vast majority of our people may be said to be living or eking out an existence in hovels. Town and village and house planning have not figured on the programme of any Government until very recent years. This is a crying need on which thought and money must be expended forthwith.

We recommend (1) Improvement committees in every town and district and money allotted every year for elimination of slum areas in towns and for building model cottages for villagers until such time as every person has a proper roof over his head. If local labour and local material are used for huts for villagers the cost will not be so heavy and the money will be served for a doubly useful purpose. Great care should be taken as regards facilities for proper sanitation when new homes are being erected as well as for the provision of adequate light and ventilation.

(2) The building of suitable homes on the hire purchase system. We congratulate the Government of Mysore and other Governments who are taking the lead in this matter and appeal to them to widen the scope of their activities in this sphere and extend them to the villages also.

(3) We are aware that the worst sufferers in this respect are Harijans and we therefore recommend that in every town and village their needs in the matter of housing should come first.

(4) *Pari passu* with schemes for proper housing we recommend that schemes for the adequate provision of pure water, proper drains and sanitation be taken up as well as instruction to the people in the matter of personal and general hygiene. In this latter our Branches should bear their full share and make a valuable contribution.

(5) We are of opinion that special attention should be paid to the housing of workers in factories. The owners of factories and governments should provide suitable living quarters for them. To this end necessary legislation should be enacted. Rent for accommodation should be controlled by the State and should be in accord with the earnings of the workers.

(6) We recommend to our Standing Committee members who happen to be in areas where housing schemes are being undertaken to send all useful information to the General Secretary for circulation among members. We also appeal to our members to agitate for house planning in those areas where no such schemes exist.

(c) Expansion of opportunities for the economic independence of women.

In the matter of increased opportunities of economic independence of women we recommend the following as necessary:—

- (1) Compulsory primary education;
- (2) Vocational Training;
- (3) Improved legal rights;
- (4) Health Insurance Act—applicable to all women working in their homes as well as in industrial and other concerns;
- (5) Creches for the children of all women workers;
- (6) Facilities for work for part-time workers;
- (7) Equal pay for equal work;
- (8) Improved legal economic status of the wife as a home maker, *i.e.*, legal claim to a certain proportion of her husband's earnings.

We believe that if the above recommendations are given effect to, it will be in the power of every woman through her possibility of economic independence to create a free and happy life for herself.

Mrs. Francis:—

It is time that one-sided disqualification in the realm of economic sanctioned by usage or law should be removed. In the political life of the country the natural sympathies of woman-kind should lean to that party or organisation, that would guarantee complete economic equality of man and woman both in theory and in practice.

No woman is free who does not enjoy economic freedom. An equal share for every daughter with every son in the intestate wealth of the father. In Indian Society either custom or law has ordained, as to place the son at a decided advantage, at the expense of the daughter in the family. It is time that women of India should organise protests and make their influence felt in the legislatures of the land. The women of India strive for freedom—spiritual, intellectual and political and economic.

4th sitting 30th December, 1940, 9-25 a.m. to 12 noon.

REPORT OF GROUP III.**Social: (a) Untouchability.**

It is sad that even to-day we have to acknowledge that the canker of untouchability still exists in our society. It is the duty of all Conference members and Branches to redouble their efforts for its removal. We therefore recommend to members and Branches:—

- (a) that they should keep at least one Harijan as a domestic servant for work other than sanitation;
- (b) that they should invite Harijans to social and religious functions and, if possible, adopt one family and serve as its god mother;
- (c) that they should form committees for regularly visiting Harijan bastis in cities and villages and make it a special duty this year to approach local bodies, Governments and others to redress the grievances of Harijans in the matter of housing, pay, leave, conditions of service, water facilities, etc., and carry on vigorous propaganda from press and platform until the necessary redress has been achieved;

- (d) that efforts should be directed towards reducing to the minimum, human agency for the work of sanitation. This can be achieved by the flush system and bore hole and deep trench latrine for both common and individual use in town as well as villages;
- (e) that separate quarters for Harijans should be discouraged in order to remove from this unfortunate section of humanity the brand of inferiority that we have placed on them;
- (f) that talks and lectures to elevate the Harijans morally and to rid them of the inferiority complex from which they suffer be undertaken by members. To this end the dignity of all labour must be stressed and given practical expression to by our members.
- (g) Educational facilities should be given to Harijans and in particular to women so that they may become Health visitors and social workers and thereby themselves contribute to the removal of untouchability. Municipalities, local boards and the government should be appealed to, not to give grants to schools that refuse admission to Harijans. The Conference here wishes to record its gratitude to Shri M.P. Birla for his handsome donation towards the education of Harijan girls as also to Thakkar Bappa for having given the entire sum allocating a portion of money collected for his birthday last year for this purpose.
- (h) All schools, hospitals, hotels, wells, temples and other such public places should be opened for the untouchables. Our Branches should influence the Governments and Municipalities concerned to undertake this work. In schools and colleges where reservation of seats obtains, Harijans should come in for their due share.

The session was adjourned till 9 a.m. on the 30th December,

Mrs. **S. Nanjamma** translated the report into Kannada and supplemented with the words, that so far as Mysore State was concerned, there was no question of untouchability because Harijans were being admitted into colleges and schools along with caste Hindus. Their places and the places of caste Hindus were mutually being exchanged in public functions and in society. A time had come in the Mysore State when man-made barriers did not at all affect the question of facilities to Harijans. She was also of opinion that the communal disharmony was not the product of age-long traditions but latterday excrescences which began to tear us asunder and to keep us divided. She put in a strong and most emphatic plea for getting ourselves united to constitute the young India of our vision. Anticipating a little she said that those who were endeavouring to achieve this object would be the real makers of that **YOUNG INDIA**, whose names would well deserve being written in letters of gold.

Miss Malthe speaking on untouchability said that if we ought really to help the backward community, we should really identify ourselves with them and referred to a thought-provoking example of the sweepers during the last war. She said that a man belonging to the sweeper community in the North of India and who had a very high education wanted to get permission to go to France to help the sweeper community which was assisting the Indian troops there. The answer was that there was no possibility for that. But he got over that difficulty, obtained sanction to proceed to France as a sweeper, went there, worked as a sweeper and helped his community.

Lady Rama Rau put before the house the casuistical proposition, which was the real, rational, and the only substantial test to find out whether, with all the display of enthusiasm on the platform, the people were prepared to proceed from what is problematical to what is practical. She put the question to the delegates from Mysore particularly, how many of them were prepared to have in their homes at least a single Harijan servant who would be entrusted with all the works other than removal of filth and indicate their willingness to do that by a show of hands.

A good many of the Mysore delegates raised their hands.

Lady Rama Rau was very much pleased at that, but she was sorry to hear that most of the temples in Mysore were not yet open to them today, and that in the Seva-sadan in Bangalore, there was not a single Harijan yet admitted.

The President desired that such of those who were willing to entertain Harijan servants in their homes should send their names to the A.-I.W.C. Association through the constituent Branch of their State.

Mrs. R. V. Subramaniam went the length of mentioning that she already had a Harijan servant in her home for the last fortnight doing all the work except work in the kitchen.

Mrs. B. K. Singh from Punjab recalled that the subject of untouchability was not a new one. From time immemorial social reformers and religious reformers in India felt the necessity for bringing about the reform in question. They did not imagine that untouchability would assume such a magnitude and be a stumbling block in the way of progress of India. The great epic of Ramayana told them that Sri Ramachandra really ate the fruits tasted by a low class woman Sabari, an instance for emulation. The preachings of Buddha, Guru Nanak, and Kabir were nothing but pleading the embracing of Harijans. No doubt it was difficult to break off from the age-long traditions. In their own homes their mothers and grandmothers who were yet conservatives could not allow the engaging of a Harijan *aya*. The high-caste people were not even merciful to the extent of allowing the Harijan servants to come a little late for their work on such of the days which were days of festivities for Harijans. She concluded that unless in their daily lives they were considerate towards them, they could not do a great deal for the Harijan uplift either morally, or spiritually.

Dr. Mrs. Isasac emphasized that the question was one in which self-examination was very essential. One and the same blood ran in the veins of Harijans as well in those of caste Hindus. The caste Hindus should

at once cease keeping themselves aloof from Harijans. The superiority complex and the patronising attitude of caste Hindus must disappear. They must cultivate loving those whom they consider lower than themselves. She made a concrete suggestion that from the registers kept at hospitals and schools and colleges the column "CASTE" should be at once removed.

Mrs. Velayudha Menon from Cochin narrated the state of things regarding Harijans in her place. 70 per cent. of the women were literate there. A separate department has been created for the Harijans and an Officer called "PROTECTOR" of the Harijan class had been appointed. Strictly speaking the Harijans in Cochin were not called by the term "BACKWARD-CLASSES" but by the term "PRIVILEGED CLASSES." That day would not be far when the people from the Privileged class would be found as officers in the various departments of the State. She concluded that if the temple-entry had not yet stepped into some of the places in India, it would do so more honourably very soon.

Miss Praphullita Bhagat:—

Madam President, Much has already been said on the subject that I have only a few suggestions to make, which in my humble opinion is of large and vital importance.

1. That the Municipalities and Governments and the public are requested to contribute to a radio set for the Harijan quarters everywhere. The Broadcasting authorities to be persuaded to arrange some special programme for them, at least once a week which should include lectures and speeches concerning their uplift.

(a) Lectures which should elevate them morally from the centuries of deterioration they have undergone.

(b) Every effort should be made to remove the spirit of diffidence from their minds.

(c) Instruction should be imparted to them from radio dealing with the life work and history of all Harijan Bhaktas and great men Balmiki, Ekanath, etc.

(d) Lectures on Hygiene, sanitation should also be occasionally arranged for them to contribute to their physical welfare.

(e) Some sort of programme should also be broadcast for them. This point would solve the problem of appointing individual perhaps unwilling and disinterested visitors and their quarters. This way one person could do the work and this would also go to elevate the down-trodden intellectually. All this might perhaps be considered impracticable. But if an earnest effort is made everything could be rendered practicable. In my opinion propaganda by radio would be a very big step towards the uplift of the Harijans. There cannot be any glorious future for India until it is so and the untouchables remain in this sunken state. This propaganda is therefore very necessary and the radio method is the quickest and best. Due attention is required on our part to the very low wages to the municipal and domestic sweepers. If my information is correct the sweepers are only given a mouthful of grain in return for all the filthy work they do during the day. This should be stopped and it should be our concern to see that they get proper wages.

3. In some villages the Harijans are not allowed to take water from proper sources but fetch water for drinking and cooking from stagnant pools. Separate arrangements for getting water should be made for them wherever opening of public wells to them is not possible or the pool water should be somehow purified for them.

4. That sweepers should be supplied with some sort of aprons which they should wear while doing the filthy work and promote healthy process in such work.

Miss Hardekar pleaded the abolition of separate child-welfare centres for Harijans. Such centres should admit the public as a whole. That would remove the inferiority complex prevailing among the Harijans.

Mrs. Parekh mentioned that untouchability was a curse on India and especially on Hindu society and went the length of suggesting that

Harijans should be specially invited to the caste marriages and that Harijans should be employed to assist caste Hindus in all the works in their homes.

Miss Sharadamma narrated in brief the advancement of Harijans in Travancore. At present the Harijans there could go along with the caste people to the innermost shrines of the temple. Free education was being given to Harijan children. Special hostels for Harijan boys and girls were established and they were given grants. Common dinners there had been to which Harijans as well as caste Hindus were invited. Government had appointed caste people to teach Harijans how to behave in caste temples.

At that stage the President put to vote the report.

It was passed unanimously.

Then **Mrs. Jyotsna Mehta** read out the report of Group No. II. "Social; laws affecting marriage and divorce in India". She also translated it into Hindi.

REPORT OF GROUP NO. II.

Social: Laws affecting marriage and divorce in India.

This Group mainly discussed Dr. Deshmukh's Two Bills on Separation and Divorce and the necessity of a comprehensive enquiry into Hindu Law with a view to making it just and equitable to women. Only thus, we feel, will a divorce law be really practicable and effective.

Regarding the two Bills of Dr. Deshmukh dealing with Divorce and Separation, it was felt that these Bills were defective and will give rise to a lot of confusion.

It was therefore considered advisable that the questions of legal separation and that of Divorce be dealt with in two separate Bills. The following suggestions for amendments to some of the clauses of Dr. Deshmukh's Bill have been made:—

- (1) The custody of children should be left to the discretion of the Court the mother being given the preference ordinarily.

- (2) Maintenance should be given by the husband to the wife and for each child separately. The Group feels that the Divorce Bill that was drafted at the half-yearly meeting held at Baroda in 1938 covers all our demands and therefore it should be given full consideration.

It was brought to the notice of this Group that the Government of India have appointed an enquiry committee to look into the Bills of divorce and inheritance for Hindu women which are already before the Central Legislative Assembly. This Conference suggests that a resolution be sent to the Government to urge that no piecemeal legislation be undertaken and that the Enquiry Committee should be asked not merely to look into the Bills before the Assembly, but to make a comprehensive enquiry into the questions of marriage, divorce and property rights of Hindu women as a whole and to take evidence from the A.-I.W.C. and other representative women's organisations.

We understand that the Women's Sub-Committee of the National Planning Committee have also submitted similar views on this question earlier. It was proposed that the Conference draw up a memorandum containing its demands and suggestions and present it to the Committee appointed by the Government.

We further suggest that Mr. V.V. Joshi of Baroda and at least two women nominated by the A.-I.W.C. should be on the personnel of that Committee. The following names have been suggested :—

- (1) Rani Lakshmibai Rajwade,
- (2) Mrs. Asaf Ali,
- (3) Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon,
- (4) Mrs. Sharadaben Mehta.

A Sub-Committee should be appointed by the Conference to draw up the Memorandum mentioned above with the co-operation of all the Branches.

Lastly, we suggest that the Branches of the A.-I.W.C. should endeavour to secure the support of those members of the Central Legislative Assembly who happened to reside in their respective areas, so as to ensure the passing into law of the Bills referring to the rights of women.

The Kannada translation was made by Mrs. S. Nanjamma.

Miss Vilasini Devi Shenoi enlightened the audience that the law of divorce did exist in ancient Puranic times among the Hindu community. With the degeneration of the Hindu community came the wonderful law-givers who put down that the law of divorce had no place in the Hindu community. With regard to the point of divorce Muslim sisters were placed in a better position according to the Bill passed in 1939. The committee that was going to be formed by the A.-I.W.C. Association should go into the question of inheritance. At present the laws had been very partial. They allow the Hindu men to marry as many times as they like. But that concession or at least a part of that concession was not extended to Hindu women. The time has arrived when the same standard of morality should prevail both for men and for women. The faithfulness of Hindu women to their husbands had been so great in India that even if the law of divorce were passed, only a very small percentage of her women would take advantage of it. The committee under contemplation must see to it that the whole of the Hindu law with regard to women is revised to satisfy the needs of every Hindu sister.

Mrs. Shiva Rao stressed the point of making the memorandum to be submitted to the Government and to the enquiry committee very comprehensive and businesslike.

Mrs. Gandhi suggested an alternative that if it proved impossible, to pass the divorce bill at least the separation bill might be passed. There need be no fear that if the Bill were passed the morality of the Hindu women would be at stake. If a husband were to abscond and if the wife could not maintain her children, born of him, the Government should have a hand in their maintenance.

Mrs. Hamid Ali pointed out that in Mr. Deshmukh's Bill the cruelty clause was not defined. Both the mental and physical cruelty should be taken into consideration. She suggested that their demands should be based on Kazmi's Bill in regard to cruelty passed in 1939. The speaker emphatically was for equal shares in a family namely, that in a family of a husband and wife and two children every one should get one-fourth of the property .

Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan drew the attention of the delegates to the fact that they need not be under the impression that Joshi's and Kazmi's Bills were not going to be considered. In the memorandum to be drafted the sections of those Bills would be incorporated. She appealed to the delegates that the various constituents of the A.-I.W.C. Association should without fail include in their report all the disabilities under which the ladies in their constituencies were labouring.

Mrs. Jyotsna Mehta read the following written speech :—

In our Conference I think this is the most important with which we are concerned as women. You know that all the matters in a woman's life centre round her happiness in married life. Everything else in her life would depend on that. It is not so with men. They have several other matters to occupy their minds and thought.

Now one of the main arguments advanced against divorce is that the Hindu marriage is a sacrament, which could never be broken like a contract. In reply to that I say that there is a sacrament on one side only, *i.e.*, on the woman's side; men do not consider it a sacrament. They can marry as often as they like, keep a mistress or go to prostitutes and so on without being subject to any criticism from the society. But when it comes to the women they say "Oh! marriage is a sacrament." It is against this injustice that we protest. The cause for this injustice is that men consider women as a thing of their possession, like a house or cattle, or their relation is that of a master and slave. A master is at liberty to behave just as he likes. The slave dare not object to it, and the slave could never have the courage to go against the master, no matter how cruelly he is treating him. He must tolerate all that mutely without signs of protest. But the educated women of India are not going to tolerate this injustice any more. We want equality for both sexes. Mahatma Gandhi says that monogamy should be as strictly enforced in the case of men as in that of women. But it is only the ideal of a Mahatma and not practicable. It is against human nature.

Another argument against divorce is that if you once introduce divorce it will be like America, where it is reported that women ask for divorce on very flimsy pretexts; *viz.*, the husband smokes too heavily or keeps too many dogs. But we do not want that sort of a divorce. We want it to apply only in extreme cases where women suffer tortures through out their life, because of brutal cruelty of husband, infidelity, or lunacy or venereal disease. It is criminal to compel a wife to live with such husbands especially with those suffering from several diseases.

At this stage the report was put to vote. 51 voted for, and 7 against. The report was passed by a majority of 44. Then the President appealed to the ladies that attended the sessions to make collections and also to give from their own pockets as generously as they could possibly do towards the funds of the A.-I.W.C. Association.

In response to the appeal, promises of donations, large and small, were made, by most of the ladies and one gentleman only. Also a fairly appreciable amount was collected on the spot.

Fifth and the Final sitting 30th December, 1940, 2-30-4 p.m.

President: Mrs. Brijlal Nehru.

To begin with **Mrs. Velayudha Menon from Cochin** spoke as follows:—

“I am very thankful to the President for giving me a few minutes to speak to you during the last session of this momentous conference. Let me assure you that I am not going to take even one minute more than what is allowed me to tell you in a few words about our work in this Conference. I had the privilege of attending the first All-India Women’s Conference in Poona. Fifteen years after that I am attending this Conference again. You know that one who sees a living thing every day cannot judge of the progress of its growth, like the one who sees it after a long time. Now after these years I find by attending the sessions of this

Conference how the Conference has progressed in its manifold activities. I am reminded of the story of Rip Van Winkle who went to sleep during the reign of George III and woke up after the American War of Independence when George Washington had won independence for America. I feel now like Rip Van Winkle. The mother of the Conference Mrs. Cousins, was our helper and adviser. This Conference unanimously wishes her long life and health to continue in splendid work. I have only a few suggestions to offer regarding the work of the Conference. The Conference in my eyes has progressed very much. The intricacies of the Constitutional development of the Conference have impressed me and the laws and bye-laws and rules and regulations have become so complicated that I feel that all of us have to go home and study them. They have grown like the democratic Constitution of the British Commonwealth, and I felt impressed by the back-bone of the constitution. But I have one constructive suggestion with regard to these complicated laws and bye-laws. It is not possible for all the members to read these details regarding the constitution and understand the important and fundamental principles. Therefore I believe it will not be too much for me to request our member for Constitution to frame a kind of ten commandments in a simple manner and insert them into the magazine that is being run by the Association, I mean *Roshni*. I would also suggest that the *Roshni* might become an organ of wider circulation. My second suggestion is we had very little time given to the Subjects Committee meetings. I know that there are many among the delegates who have very intelligent and original thoughts arising from their experience but every one is not bold enough to come to the platform and speak out her views. We do not wish to lose their experiences. Let us open a discussion column in the *Roshni*. This is one of the ways of increasing the number of subscribers for our magazine. Then we can hope also to reduce the rate of subscription. An enquiry column may also find a place in the pages of the *Roshni*. Questions may be asked by members and the editor will answer them. My next suggestion is with regard to the Camp. We are put in two camps, Vegetarian and non-Vegetarian. In my humble opinion I wish there were only one single camp. Of course all honour to the Reception Committee members who have been looking to our comforts. The single camp will enable the delegates from all parts of India to meet at close quarters and exchange in greater detail their viewpoints.

Miss Malthé suggested that the various newspapers that were being circulated in the place of the Conference should be made available for the delegates so that then and there they could get an idea as to how the deliberations of the Conference were being served to the public. She complimented the arrangement of various group meetings which enabled the delegates concerned to specialise in particular subjects.

Miss Renu Roy opined that a little more time for the group meetings was the dire necessity, as the present group meetings were a bit confused for want of time. And she further suggested at least three sittings for each group meeting. Her second suggestion was that the group meetings should be a place where each and every one of the delegates might discuss the problems and exchange their opinions.

REPORT OF GROUP IV.

Civic Training.

“Man perfected by society is the best of all animals. He is the most terrible of all when he lives without law and justice. If he finds himself an individual who cannot live in society or who pretends he has need of only his own resources, do not consider him as a member of humanity; he is a savage beast or a god”—Aristotle.

The importance of the subject.—A knowledge of Civics is most important and yet it is one of the most neglected aspects of our educational life. Our children grow up into adult men and women without realising their rights and obligations as citizens. We suggest that in their most elementary form the principles of Civics should be impressed on the child mind so that at home and in the family the child learns to give up his own selfish pleasures and privileges and lives the life of the family. This training at home can be implemented by the teaching of Civics in all our schools so that the child when he grows up learns to be a good citizen respecting the rights of his fellowmen and yet jealously preserving his own. We may even suggest that our universities should make Civics an optional subject for the Degree examination if not as a subject by itself, at least as part of the wider sciences with which this subject is so closely associated. In this connection we recommend that our Schools and Colleges should grow out of their present cramped systems, where the word of the teacher is law. We should urge

more of local self-government in these institutions which are after all the best training ground for real citizenship. College unions with a multiplicity of interests relating to the civic side of life should be encouraged, particularly debating societies run on parliamentary lines.

At the present time, Civics has assumed greater importance than ever. With a widening of franchise and spread of democratic ideals, it is highly important that every individual should exercise his vote to the best of his ability and in the best interests of society. The A.-I.W.C. has been demanding adult franchise and a full use has to be made of the vote, our men and women must be trained to a realisation of their civic rights and responsibilities—our women particularly, so that it may not be argued by our opponents that the woman's vote is a mere duplication of her husband's or father's vote.

To this end we would suggest lectures on citizenship for the masses in the language of the area. These lectures should be organised by responsible groups of men and women, both official and non-official. The lecturers should be selected with great care from among people who have a deep knowledge of the subject and a wide outlook and who would preach from the point of view of world citizenship and not from a merely parochial and sectarian viewpoint.

We regret the overemphasis laid on literacy *per se* in recent times. In our opinion literacy, divorced from instruction even in the basic principles of civics, has no intrinsic value. The newly made literate may lapse into illiteracy; but a knowledge of civic rights and obligations properly imbibed will become an integral part of his very life. This teaching should include an elementary knowledge of sanitation, health and hygiene, banking and the co-operative movement. In the very wide domain of civic rights and responsibilities, we would like to draw particular attention to those duties which it is incumbent on every good citizen to perform.

Public Health :—

(i) All citizens should actively co-operate with the municipal authorities—

(a) in taking advantage of preventive measures such as vaccination, etc., against diseases, epidemics, etc;

- (b) in boycotting all purveyors of adulterated and unlicensed food stuff;
- (c) in enforcing the existing bye-laws against beggars, etc., refraining from giving them alms where beggar homes exist. They should demand legislation where such does not exist and agitate for the establishment of beggar homes under proper supervision;
- (d) by not engaging the services of unregistered *dais* and saving ignorant people from the clutches of quacks.

(ii) *Family Spacing*:—Citizens should educate public opinion in favour of family spacing upon which is dependant to so large an extent the health and vitality of the nation. Municipalities should be asked to open birth control clinics and give facilities and grants to voluntary organisations.

The Rights of Citizen:—

(i) *Housing*:—Municipal bye-laws should be strictly enforced against all landlords particularly with regard to sanitation and adequate water-supply for tenants. Municipal employees should be provided with decent quarters. We are yet very far off from the ideal of Workmen's Colonies of the kind provided in European cities with facilities for creches, kindergarten, libraries, dispensaries, etc.

(ii) Provision by the Municipality of adequate civic amenities, such as parks, playgrounds, gyms, swimming pools, public telephone, etc.

Other Duties of a Citizen:—

- (i) Public manners:—
 - (a) Etiquette of travelling—the citizen of to-day is woefully ignorant of this;
 - (b) Etiquette in cinemas, and at all public functions, meetings, etc.
 - (c) Behaviour on roads, etc. The average citizen avoids the foot-path. A cluster of people discussing the latest gossip right in the middle of the road is a common spectacle in an Indian city.

(ii) *Attitude to servants and subordinates*:—Exploitation of labour to be abolished: more humane treatment to domestic servants; municipalities should be approached to fix minimum wages, maximum loads, etc., for their employees.

(iii) *Kindness to animals*:—It is best to impart this instruction at the earliest age.

The City Beautiful:—

Necessity of co-operation between the municipality and the citizen in the matter of cleanliness of roads and streets which must not be used as public lavatories or receptacles for refuse and garbage.

Ugly posters should not be allowed to mar the beauty of a place, poster-boards and kiosks to be provided by the municipality.

Our branches and their work in this direction:—

(1) Organise lectures on the rights and obligations of citizens preferably illustrated with lantern slides.

(2) Make vigorous propaganda in the matter of health, hygiene and sanitation. Women and men to be induced to take advantage of such civic amenities where such do not exist.

(3) Establish, where possible, Social Service Departments with paid and honorary staff for the training of social workers, on the line of the Delhi resolution.

(4) Create propaganda against the advertisement of quack remedies, and also against the publication of vulgar and obscene advertisement.

(5) Teach men and women to take an intelligent interest in the exercise of the vote.

Mrs. Billimoria read the report of Group IV on "Civic Training".

Mrs. Doctor was of the opinion that women should fight and work for making their cities beautiful.

Mrs. Rajan Nehru impressed upon the fact that women should agitate for the amenities and when they were granted they should make good use of them. Every citizen ought to realise that the city belonged

to him or her. The Delhi Branch passed the resolution to the effect that women should find places on the municipal and the social committees. Therefore they should be trained in citizenship. If as citizens the people were not prepared for emergencies they should be wiped out of existence. For example it should be the duty of the Air-Warden to give the signal in good time before air raid.

Dr. Olga Feinberg stressed the point about providing dispensaries for the Harijans because in her opinion it was more essential to attend to their health than to their education. As it was very difficult for the Harijans who practically had no leisure to leave their places it was imperative that small and cheap dispensaries should be provided in their own places.

Then the Treasurer Mrs. G. R. Billimoria read out the list of donations promised and paid in the morning.

The **President** concluding the Conference spoke as follows :—

We have practically finished all business that we had at this session. I have been preaching brief speeches, taking a short time, to all those who came up the platform. I can assure you I will be as brief as I wanted others to be. I have not got very much to say. But before saying anything else I want all those to whom I might have given offence to forgive me for anything that they did not like. The work of the President is always difficult. The President has to check people, has to give rulings which is not sometimes relished by the opposite party and therefore it becomes very difficult to keep everybody in good temper. The work is so hard and we have been working at such pressure that perhaps I myself have not been able to keep the balance as I should have done. Therefore I assure all those who might have felt hurt by any of my words that I never meant them. I want them to forgive me.

Then I want to thank all the delegates and all the co-workers who have been co-operating with me during the sessions. It is evident that without the guidance of the senior workers and the ex-Presidents it would have been very difficult for me to carry on the work. I am very grateful for the work they have been doing. For the last three years we have been carrying out our work in a slightly different way. We have adopted the

group system. In spite of the fact that we are 15 years old we are yet new to the task that is before us. It is quite evident. The group system is very good and has to be taken up. But for the efficient working of the group system specialised knowledge is necessary and I am afraid specialised knowledge is very much lacking among us. We have to work throughout the year to make the group system efficient and useful. Unfortunately that work throughout the year is not being done. That is why we find it rather difficult to work. Therefore it is possible that some of the delegates and other workers have found it difficult to go through the work in this manner. But I think that for the progress of the general work specialisation is very necessary. And as much specialisation as we can do, we should do, so as to make our work efficient.

Now I want to give my thanks and the thanks of the Conference, to the delegates, the Standing Committee members, the Reception Committee members, to Lady Mirza, to Mrs. Mandyam, to the girl guides, boy scouts, volunteers, pressmen, Municipal Council, the Government of Mysore, our hostesses and to all the people of Mysore for the very glorious reception they have given us. They have spared no pains to make us comfortable and I can assure them that all of the delegates who have come from far off north have felt very happy amongst them. Lady Mirza, every one of us has admired you. It is very difficult to praise a person to her or his face. But behind you we have no word except words of praise for you. Your dignity, your grace, your very graciousness, the friendship that you have extended to us, all that—we have admired and admired greatly. This session of the Conference has brought you very near to our hearts. And I can assure you we shall always remember you, your co-workers, and your beautiful State with great gratitude. The pleasant memories that we carry with us from here will ever be cherished in our hearts. We shall always look back upon them with happiness and gratitude.

Now, to our delegates I have one word to say. But before saying anything to the delegates, who have come from different parts I want to thank the President of the last year and the Secretary, Mrs. Hamid Ali, and Mrs. L. N. Menon respectively for the very splendid work they have done throughout the year. I tell you that the work of the president is an onerous one. It is not only so at the sessions. It is so all through the year.

Difficult problems are brought to the President. She has to solve them and she has to decide them so as to please the parties which send the problems, and they are bound to be unpleasant to the people against whom rulings are given. Therefore the work is difficult. But our last year's President had done it so well that she has come nearer to the hearts of even those against whom she might have given her rulings. Her work and that of the Secretary have been appreciated all round. The Secretary has done an extraordinarily good piece of work, very good work for us, and this is the editing of the *Roshni*. She has done it so well and so efficiently that there is not one amongst us who is not grateful to her, for this good work she has done. Without a paper of its own the work of the Conference cannot go on. We hope that she has made this her own work and for the future also she is willing to take up that work. During the past year she had other duties. But this year she has time to devote her attention solely to the editing of the *Roshni* and I can assure you that the next year's product will even be better than this year. So we are very happy that she has undertaken to do this good work. And I hope that all of you will become subscribers to that beautiful, useful, and very good magazine that she is editing.

I want to say a few words to the Delegates. I am very sorry to see that some of our delegates did not care to attend all the sessions of the Conference. They missed several sessions. I know Bangalore and the State of Mysore is very tempting especially to young people who come from far off north and other places and who want to see all the beautiful things that Mysore has created. But they should all remember that work is to come first before pleasure and therefore they should have postponed their visit to the places outside Bangalore which they must see after the Conference. So, Fellow-Delegates, I want you all to remember that when you come to the Conference you do not come in a holiday mood. You come in a mood of service to give the best thoughts that you can, to the work of the Conference. You give us the experience that you have gone through during the year and make your constructive contribution to the work on hand but not destructive criticism. Therefore I appeal to you all that during the coming year you give your whole attention to the work of the Conference. There are several amongst us who feel discontented in their surroundings. They have a desire for service. But that desire for service is so

much mixed up with other feelings. They like to see that they are observed going from one place to the other. They wish to have receptions and wish to receive other honours. They feel they are also as much educated and in spite of it when they are left out they wonder why it is so. But they forget that the person who is honoured has left behind a history. They forget the heart of that person. They do not stop to consider that that person deserved that position. They also forget that she has given her life to the service of the people and to the nation. Therefore all the people and all the delegates who are here must try and cultivate that heart and that mind which will impel them to give their best services to the womanhood of India. I tell you honestly. I do not admire speeches at all. Because I had a lot of speaking, you may not believe me. It is not necessary for people to speak. It is not even necessary for people to go to jail. I for one do not like to speak at all. I wish to keep quiet. The speech does not come from my heart. Wherever you are, in your colleges, in your houses, in your schools, you can be of service to your fellow-beings and your country. You can give a little out of your pocket money to the various things that are started to keep the public works going. For those things no big platforms are necessary. For those things you need not go out of your homes. You must have a heart, mind and determination to give. Be useful to the people wherever you are. Study what is demanded of you by the country to-day and then determine to do it. You can do it from where you stand. You need not go out for it. That is my only appeal to you. If our delegates, if our members do that, it is quite sufficient. We do not want anything more. We do not want your learning or speaking. What we want really is a good heart determined to be of service. The ideal of service in whatever circumstances you are is all we expect you to possess. That is all I have to tell you. Once again I thank you all for being patient.

At the concluding session of the Conference, Begum Hamid Ali spoke as follows :—

Friends,

I am just going to say a few things which come from the bottom of my heart. I thank you all very much for the kind things that have been said about me by the President and by everybody else and for the way

in which you have received me. I am thankful for the great help that the personnel of the Conference has given me,—every one of the members who worked with me, and the other oldest members, the workers and colleagues of the Conference. I am really standing here to thank very warmly and very heartily, my colleague, the loyal, methodical and efficient honorary General Secretary,—Mrs. Lakshmi N. Menon. I would wish in future every President and Chairwoman of the Conference, to have as good a secretary as I had been lucky enough to have, and I wish they come to know each other better than we did before. We now part friends: so that we hope to work again and always, not only in the Conference, but also apart from the Conference all our lives. As for our President of the day of this year, you all know that I welcome her most warmly. I know she has presided over large deliberations. I know her for many years. I know she will be most efficient and a wise President and the Conference will gain by the inspiration that she will give to us next year. I also welcome our new Secretary, Mrs. Urmila Mehta, having been in the Conference for many years. I have every hope that she will do good credit to the Conference.

One of the things that Mrs. Menon has done is the editing of the *Roshni*. Mrs. Menon has already done much for it. I cannot praise that paper enough. Personally I like it so well, that I do not know how to praise it. I must tell you it has already become a reference paper for working the Conference. I do not think one can say more about the paper that is only one year old. In reality it has already become a reference paper for the workers of the Conference.

Mrs. Rustumji Faridoonji next spoke as follows:—

Madam President and sisters:—

Votes of thanks have been given. You have heard sound advice from our President. Mine is only a very personal note to-day. As I feel day by day that I am getting older and losing a good deal of strength, I am standing before you, here, to-day, to say—most possibly—a simple farewell. (**Cries of “no, no” from the audience.**) If God gives me health I will come to future Conferences but my coming to the Conference means being present there the whole time. I cannot bear the idea of coming to a Conference, and then, being forced, lie in bed for an hour, as I ought

to have done here to-day. It is this sort of a personal feeling which makes me feel that I should say good-bye to many an old friend, that I see here now. (No.) But before I just say "Good-bye", I want to appeal to you all and my appeal is that of your President:—"India needs every one of you, women". Do not think that "because Mrs. so and so is working, I can stay and do nothing". If you can do, each and every little you do, is wanted, and I beg of you, specially the younger generation, to try to find some little time to devote to the service of the country. You have gone through all the resolutions and problems and there is work ready to your hand. At your next door, your neighbour may want you. If you go further, your Mohalla may want you, your Municipality may want you. So, please make up your minds, that when you go home, you won't just devote your time to yourself—devote yourself to your own home and be selfish—but you will make greater effort to devote yourself to your country. It is the only request that an old member is making to you, to-day. God bless you all, bless the **All-India Women's Conference** . . . (pause) May God bless you all, and my friend, the old-guard—Mrs. Cousins. May the **All-India Women's Conference** rise higher and work for the women of India for ever.

Mrs. Doctor spoke for a few minutes:—

Ladies,

I thank you all for allowing me to speak a few words. I fully endorse all that has been said before me. As for Mrs. Cousins and Mrs. Faridoonji, I must say that their very presence here, on the platform, is a sort of stimulus for the Standing Committee. Their venerable grey hair, their beautiful faces, above all their sweet tempers, have induced us to work always for the Conference, and whether old age or grey hairs they will come to our Conference for many more years to inspire us. Our President has thanked the members of the Reception Committee. I am sure that you will all agree with me, when I say that those thoughts have come from the bottom of our hearts for all the comforts and kindnesses that we have received. Mrs. Cousins, our mother, remarked that whenever she came to the Conference, she felt younger and younger. I do not know how it is. Once again I bless the Conference and take my seat.

Message from Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

Sister Delegates,

I am sorry indeed that another engagement in Mysore—which I could not give up—prevents my being with you all to-day. I am writing these few lines to say “au revoir” to you to wish you every success in your work in the coming year. Annual sessions are nothing worth if they do not inspire us with enthusiasm and fill us with redoubled energy for the future. I know that workers are few but if the cause is worth while—and it IS worth while—then they WILL come and the work will not languish. The Conference lives from hand to mouth—financially—a good thing because it makes us all alert and keeps alive within us a real concern for it. I do hope the Mysore session will not fail us in this respect and that we shall be able to raise enough money for work for the coming year. The Conference and the Lady Irwin College, its child, are our first care and every penny we can spare should go towards their maintenance. Do give liberally and ask others to do so. I appeal to the Mysore public to be generous too.

Secretary's Remarks on the Eve of Relinquishing Charge.

In laying down the office and handing it over to my successor Mrs. Urmila Mehta, I hope you will permit me to say a few words to thank all of you, for your co-operation and patience. The General Secretary's work, I might tell you, notwithstanding the power and glory once associated with it, is not a bed of roses, but it is exciting if you are fond of fighting, and really educative if you are capable of learning anything by contact with others. It has taught me to ignore many things which once seemed important, and which still seem very important to others. It has made me a wiser woman because during the last nine months I was called upon to discriminate between essentials and non-essentials, the transient and the permanent. For giving me that opportunity I tender my sincerest thanks.

I dare say that in this meeting there are many who feel that the General Secretary might be a little more polite and a little less abrupt, and devote a little more time for a quiet chat. I am sure they are right and I

myself would like to have a few more days to meet my old students who are here with their children and whose numerous invitations I have had to refuse for want of time, and meet more of the delegates especially the Standing Committee members of 1940 with whom I have yet many quarrels to pick. I hope Mrs. Urmila Mehta will treat them kindly. I am also one of them. Most of them have forgotten all my warnings as I have forgotten all their threats. I know that time will heal if there is still any soreness left of the days of our comradeship. I thank you for your help, your co-operation and patience. Now I must confess that there is one person, a very prominent person here who had to put up a lot from me. I am sure she would smile if I were to mention her name—Begum Hamid Ali—the most understanding and forgiving of colleagues I have had. There are still three other persons whom I should particularly mention. Two of them are my oldest friends from the days of the Delhi Conference, Mrs. Cousins and Mrs. Rustumji. I knew I could always count on them and seek their help when necessary. But I do not think it is wise to tell you all the things that these veteran soldiers of the Women's Conference have done for me and the Conference in helping us to reorganise our different branches, organise this Conference. Then there is Rajkumari Amrit Kaur who, notwithstanding our strong spiritual differences was always an unfailing source of strength to me in everything. I am indebted to her and Mrs. Cousins—especially, in bringing out the *Roshni*.

I have reserved the Reception Committee for fuller treatment. The difficulties that the Branch had in coming to a decision melted like dew on a sunny morning when their chairwoman sent the telegram welcoming the A.-I.W.C. to Bangalore. Lady Mirza Ismail does not believe in words and I might confide in you that till I actually met her on the 19th I had not a word in exchange from her. She accepts things like a philosopher and I recall her words when somebody pointed out a difficulty "well, if we have to do it, it has to be done there is no sense in evading issues." "Things that have to be done must be done". I hope many of our standing committee members will remember her words and say, "if we have to do it let us do it." Duty is stern and we must obey her.



Mrs. S. R. Mandyam
Secretary of the Reception Committee,
Bangalore.

I have known Lady Mirza Ismail only during the last few days and I do not want to say things that you are already aware of, her cheerfulness of disposition and her untiring energy and her habit of going ahead in the face of difficulties. Mrs. Mandyam's only fault is her seriousness. Many a delegate has asked me to request her to smile occasionally which I have forgotten to do in the midst of preoccupations. But she is efficiency incarnate—firm and grim almost like the rock of Gibraltar, although I have seen her yielding a little once. Then there is the ever-present Indiramma, to whom everything is easy and simple, who is always everywhere offering her services to everybody; I wish every Reception Committee will have members like Indiramma.

I must not forget the little guides and scouts—the little unknown soldiers of this complicated organisation. If they are not here always at our beck and call, I am sure we would not have been able to carry on even a little of our scheduled work. It is due to them again that the working of the Conference has been so easy. They looked after our comforts here in the hall, supplied us with the necessary literature, looked after our lost articles, and the scouts had no rest. They are the messenger boys and considering the distance between this hall and the camps, I think they have done their work exceedingly well. And to think, that all they got in return were a few autographs! I congratulate them and other sister guides for their excellent work.

My last request is that delegates who are attending the Sessions should help the organisation by carrying the message of the Conference to their districts and implementing the resolutions adopted by the Conference.

Mrs. Mandyam :—

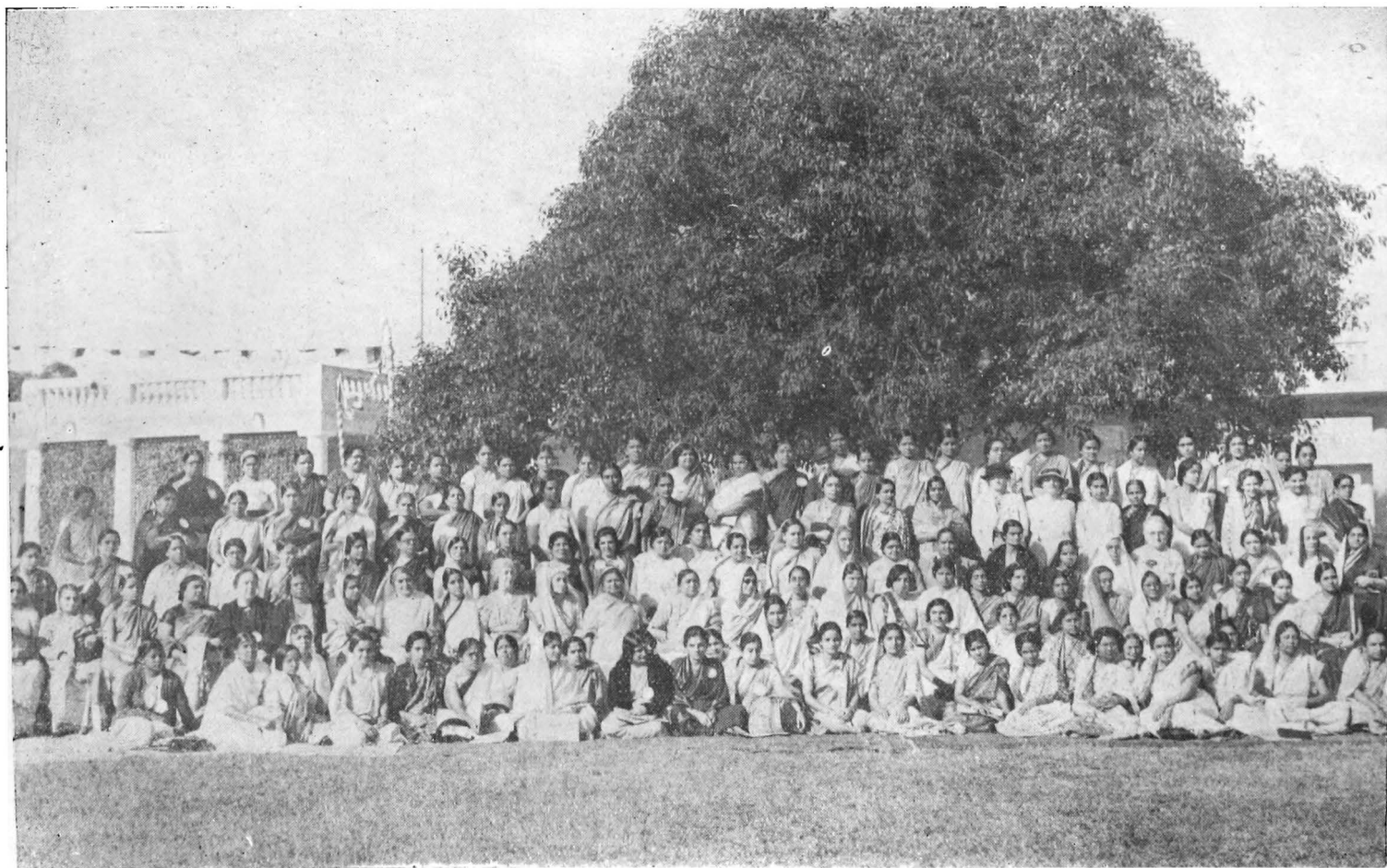
After all the splendid speeches that you have been hearing for the past four days my humble self standing before you to do my duty which is that of offering a hearty vote of thanks to you all. These four days have passed away in such a short time and before we could realise where we are, is over. This Conference has brought about better social understanding between the different classes of people which is one of the achievements of the A.-I.W.C.

The time at our disposal was very short for us to make all the arrangements. Now, on behalf of the Reception Committee I offer to the delegates and visitors a hearty vote of thanks for attending these sessions and making them a success. To you,—our President—Mrs. Brijlal Nehru we convey our thanks for the patience with which you faced the arduous task of conducting a huge Conference. Our thanks are also due to all the workers and other members of the Reception Committee who have spared no pains to put their heart and soul to make this function a success.

My sincere thanks are due to the gentlemen helpers who, though behind the *Purdah* have helped a good deal to make arrangements for the Conference. We are very grateful to the municipal authorities, the Deputy Commissioner, to the Electrical Department, the Health Department, Engineering Department and other Offices and Departments that co-operated with us to render us a great help. If by chance, I have omitted to thank any of my fellow-workers, it is not intentional but merely a slip, and I beg of you to excuse us. Our special thanks are due to the volunteers, rovers, girl guides who were ever ready to help us at all times.

Friends and sisters, we have done our best to make you all happy and comfortable during your stay here. If there had been any mistakes or omissions on our part I request you all to kindly excuse us.

Finally the President declared the Conference closed, and mentioned that the Delegates were at liberty to go and work hard. Miss Leelamani Naidu proposed three hearty cheers to Lady Mirza Ismail,—Chairwoman of the Reception Committee,—and Mrs. Mandyam proposed three hearty cheers to the All-India Women's Conference.



Delegates to the XV Session of the All-India Women's Conference.

**THE ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S
Receipts and Payments Account for the**

| | Rs. a. p. | Rs. a. p. |
|--|------------|------------|
| To Balance on 1st November, 1939 :— | | |
| Fixed Deposit in the Bank of India Ltd. | 2,856 12 0 | |
| Fixed Deposit in the National Bank .. | 630 0 0 | |
| With the National Bank | 7,838 8 0 | |
| With Mrs. Mehta (Social Section) .. | 15 15 6 | |
| With Mrs. Doctor (Social Section) .. | 56 12 0 | |
| With Hon. Gen. Secretary | 348 8 0 | 11,746 7 6 |
| „ Registration Fees of Delegates | .. | 1,420 0 0 |
| „ Donation for Conference Expenses | | 643 0 0 |
| „ Donation towards Central Office Fund .. | | 283 0 0 |
| „ Donation from Rajkumari Amrit Kaur towards Travel Expenses of Org. Secretary | | 500 0 0 |
| „ Donations towards Turkish Earthquake Relief | | 1,407 0 0 |
| „ Affiliation Fees | | 865 0 0 |
| „ Reception Committee | | 773 15 0 |
| „ Proceeds of Dramatic Entertainment .. | | 350 0 0 |
| „ Constituencies and Sub-Constituencies— For extra copies of circulars | | 240 8 0 |
| „ Vice-Presidentship Fees | | 40 0 0 |
| „ Subscription towards Education Fund Association | | 10 0 0 |
| „ Subscription towards Kamala Nehru Fund | | 10 0 0 |
| „ Sale of Annual Reports | | 77 3 0 |
| „ Interest on Bank Current Account | | 38 12 0 |
| „ Miscellaneous Receipts | | 36 7 9 |
| „ Interest on Fixed Deposit | | 129 14 0 |
| Total | | 18,571 3 3 |

Examined and found correct.

SORAB S. ENGINEER & Co.,
Incorporated Accountants,
Registered Accountants,
Hony. Auditors.

Bombay, 19th February, 1941.

The grateful thanks of the Association of the All-India Women's Conference are due to Messrs. Sorab S. Engineer & Co., for auditing the accounts of the Conference free of charge. This is a service which the firm has generously rendered us for many years and it has been of invaluable help to the Conference.

CONFERENCE.

Year ending 31st October, 1940.

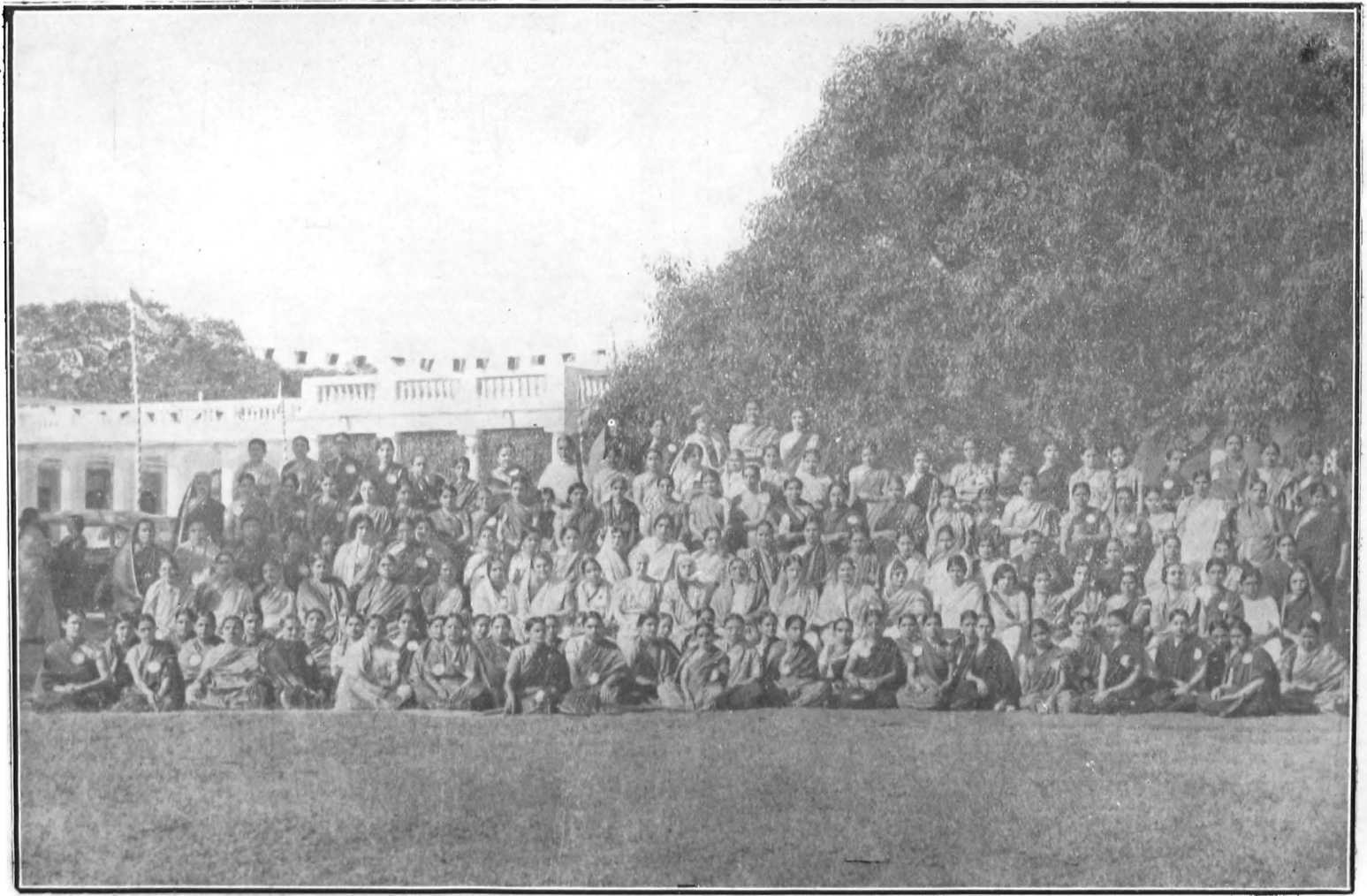
| | Rs. | a. | p. | Rs. | a. | p. |
|--|-------|----|----|--------|----|----|
| By Reception Committee Expenses .. | | | | 710 | 0 | 0 |
| „ Honorary General Secretary's Expenses* | | | | 2,803 | 5 | 3 |
| „ Central Office Expenses :— | | | | | | |
| Mrs. Hajrah Begum Ahmed's salary .. | 416 | 2 | 0 | | | |
| Mrs. Hajrah Begum Ahmed's travelling, postage, etc. | 49 | 1 | 6 | 465 | 3 | 6 |
| „ Printing and Stationery | | | | 1,314 | 10 | 6 |
| „ Education Section Expenses | | | | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| „ Social Section Secretary's Expenses .. | | | | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| „ Mrs. Seva Singh Gill as subscription towards Education Fund Association .. | | | | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| „ Indigenous Industries' Section | | | | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| „ Miss Bhalerao's Travelling Expenses, etc. | | | | 115 | 12 | 6 |
| „ Kamala Nehru Fund | | | | 525 | 0 | 0 |
| „ Turkish Earthquake Relief Fund | | | | 1,407 | 0 | 0 |
| „ Affiliation Fee to International Alliance of Women's Suffrage | | | | 27 | 3 | 3 |
| „ Honorary Treasurer's Expenses | | | | 22 | 8 | 0 |
| „ Bank Commission and Charges | | | | 14 | 10 | 0 |
| „ Bank and other balances :— | | | | | | |
| Fixed Deposit in the National Bank .. | 5,680 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Fixed Deposit in the Bank of India .. | 2,931 | 12 | 0 | | | |
| With the National Bank | 2,276 | 9 | 3 | | | |
| With Mrs. Mehta (Social Section) .. | 15 | 15 | 6 | | | |
| With Mrs. Doctor (Social Section) .. | 36 | 12 | 0 | | | |
| With Personal Assistant to Hon. Gen. Secretary | 50 | 0 | 0 | | | |
| With Hon. Gen. Secretary | 114 | 13 | 6 | 11,105 | 14 | 3 |
| Total | | | | 18,571 | 3 | 3 |

*Details of the Office Expenses of the Hon. General Secretary :—

| | | | |
|---|-------|----|---|
| Salary of Personal Assistant | 1,581 | 11 | 0 |
| Travelling Expenses of Personal Assistant | 230 | 4 | 6 |
| Office shifting expenses | 210 | 1 | 0 |
| Printing and Stationery | 329 | 10 | 9 |
| Postages, Telegrams, Telephones, Registration Charges | 372 | 10 | 9 |
| Furniture Hire | 33 | 0 | 0 |
| Repairs to typewriter and Miscellaneous expenses | 26 | 12 | 0 |
| House Rent | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| Bank's Commission | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 2,803 | 5 | 3 |

DRAFT BUDGET FOR 1940-41.

| Receipts. | | | Expenditure. | | | | |
|--|---------------|----------|--------------|---|---------------|----------|----------|
| | Rs. | a. | p. | | Rs. | a. | p. |
| Balance on 1st November, 1940 .. | 11,117 | 9 | 3 | Reception Committee .. | 805 | 0 | 0 |
| Registration Fee .. | 1,610 | 0 | 0 | Hon. General Secretary's Expenses | 2,990 | 0 | 0 |
| Donations .. | 1,080 | 0 | 0 | Printing and Stationery .. | 1,320 | 0 | 0 |
| Affiliation fees .. | 875 | 0 | 0 | Education Section Expenses .. | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Proceeds of Dramatic entertainment by the R.C. | 400 | 0 | 0 | Social Section .. | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Subscription for extra copies of circulars .. | 60 | 0 | 0 | Hon. Treasurer's .. | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Sale of Annual Reports .. | 70 | 0 | 0 | Indigenous Industries' section .. | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| Interest on Bank Account .. | 15 | 0 | 0 | Affiliation Fee to International Alliance of Women's Suffrage | 27 | 0 | 0 |
| Miscellaneous Receipts .. | 30 | 0 | 0 | Bank Commission and charges .. | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| Interest on Fixed Deposit .. | 315 | 0 | 0 | Expenses on Roshni | 600 | 0 | 0 |
| Roshni Subscription .. | 300 | 0 | 0 | | | | |
| | | | | Total .. | 5,857 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | | Balance .. | 10,265 | 9 | 3 |
| | | | | | | | |
| Total .. | 16,122 | 9 | 3 | Total .. | 16,122 | 9 | 3 |



The Standing Committee of the A.-I. W. C. and members of the Reception Committee at Bangalore.

MESSAGES.

Messages wishing the Session success from prominent people and numerous friends and organisations in India and abroad received were from:—

Mrs. Bakulabai Abhyankar.
Her Highness the Princess of Berar.
Miss Shantabai Bhalerao.
Mrs. Annapurnabai Deshmukh.
Dr. G. V. Deshmukh.
Her Highness Maharani Chimnabai Gaekwad.
Mahatma Gandhi.
Mr. Hamid Ali and Miss Vera Brittain.
Miss Harrison and Mrs. Grace Lankester.
Elizabeth Leader Winifred Iles.
Shrimati Kamala Devi and Miss Mary Dingman.
Miss Anandidevi Khemchand.
Maharani Lalita Kumari Devi of Vizianagram.
Rani Laxmidevi of Phaltan.
The Liaison Group in Great Britain.
Secretary, Mahila Samaja, Hariyur.
Mr. E. G. Mc. Alpine.
H. H. Maharani Sucharu Devi of Mayurbhanj.
H. H. the Dowager Maharani of Mysore.
H. H. the Maharaja of Mysore.
H. H. the Maharani of Mysore.
Mrs. Sharadaben Mehta.
Sogra Humayoon Mirza.
Mrs. Manoramabai Mudholkar.
Mrs. Sarojini Naidu.
Lady Vidyagauri Nilkanth.
H. H. Princess Niloufer.
H. H. Maharani Setu Parvati Bayi of Travancore,
Miss Piggot.

Shrimati K. Ramasubbamma.
 Mrs. Renuka Ray.
 Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi.
 Rogers.
 Diwan Bahadur Harbilas Sardar.
 Col. Shamsher Singh.
 Miss Meliscent Shephard.
 Women's Peace Movement, Edinburgh.
 Society of Friends' Llandrindonwells
 Vera Brittain.
 Churulata Mukerjee.
 Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh.
 Diwan Bahadur K. Ramaswamy.
 Sir C. Y. Chintamani.
 "Wish Conference success under Mrs. Nehru."

Mrs. Bakulabai Abhyankar.

"At the critical moment in World's history I wish your Conference success in arriving at wish and unanimous decision on all matters of vital importance."

Her Highness Princess of Berar.

"Best wishes for the Conference".

Miss Shantabai Bhalerao.

"Wish Conference every success."

Mrs. Annapurna Deshmukh.

"I hope the Conference will make strenuous efforts to remove the special disabilities of Hindu Women regarding marriage and property laws. Wish the Conference every success."

Dr. Deshmukh.

"Wish the Conference a great success in its deliberations and hope this Conference will tackle all problems confronting the women of India."

Her Highness Maharani Chimnabai Gaekwad.

"I hope the All-India Women's Conference will stand for unadulterated non-violence."

Mahatma Gandhi.

"Believe contribution of Indian women is vital in present world situation for it will be from our conception of human brotherhood that men and women must strive to build a better world for our children."

Miss Vera Brittain.

"Special greetings to Conference."

Miss Harrison and Mrs. Lankester.

"Greetings and best wishes."

Elizabeth Leader Winifred Iles.

"Greetings Conference."

Shrimati Kamala Devi and Miss Mary Dingman.

"Greetings best wishes success Conference."

Miss Anandidevi Khemchand.

"Please convey hearty congratulations to Shrimati Brijlal Nehru. Praying for Conference's great success."

Maharani Lalita Kumari Devi of Vizianagram.

"Wish session all success under your able presidentship. Please convey apologies to all sisters."

Rani Laxmidevi of Phaltan.

"We send to our sisters in India our greetings and best wishes for a fruitful Conference. We know that you and we have the honour and responsibility of living at a great formative period of history. Now we suffer the birth pangs, later we shall welcome the new birth. We see our men and women courageous and gay, determined and tireless under daily and nightly dangers, and we hope that, forged in this furnace, we shall emerge resolute to wage war, not on moral foes, but on poverty and disease, and that we shall widen our liberties and broaden our responsibilities. Without that hope we could not go on. To you we send our fervent wishes that you may gain the same liberties and responsibilities without war, that you may wisely guide your great country into unity and peace and prosperity, and, linking hands and hearts with China, lead Asia to spiritual victory."

Liaison Group in Great Britain.

"Wish Conference every success."

Secretary, Mahila Samaja Hiriyur.

"I very much regret that my absence from Bangalore during the Christmas holidays has prevented me from being present at this session of the All-India Women's Conference—the first to be held in Bangalore. The invitation of the Conference to me to speak on the opening day is an opportunity which I am sorry to have missed. I feel sure that your deliberations will be fruitful, and the Department of Public Instruction in Mysore will be particularly interested in those subjects which concern Women's Education—subjects which are fundamental, and lie at the root of almost all other questions affecting the general position of women.

Mr. E. G. Mc Alpine,

Director of Public Instruction, Mysore.

"Though far, my thoughts, sympathies and prayers with you. May God bless the noble endeavour. Greetings and goodwill."

H. H. Maharani Sucharu Devi of Mayurbhanj.

"It is particularly gratifying to me that the All-India Women's Conference is being held in Bangalore this year. I wish it all success."

H. H. the Dowager Maharani of Mysore.

"I wish the All-India Women's Conference every success."

H. H. the Maharani of Mysore.

"I wish every success to the Conference. I hope the deliberations will lead to definite results. My greetings to all our friends."

Mrs. Sharadaben Mehta.

"I wish the Conference every success."

Sogra Humayoon Mirza.

"Wishing successful session."

Mrs. Manorama Mudholkar.

"Please accept my sincere good wishes for the success of the session. I hope this year's deliberations would be as useful as the past years and would give good impetus to the workers in the cause of women's uplift."

Lady Vidyagauri Nilkanth.

"Wish Conference success. Women must stand united for progress and peace in the world".

H. H. Princess Niloufer.

"Greatly regret my inability to be present at the All-India Women's Conference. Wish it all success."

H. H. Maharani Setu Parvati Bayi of Travancore.

"Greetings. Wish success. Remember Sind's medical need."

Miss Piggot.

"I wish the Annual Conference a success."

Shrimati K. Ramasubamma.

"Extremely sorry ... unable attend Conference. Wish Bangalore Session every success."

Mrs. Renuka Ray.

"Regret inability to attend. Wish success Conference."

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi.

"A group of English women send friendships, greetings and goodwill. Love conquers all."

Rogers.

"Hearty goodwishes. Women's work essential for salvation of India."

Diwan Bahadur Harbilas Sarda.

"Cordial good wishes for success Conference. India expects her leading women to play increasingly active and purposeful part in moulding country's political and socio-economic structure. May your inspiring leadership point true way."

Col. Shamshersingh.

"Cordial greetings New Year to all friends."

Miss Meliscent Shephard.

"We send greetings."

Women's Peace Movement, Edinburgh.

"Your effort warmly appreciated."

Society of Friends' Llandrindonwells.

"My thoughts with you all wishing the Conference every success and prayer that the united front of the women of India will succeed in attaining our and our country's rightful place."

Charulata Mukerjee.

"The All-India Women's Conference has done valuable work for Indian women and through them for India. It has consistently made a stand against communalism and for this reason alone deserves the support of every patriotic India. I hope it will continue to lay stress on social work for which there is immense field in India. I wish all success to the Fifteenth Session of the Conference."

Kunwar Sir Maharaj Singh.

"I wish the Conference unqualified success. The uplift of women is a pressing problem of great national importance and the Conference should be congratulated on undertaking this noble task and accomplishing much in the progressive direction during the last so many years of its useful existence."

Diwan Bahadur K. Ramaswamy.

"I wish the Conference the best success. I have a lively sense of the immense service the Conference has done to the cause of India's daughters and I wish it to grow from strength to strength."

Sir C. Y. Chintamani.

APPENDIX II.

List of Branches and Units total Membership.

1. Andhra :—

| | | |
|------------------|----|-----|
| 1. East Godavary | .. | 400 |
| 2. West Godavary | .. | 200 |
| 3. Guntur | .. | 100 |
| 4. Vizagapatam | .. | 50 |
| 5. Cudappah | .. | 300 |
| 6. Krishna | .. | 200 |
| 7. Kurnool | .. | 60 |
| 8. Anantapur | .. | 40 |

Total .. 1,350

2. Assam :—

| | | |
|----------------------------|----|----|
| 1. Shillong | .. | 50 |
| 2. Sylhet | .. | 46 |
| 3. Silchar (not available) | | |

Total .. 96

3. Baroda :—

| | | |
|-------------|----|-----|
| 1. Baroda | .. | 160 |
| 2. Navasari | .. | 75 |

Total .. 235

4. Bengal East :—

| | | |
|--------------------------|----|----|
| 1. Dacca (not available) | | |
| 2. Comilla | .. | 52 |
| 3. Faridpur | .. | 80 |

Total .. 132

5. Bengal West :—

| | | |
|------------|----|-----|
| 1. Bankura | .. | 115 |
| .. Total | .. | 115 |

6. Berar :—

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|----|
| 1. Yeotmal | .. | 60 |
| 2. Akola | | |
| 3. Amraoti (Figures not available.) | | |
| 4. Buldhana | | |

Total .. 60

7. Bihar :—

| | | |
|----------|----|----|
| 1. Patna | .. | 62 |
|----------|----|----|

Total .. 62

8. Bombay :—

| | | |
|--------------------|----|-----|
| 1. Bombay | .. | 195 |
| 2. Dadar-Matunga | .. | 250 |
| 3. Khar-Santa Cruz | .. | 217 |

Total .. 662

9. Calcutta :—

| | | |
|-------------------|----|-----|
| 1. Calcutta | .. | 225 |
| 2. Burra Bazar | .. | |
| 3. South Calcutta | .. | |

Total .. 225

10. C.P. North :—

| | | |
|---------------|----|-----|
| 1. Jubbulpore | .. | 120 |
| 2. Bilaspur | .. | 45 |
| 3. Saugor | .. | 35 |

Total .. 200

11. C.P. South :—

| | | |
|--------------|----|-----|
| 1. Nagpur | .. | 100 |
| 2. Chindwara | .. | 30 |
| 3. Bhandara | .. | 30 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 4. Wardha .. 30 | 17. Indore:— | |
| 5. Seoni .. 30 | 1. Indore .. 68 | |
| 6. Saoner .. 20 | 2. Mahidpur .. 17 | |
| 7. Chanda .. 30 | 3. Karnod .. 32 | |
| 8. Arvi .. 30 | 4. Maheswar .. | |
| 9. Balaghat .. 30 | | |
| 10. Gondia .. 25 | Total .. 117 | |
| 11. Katol .. 25 | | |
| 12. Umner .. 30 | 18. Jath State:— | |
| 13. Hinghaghat .. 30 | Jath .. 101 | |
| Total .. 440 | Total .. 101 | |
| 12. Cochin:— | | |
| 1. Ernadulam .. 145 | 19. Karnatak:— | |
| 2. Trichur .. 60 | 1. Dharwar .. 200 | |
| 3. Trippunitura .. 35 | 2. Mangalore .. 171 | |
| Total .. 240 | 3. Karwar .. 150 | |
| 13. Delhi:— | 4. Belgaum .. 25 | |
| 1. Delhi .. 150 | 5. Bellary .. 50 | |
| 2. Muzaffarnagar .. 49 | 6. Gadag .. 28 | |
| 3. Narela .. 30 | 7. Garag .. 30 | |
| 4. Qaral .. 100 | Total .. 654 | |
| 5. Simla (not available). | | |
| Total .. 329 | 20. Kolhapur:— | |
| 14. Gujarat:— | 21. Konkan:— | |
| 1. Ahmedabad .. 90 | 1. Alibag .. 24 | |
| 2. Surat .. 95 | Total .. 24 | |
| 3. Broach .. 125 | | |
| Total .. 310 | 22. Maharashtra:— | |
| 15. Gwalior:— | 1. Poona .. 230 | |
| Figures not available. | 2. Malshiras .. 80 | |
| 16. Hyderabad-Deccan:— | 3. Satara .. 60 | |
| 1. Hyderabad .. 320 | 4. Wai .. 50 | |
| 2. Aurangabad .. 55 | 5. Karad .. 50 | |
| 3. Parbani .. 100 | 6. Nasik .. 50 | |
| 4. Gulbarga .. | 7. Ahmednagar .. 100 | |
| 5. Warangal .. 75 | 8. Kirloskarwadi .. 60 | |
| 6. Mahboobnagar .. 14 | 9. Dhulia .. 20 | |
| Total .. 564 | Total .. 700 | |

23. Madras :—

| | | |
|-----------|----|-----|
| 1. Madras | .. | 116 |
| Total | .. | 116 |

24. Malabar :—

| | | |
|--------------|----|----|
| 1. Calicut | .. | 46 |
| 2. Cannanore | .. | |
| Total | .. | 46 |

25. Mysore :—

| | | |
|----------------------|----|-----|
| 1. Bangalore | .. | 105 |
| 2. Mysore | .. | 91 |
| 3. Chikmanglore | .. | 50 |
| 4. Chitaldrug | .. | 52 |
| 5. Tumkur | .. | 50 |
| 6. Devangere | .. | 40 |
| 7. Kolar | .. | 50 |
| 8. Kolar Gold Fields | .. | 50 |
| 9. Mandya | .. | 50 |
| 10. Hassan | .. | 66 |
| 11. Shimoga | .. | 50 |
| Total | .. | 654 |

26. N.-W.F.P. :—

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. Peshawar | |
| 2. Abbottabad | |

27. Orissa :—

| | |
|------------|--|
| 1. Cuttack | |
| 2. Puri | |

28. Phaltan :—**29. Punjab (Central) Lahore****30. Sangli :—**

Sangli has five sub-branches.

31. Sind :—

| | | |
|--------------|----|----|
| 1. Karachi | .. | 58 |
| 2. Hyderabad | .. | |
| Total | .. | 58 |

32. Tamilnad :—

| | | |
|-------------|----|----|
| 1. Pollachi | .. | 46 |
| Total | .. | 46 |

33. Travancore :—

| | | |
|---------------|----|-----|
| 1. Trivandrum | .. | 150 |
| 2. Nagercoil | .. | 50 |
| Total | .. | 200 |

34. U.P. Agra :—

| | | |
|--------------|----|-----|
| 1. Allahabad | .. | 300 |
| 2. Dehra Dun | .. | 79 |
| 3. Meerut | .. | 46 |
| 4. Benares | .. | 300 |
| 5. Cawnpore | .. | 70 |
| Total | .. | 749 |

35. U.P. Oudh :—

| | | |
|--------------|----|-----|
| 1. Lucknow | .. | 46 |
| 2. Moradabad | .. | 76 |
| Total | .. | 122 |

Total No. of Branches .. 35

Total Units .. 125

Total Membership .. 8,607

N.B.—These figures were collected from the quarterly returns submitted by the Branches —(L.N.M.)

**MEMORANDUM OF
IMPORTANT RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS.**

1. EDUCATIONAL

A. Primary Education

1. This Conference demands that the new Constitution of India should guarantee to every child within the country, free instruction in reading and writing up to a prescribed minimum standard, as fundamental right of Indian citizenship.

2. This Conference is strongly in favour of compulsory primary education for girls as well as for boys; it recommends all Local Governments and Local Bodies to take immediate steps to introduce compulsory education in urban, suburban and rural districts in such a way that at all district headquarters and towns the scheme shall be in full working order within five years and shall be universal within twenty years. This Conference is of opinion that this compulsory education should be made free in all schools provided by public authorities to all those unable to pay for it.

3. In order to carry out Compulsory Primary Education efficiently this Conference is of opinion that

(a) More Rural Training Centres should be opened where teachers drawn from rural areas should be trained under conditions such as they will meet in their work. These teachers should, in every case possible, be of secondary grade, and the employment of all teachers of lower grade should ultimately cease.

(b) Residential quarters for women teachers should be provided in all teaching centres.

(c) In order to assist poor parents in compulsory areas crèches and nursery schools for the care of children under school-going age should be established near schools.

(d) Only clean, dry, airy and well-ventilated buildings with adequate playgrounds should be used as schools.

- (e) The sanitary code for secondary schools should be extended to elementary schools and rigidly enforced in view of the high percentage of diseases borne by contaminated water.
- (f) School texts should be related to the psychology and environment of the child.
- (g) More women should be trained as specialist teachers in domestic science so that the teaching of the subject may be progressive and efficient. It is essential that the foundation of such teaching should be firmly laid in the elementary schools.
- (h) Nutrition Bureaus should be established in every Province where the much needed research work on the value of the food-stuffs available in the Province should be carried out and where all information regarding suitable dietaries could be obtained.

4. One of the first essentials for improving primary education is that the scale of salary for primary school teachers be raised. The standard required for the entrance examination for training institutions should also be raised and a better training should be provided. Well-educated men and women should be invited and given opportunities to act as honorary teachers while the supply of trained teachers is inadequate.

5. As far as possible women teachers should be engaged in the earlier stages of education, both of boys and girls; these early stages should in fact be wholly the concern of women.

6. Every educational institution for young children should make full provision for Kindergarten, Montessori or other similar classes.

7. This Conference feels that in the poorer districts a mid-day meal should be provided in the schools for those pupils who would otherwise have nothing to eat, and that the Government should be asked to make a special grant to such schools for this purpose. In these poorer districts ladies should come forward and by their own work and money organise the provision of meals.

8. This Conference is of opinion that:

- (a) Priority should be given to the claims of girls' education in every scheme of educational expansion,

- (b) Primary education should be made compulsory for girls as well as for boys.
- (c) It protests against the omission of girls from schemes of compulsory education.
- (d) It urges that compulsory education should be enforced wherever it has been established, and that public co-operation should be secured to ensure the regular attendance of pupils until their 12th year,

because it realises that educated mothers are a sure guarantee of the education of the coming generation and an essential factor in the advance of a nation.

9. **Compulsory Education:** This Conference is of opinion that girls should be included in all schemes of compulsory Primary Education and particularly supports the resolutions of Constituencies of Madras Presidency that the new Committee formed by the Madras Government to draft a Scheme of Compulsory Elementary Education should do so not only for all boys, as are its terms of reference, but for all girls and boys of elementary school-going age.

10. **Primary Education:** This Conference urges the universal introduction of free and compulsory Primary Education without further delay. With this purpose in view we request the authorities:

- (a) To provide for properly trained teachers the majority of whom should be women.
- (b) To request the Government of each Province and State to make adequate provision for this item in the budget for the next year.
- (c) To make provision for the re-orientation of such education with special stress laid on training in handicraft.
- (d) In order to effect economy, "the shift system" be introduced, where possible, and boys and girls be taught together.
- (e) In rural areas, where necessary, "seasonal" education be arranged for.
- (f) That buildings however simple, with playgrounds and adequate sanitary arrangements be provided in suitable localities.
- (g) That medical inspection and treatment begin at this stage and

be made compulsory by legislation, and care should be taken to appoint efficient and responsible doctors.

- (h) That all Primary Education should be on a non-communal basis. (Nagpur 1937.)

11. **Voluntary Service:** This Conference urges all educated men and women to further the cause of education on the following definite lines:—

- (a) To organise well-run Nursery Schools for children between ages of 3 and 6.
- (b) To form Care Committees to follow up in a practical manner the work of medical inspection and treatment.
- (c) To provide buildings, however simple, for schools.
- (d) To make special efforts to promote adult education individually and through organisations.
- (e) That Co-operative Societies be formed to raise money for investing in buildings for schools, the interest on the capital thus raised, being paid by the rent which in its turn must be collected by private effort if not contributed by Government.

(Nagpur 1937).

B. Secondary Education.

1. The Vernacular should be the medium of instruction. English being a compulsory second subject; Hindi or Urdu should be included in the curriculum as an alternative to the classical languages, one of which should be compulsory.

2. Alternative courses should be established to suit the needs of girls who do not intend to take up College Education. These should include Domestic Science, Fine Arts, Handicraft and Industries.

3. It is desirable that Sex Hygiene be taught in all Secondary schools and colleges, by competent teachers.

4. **Secondary Education:** This Conference is of the opinion that Secondary Education for girls be remodelled so as to include subjects such as Home Craft, Home Nursing, First Aid, Dietetics, Needle Craft, Cookery, Laundry, which should be made optional, one at least being compulsory. (Nagpur 1937).

5. Separate Middle Schools and High Schools for girls should be established in places where a demand for them exists and where there are no such schools.

6. Whereas in many parts of India the problem of obtaining suitable buildings for girls' schools is becoming more and more acute, the Conference calls upon its Standing Committee to consider.

(a) The advisability of launching a propaganda campaign in its many Constituent Areas in order that companies may be formed on the lines of the Girls' Public Day School Company in England whereby in that country a sufficiency of Girls' High Schools was established.

(b) The recommending of such a campaign to the All-India Women's Education Fund Association as part of its work in the coming year.

7. This Conference recommends that the inspecting staff of girls' schools should consist of women only, and that the Chief Inspectress should be considered as Deputy-Directress of Inspection.

8. This Conference supports the Resolution of Central Punjab Constituent Conference and draws the attention of the Government to the condition of women's education in the North-West Frontier Province and requests that a High School for girls be opened there at the earliest possible date.

C. College Education

1. The following subjects should be added as optionals to the present curricula: Fine Arts, Advanced Domestic Science, Journalism, Social Science, Architecture.

2. Special encouragement in the way of Scholarship should be offered to women students to attract them to take their Degrees in Law, Medicine, Fine Arts and Social Science.

3. **Hostels:** This Conference reiterates its demand that sufficient number of recognised Hostels should be established for women students by the authorities concerned and that they should be efficiently supervised by experienced and responsible women as Inspectresses.

(Nagpur 1937).

4. This Conference urges the Educational authorities in India to make adequate Hostel arrangements for women students in all important centres of education.

It further calls upon them to make such arrangements on non-communal lines,

(Ahmedabad 1936).

5. Lady professors should be appointed (to act as adviser) in all colleges where there are women students.

6. This Conference recommends the University of Bombay and to other Universities where such facilities do not exist :

(i) that vernacular should be allowed, optionally with classical languages in the curricula at *every stage* in the University course,

(ii) that Domestic Science, optionally with Physics, should be allowed in the First Year in the Arts Examination.

7. This Conference regrets that the condition of affiliation of colleges to Universities regarding the provision of lodging accommodation of students has in some instances remained a dead letter, so far as women students are concerned, and it requests the Senates to see that all colleges affiliated to their respective Universities are suitably provided with hostels or approved lodging accommodation of their women students and, to direct their Syndicates to ask the inspecting committees of the affiliated colleges to report as to whether this condition has been fulfilled.

8. This Conference is of opinion that, in view of the long hours and strenuous nature of the work which the Medical Course entails, hostels for women students in the *immediate* vicinity of the Medical Colleges are a necessity and this Conference recommends that such provision should be made by college authorities.

9. This Conference congratulates the A.-I. W.E.F. Association for having established in Delhi a Central College (Lady Irwin College for Women) to teach Home Science in all its branches. It calls upon all its Constituencies to collect funds for the creation of at least two local scholarships for girls who after completing the Home Science Course at the Lady Irwin College would be expected to teach that subject for a stated number of years. It also requests the public to extend financial aid towards this most useful and unique institution.

10. **University at Poona :** This Conference urges the Government of Bombay to take all necessary steps to give at an early date statutory recognition of the S. N. D. Thackersey Indian Women's University which has been doing useful work for the higher education of Women for the last 20 years.

(Nagpur 1937).

11. The All-India Women's Conference congratulates the S. N. D.

Thakersey Indian Women's University and thanks the Government of Bombay for recognising the degree of this University as equivalent to the degrees of other universities for the purposes of Government service. It urges other Provincial Governments to grant them similar recognition. (Delhi 1938).

12. **College for Girls in the N.-W.F.P.** This Conference supports the demand of the women of the North-West Frontier Province for a Girls' College and urges the authorities to take steps for its establishment at an early date. (Ahmedabad 1936).

13. And it further urges that Home Science be introduced as a compulsory subject in high schools and as an optional course in colleges for women.

D. Training

1. This Conference recognises the imperative need of a greater number of training Schools and urges upon the Government and the Local Bodies to take immediate steps to start such schools in every centre where they do not exist.

2. This Conference is of opinion that centres for special courses to train teachers for rural areas should be opened, and that courses should be arranged for teachers already working in rural areas.

3. This Conference recommends that branch committees similar to the Bengal Branch of the Indian Women's Education Society be formed in the different provinces of India to help the Bengal Committee in the selection of a scholar to undergo training abroad.

4. This Conference recommends that immediate steps be taken to carry into effect the repeated Resolution that Central College be founded to train graduates and matriculates in order to secure a higher standard of Kindergarten and secondary teachers and that the Fund Association be requested to allot money for founding and endowing such a college.

5. This Conference places on record its dissatisfaction with the policy of the Government in reducing the number of students admitted to the Training College and strongly desires that their numbers should be increased.

6. This Conference regards the standard accepted by the Government of 50 per cent. of trained teachers in primary schools as a very low one and suggests to all Municipalities and Local Boards to engage only trained teachers.

7. This Conference considers that the present course of training for Matriculate and non-matriculate teachers is very unsatisfactory, and that the standard of examination should be raised and better provision be made for the actual training.

E. Literacy, Mass Education and Adult Education

1. Literacy—

This Conference reiterates its former resolutions deploring the appalling illiteracy in the land, and believing that unless a concerted and intensive campaign is organised the moral and material progress of the land is bound to be hampered, appoints a Sub-Committee,

- (a) To study the question in all its bearings.
- (b) To keep in touch and co-operate with all work in the cause of literacy amongst adults.
- (c) To initiate practical schemes of work.
- (d) To report on all work done in this direction to the next Conference. (Trivandrum 1935).

2. Mass Education

As all claims to democracy and citizenship will fail to receive recognition so long as the masses of India remain illiterate this Conference emphatically repeats its demand for

- (a) The efficient introduction of **COMPULSORY EDUCATION** throughout India.
- (b) The extension of **ADULT EDUCATION** especially with a view to the expansion of vocational training and the general uplift of the masses.

3. University Extension Lecture Scheme should include special courses for women.

4. This Conference recommends that Industrial Homes for women be established where possible and that provincial Governments be approached to give sufficient grants to run such institutions in an efficient manner.

5. This Conference reiterates the importance of tackling the problem of Adult Education in every way possible and urges the Government, Municipal Councils, Local Bodies and Women's Associations to organise classes and centres for the promotion of literacy and general education among adult women and suggests the establishment of cinemas, moving

libraries and publication of suitable books and magazines in the vernaculars.

6. This Conference, realising the vital need of educating the masses of the country, urges that the speediest possible measures be adopted for the spread of adult education and suggests the use of the Radio and Broadcasting as one of the means to achieve this object.

7. Adult Education—

(a) *Literacy*: With a view to intensify the campaign against illiteracy, this Conference recommends that each Constituency should appoint a special sub-Committee to carry on the work and to report progress every half-year to the Conference through the proper channels.

(b) *Mass-education*: This Conference views with satisfaction the work that is being done for the promotion of adult education, particularly in the rural areas of the country, by our constituencies and by other public and private organisations.

It urges the constituencies to make further earnest efforts to organise such work wherever required and to co-operate with other associations doing similar work.

(c) *Broadcasting*: This Conference strongly appeals to the Broadcasting authorities in India to promote mass education in every possible way through the medium of the Radio. It suggests the authorities concerned to have representative committees, with women, in every province to draw up practical schemes for this purpose. (Ahmedabad 1936).

F. Common Language

1. Recognising the urgent need of a universal language for India, this Conference appoints a sub-committee,

(a) To report on means and methods that could be adopted for the realisation of this ideal.

(b) To compile a comprehensive vocabulary of words commonly used in India in order of frequency of use.

(c) To co-operate with other associations engaged in similar work. (Trivandrum 1935).

2. **Common Language**: This Conference resolves that it is desirable that in order to promote cultural unity and harmony amongst the people of India, Hindustani be made the common language, the script used being either Devanagiri or Persian. With the purpose in view it calls upon

- (a) all Constituencies of the A.-I.W.C. to help by starting work in this direction,
- (b) that Hindustani be taught as an optional second language in Primary Schools. (Delhi 1938).

3. Hindustani :

- (a) This Conference recommends that earnest efforts be made in all constituencies to encourage the study of Hindustani so that it may soon become the common language of India.
- (b) It requests all educational authorities to promote the teaching of Hindustani in schools.
- (c) It further requests the Universities to include Hindustani in the syllabus for the Matriculation Examination and other University Examinations where it may not be so included.
- (d) It is the opinion of this Conference that the language should not be over-Sanskritised or over-Persianised, and that the script used may be the Devanagri, Urdu or Roman.

(Ahmedabad 1936).

G. General

1. This Conference defines Education as training which will enable the child or the individual to develop his or her latent capacities to the fullest extent for the service of humanity. It must therefore, include elements for physical, mental, emotional, civic and spiritual development. The course of study arranged for this purpose must be so flexible as to allow of adaptation to the conditions of the individual, the locality and the community.

2. At every stage of education the spirit of social service should be inculcated.

3. Moral training, based on spiritual ideals, should be made compulsory for all schools and colleges.

4. In all education of girls, teaching in the ideals of motherhood, and in making the home beautiful and attractive, should be kept uppermost.

5. Agriculture should be included in the curriculum as a compulsory subject in schools in rural areas and as an optional subject in all other schools and colleges.

6. Girls' schools should be inspected both by women having general and also by those having technical qualifications.

7. This Conference is of opinion that the undue importance given to examinations has greatly hindered the educational progress of pupils and it recommends that investigation be made into the problem of testing progress.

8. This Conference approves of Cinema Films being used for educational purposes in schools generally and in rural schools in particular.

This Conference in its Memorandum has emphasised the necessity of reforming and enlarging the conception of education in Universities, training colleges and schools. It views with interest the progress that has been made and joins with the Constituent Conference in reiterating the importance of the inclusion in the curricula of study of:

- (a) Sociology, Home and Domestic Science in all its branches.
- (b) Fine Arts, (Music, Painting, etc.).
- (c) Specifically Indian Culture, including the Vernaculars and Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian.
- (d) Physical Culture.

(i) This Conference reiterates the vital necessity for public parks and playgrounds for children in cities, and gives its whole-hearted support to all schemes for the extension of physical education in schools and colleges.

It hopes that the example of Bengal in the formation of a "Fresh Air League" will be followed by other Constituencies.

(ii) This Conference strongly protests against the recent cuts in grants-in-aid to educational institutions, particularly primary schools, and urges the educational authorities to see that all such grants are immediately restored.

10. This Conference reiterates its former Resolutions—

- (a) that in all educational institutions there should be compulsory physical training for children from the primary stages by qualified physical instructors;
- (b) compulsory medical inspection with after-care treatment;
- (c) and it also calls upon Municipalities and Local Boards to provide an adequate number of public parks and playgrounds for women and children.

11. This Conference requests the authorities of the Allahabad and Benares Hindu Universities to remove the bar against co-education and

urges those schools and Universities where co-education does not exist to introduce and encourage the same.

12. This Conference feels that there ought to be a re-orientation of the entire system of education in this country and is of opinion that Government and private institutions should introduce vocational training immediately in schools and colleges.

13. This Conference, mindful of the interests of the youth of this country, appeals to the Government of India to exercise rigid control over all cinema films and posters and requests it to appoint women on every Board of Censorship.

14. **Literature, Etc.:** This Conference lodges its emphatic protest against the publication and circulation of obscene literature, pictures and films throughout India and demands that instances be reported immediately to the authorities concerned who are urged to take drastic action.

In this connection this Conference proposes that sex education be imparted by suitable teachers.

15. **Health:** This Conference is emphatically of opinion that the health of children and specially of school children and college students is of vital importance to the well-being of the country. It therefore considers it essential that matters connected with,

(a) School hygiene and sanitation;

(b) Medical Inspection of school children;

(c) School Clinics and Care-Committees;

(d) Health education in schools;

(e) Physical Culture;

(f) Adult Classes for the study of Child Welfare and Child Hygiene, and,

(g) Dietetics, with special reference to children's food, should receive special attention, and appoints a Sub-Committee to study the questions and to report to the Conference at its next session.

16. **Medical Inspection.**—This Conference demands legislation for compulsory Medical Inspection and treatment in all schools.

(Ahmedabad 1936).

17. Special schools for defectives (whether physical, mental or moral) should be established and private enterprise in this direction should be encouraged and aided by the Government.

18. **Mal-Nutrition.** (a) That every person responsible for the education of children should study and understand the principles of dietetics and nourishment and spread knowledge in his direction.

(b) To combat the evil of mal-nutrition the authorities should make every effort to supply suitable nourishment to such children as need it.

(Nagpur 1937).

19. This Conference calls upon the Government to withhold its grant from any school which excludes any particular community from it, in all cases where no other provision for that community already exists.

20. This Conference recommends that Government recognition should be given to successful educational institutions which have been working on experimental lines advocated by this Conference (such as the Indian Women's University and others) which deserve such recognition.

21. This Conference recommends that women should be given adequate representation on all Educational Boards which control Primary, Secondary, and University Education and all Text-Book Committees.

22. This Conference reiterates the importance of educating girls of all communities in the same schools in order to promote mutual understanding and a common cultural unity.

23. This Conference is totally opposed to the infliction of corporal punishment in schools and institutions for boys and girls and it calls on every one to report instances to the authorities concerned and on the latter to see that the laws forbidding such acts are strictly enforced.

24. **Co-education.**

In the opinion of this Conference, the proper encouragement of *co-education* would help greatly towards the solution of various social and economic problems confronting the country. The Conference therefore urges strongly that:—

- (i) Co-education be introduced in primary schools and colleges.
- (ii) A large proportion of women teachers be always appointed on the staffs of Co-educational Institutions, particularly those of primary schools.
- (iii) At least one of the supervisors employed by the Local Self-governing Bodies be a woman.

25. **Parental Co-operation.**

Realising how gravely the progress of Education in the country is

hampered_ by the lack of *co-operation* between teachers and parents this organisation of women appeals to all parents and guardians to help in this direction.

26. **Debating Society**

In support of the recommendation of the Educational Committee, this Conference advises the immediate formation in each Constituency of a *debating society* to serve as a training ground for:—

- (a) the stimulation of discussion on matters of public interest;
- (b) the efficient expression of thought and speech.

27. **Differentiation between the Matriculation and the School-Leaving Examination.** This Conference considers that the combination in one and the same Matriculation Examination of two different tests, one an entrance to the University, and the other a completion of Secondary Education, is not calculated to accomplish either of those two aims satisfactorily; and therefore calls upon all Departments of Education and Universities to take immediate steps for the separation of these two tests into two distinct examinations. (Ahmedabad 1936).

II. SOCIAL

A. **Child Marriage Restraint Act.**

1. This Conference emphatically condemns the unnatural and devitalising custom of allowing immature girls to become wives and mothers, as it robs them of their right to education and freedom and arrests their mental, moral and physical growth. This meeting demands that the legal age of marriage be fixed at 16 and 21 for girls and boys, respectively.

2. (a) This Conference expresses its satisfaction at the passing of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, and congratulates Rai Saheb Harbilas Sarda and those who helped in making it the law of the land on their achievements.

(b) It further urges that:

- (i) In order to make this Act effective, it is necessary to form Sarda Committees to prevent, and to bring to light, breaches of the Law.
- (ii) In order to give effect to the Child Marriage Restraint Act, it is imperative to take immediate steps to provide adequate machinery for the registration of marriages and

to ensure the correct registration of births, in accordance with the recommendation of the Age of Consent Committee.

- (c) It condemns the agitation started by certain classes against the Child Marriage Restraint Act and condemns the proposed Bills asking for exemptions from the operation of this Law.

3. This Conference once again condemns all attempts to repeal the Child Marriage Restraint Act and is opposed to the exemption of any section or community from its provisions.

It urges upon the Government not only to enforce the Act more stringently but also to amend it so as to make child marriage impossible.

4. This Conference views with dismay the frequent violation of the Sarda Act. It calls upon the Constituencies to educate public opinion against the custom of child-marriage.

- (i) by holding public meetings denouncing the evil results of child-marriage;
- (ii) by distributing leaflets containing information about the existing legislation and the necessity of drastic measures and effective amendments to the Act.
- (iii) by supporting Bills in the Legislatures amending the Child Marriage Restraint Act, *e.g.*, Mr. B. Das's Bill before the Legislative Assembly and the Bill before the Travancore Legislative Assembly;
- (iv) by appealing to the Indian States to introduce similar measures for the restraint of child marriages as soon as possible.

5. This Conference supports Sir Hari Singh Gour's Age of Consent Bill and demands that the age be raised to 16 and 18 for married and unmarried girls, respectively.

6. This Conference gives its support to the "Bill to further amend the Special Marriage Act of 1872."

7. This Conference is of opinion that marriage should not be made compulsory for every girl and urges upon parents the necessity of recognising the rights of sons and daughters to decide their own career in life.

8. This Conference recommends that unequal marriages of old men to minor girls should be forbidden by law.

9. **Polygamy:** This Conference strongly disapproves of Polygamy

and appeals to women not to marry, and to parents not to give their daughters in marriage to any man who has a wife living.

10. (a) This Conference is grateful to Sir Hari Singh Gour for having taken up the question of Hindu marriage and recommends that his Marriage Dissolution Bill may be amended on the lines of the Baroda Hindu Divorce Act.

(b) This Conference is of opinion that the prevalent practice of divorce among Mahommedans, in so far as it allows an arbitrary power to the husband to divorce his wife at his mere caprice, is not in accord with the true interpretation of Islamic teaching and places on record its considered opinion that the right to divorce as conceded by the Islamic Law to Muslim women be recognised by the British Courts.

11. In view of the fact that the **Child Marriage Restraint Act** has proved ineffectual so far, this Conference re-iterates its opinion that Mr. B. Das's Bill amending this Act should be passed into Law without further delay.

It strongly advocates that anti-child marriage propaganda work be redoubled throughout the country with particular emphasis in the villages. (Ahmedabad 1936.)

B. Inheritance

1. (a) This Conference places on record its opinion that there should be complete equality between the sexes in the matter of inheritance and control of property.

(b) As a step towards this goal the Conference supports the following measures which are pending in the Legislative Assembly.

(i) "A Bill to declare gains of learning by a Hindu to be his separate property." (Mr. Jayakar.)

(ii) "A Bill to make better provision for certain heirs under Hindu Law especially with regard to women regarding their rights of inheritance." (Mr. Jogiah.)

(iii) "A Bill to secure share for Hindu Widows in their husbands' family property." (Rai Saheb Harbilas Sarda).

(iv) "A Bill to remove certain existing disabilities in respect of powers of adoption among Hindus." (Mr. Jayakar.)

- (c) In order to ensure the rights of inheritance to Muslim women in accordance with the laws laid down in the Koran, the current customary law as practised in some parts of India be not recognised by the Courts.
- (d) The Conference further extends its cordial support to the committees, appointed in Mysore and Baroda, for investigating the Hindu Laws of Inheritance with a view to making them more equitable to women.

2. **Legal disabilities of women**

- (i) This Conference strongly protests against the existing discriminations in Hindu Law against the rights of women; it demands that existing laws should be so amended as to make them just and equitable and that an All-India Non-official Commission be appointed to consider the removal of the legal disabilities of women as regards inheritance and marriage.

(ii) **Legal disabilities**

- (a) We give our whole-hearted support to all the bills introduced into the Provincial and Central Legislatures, such as the Bill on the Hindu Women's Inheritance Rights (by Hon. Mr. P. C. D. Charry, before the Council of State) and welcomes the bills passed by Sangli and Mysore Darbars on Hindu Widows' Property Rights, which seek to remove the legal disabilities of women in so far as they are in accord with our principles. We further support Rao Bahadur Kale's Bill in the Bombay Council, on the Hindu Widows' Property Rights.
- (b) We record our strong protest against Mr. Desai's Bill to amend the laws of Adoption before the Bombay Council, as it is a decidedly retrograde measure.
- (c) We urge once more on Government the necessity of appointing a Commission with an adequate number of women on its personnel to enquire into the whole question of the legal disabilities of women. We regret that Government has so far not acceded to a demand in which we have been united from the very beginning,

The recent public meetings all over India are conclusive proof that we have a large backing amongst our men and we confidently hope, therefore, that the Government will accede to our request.

3. (a) This Conference resolves that a Special Committee with power to co-opt lawyers and experts should be appointed to enquire into and suggest adequate remedies for the legal disabilities of women; the Sub-Committee to appoint Branch Sub-Committees in the different provinces and Indian States to consider questions of local interest.
- (b) This Conference records its sense of gratitude to the movers of the Bills in the Central and Provincial Legislatures which aim at improving the legal and economic status of women. Further it congratulates the Bombay Legislative Council for having rejected Mr. Desai's Adoption Bill.
- (c) This Conference urges the early enactment of legislation penalising the practice of polygamy. It recommends to our Special Committee to draw up a rational system of marriage laws which will include divorce.

4. This Conference strongly urges that the mother should have equal right of guardianship with the father over her children and that a widow should have preferential right of guardianship over them.

5. **Statement on Legal Disabilities of Women.** This Conference empowers the Special Committee on Legal Disabilities of Women to draw up a comprehensive statement of the lines on the Baroda and Mysore enactments which can later be introduced in the form of a Bill in the new Legislatures. (Ahmedabad 1936.)

6. **Removal of Legal Disabilities of Women.** This Conference urges upon the various Governments to introduce a bill making the following additions and alterations in the existing Hindu Law as it affects marriage and divorce :

- (a) That monogamy should be made compulsory.
- (b) That the custody of the child should be given to the mother unless there is just cause for withholding the same.
- (c) That the age of marriage should be raised to 16 for girls and 20 for boys.

(d) That there should be suitable provision in the Hindu Law for divorce on the following grounds:—

- (i) Desertion, (ii) Lunacy, (iii) Cruelty, (iv) Adultery,
(v) Drunkenness, (vi) Leprosy. (Nagpur 1937.)

7. Support of Bills Pending Legislation

(a) While this Conference lends its support to the following Bills pending in the Legislative Assembly,

- (1) The Hindu Inter-caste Marriage Bill.
- (2) The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Bill,
- (3) The Arya Marriage Validation Bill,
- (4) The Bill for the removal of social disabilities amongst certain classes of Hindus,

in so far as they help to improve status of women, the Conference feels that the time has come for such piecemeal legislation to be replaced by comprehensive legislation on equitable lines affecting the rights of the people of the country as a whole.

(b) This Conference regrets that Dr. Deshmukh's Bill on the Hindu women's right to property which has been referred to a Select Committee, has been whittled down in favour of widows only, ignoring the rights of daughters and other female heirs.

(c) This Conference regrets that none of the Social Reform Bills which were before the Legislatures for consideration last September has made any headway. It appeals to the Government as well as to all the members of the Assembly to try their utmost not to delay the passing into law of such measures as will constitute a real step forward in the life of the nation.

(Ahmedabad 1936.)

8. **Bills Pending Legislation.** This Conference supports Mr. Rajah's Bill for removing the disabilities of depressed classes.

(Nagpur 1937.)

9. This Conference supports the amendments proposed by Mr. B. Das and Mr. Lalchand Navalrai in the Central Legislative Assembly to the Sarda Act and expresses its opinion that an additional clause should be added to the Act, so that people who celebrate child marriages outside British territory in order to evade the consequences of the Act, though

residents of British India, may be punished and that this Act should be so amended as to declare all marriages performed in contravention of the Sarada Act null and void. (Nagpur 1937.)

10. This Conference congratulates His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad and Berar for having so graciously accorded his consent to the "Hindu Widow Remarriage Bill."

11. This Conference congratulates H. H. the Maharajah of Travancore for so graciously giving his assent to the Hindu Widow Remarriage Bill recently passed by both Houses of Legislature in the State.

12. This Conference congratulates the Government of H. H. the Maharajah of Travancore for appointing, for the first time in India, a woman to the Judiciary of the State.

13. This Conference congratulates the Government of H. H. the Maharajah of Gwalior for passing into law the Widow Remarriage Act.

C. PURDAH

1. This Conference condemns the custom of enforced seclusion of women and entreats all Hindus, Muslims and other communities which observe this custom, to take practical steps to educate public opinion towards abolishing it as soon as possible.

D. HEALTH

1. This Conference realises with great concern that drugs and medicines sold in India are generally impure and of inferior quality as disclosed by the evidence of eminent doctors and chemists before the Drugs Inquiry Committee.

(a) It therefore supports the proposition that an All-India Drug Act be enacted for the proper control and check over the import, sale and manufacture of all drugs and chemicals.

(b) It urges all Constituencies to use every means in their power to discourage and prevent the indiscriminate use of opium and other detrimental drugs.

2. This Conference strongly recommends to Municipalities the need for the strict enforcement of the Food Adulteration Act.

3. **Compulsory Registration of Dais and Midwives.** With a view to check the inordinately high rate of Infant and Maternal Mortality in India, this Conference urges the need of Legislative measures

for compulsory registration of *dais* and midwives and periodic supervision by qualified supervisors.

4. **Birth Control.** This Conference reiterates its former resolutions supporting the necessity for instruction in methods of Birth-Control through recognised clinics and calls upon all the Constituencies to make a special effort to induce Municipalities and other organisations for maternity and child welfare to open centres to impart such knowledge to those who stand in need of it.

5. **Birth control clinics.** This Conference believes that it is the duty of medical departments and local authorities to take immediate steps to put an end to the advertisement and sale of birth control remedies by quacks which ruin the health of women in many cases. It appeals to medical departments and municipalities to educate men and women in birth control methods from the point of view of their ill health, mental weakness and economic considerations. Such clinics should be specially opened in labour areas. (Nagpur 1937.)

E. STATUS OF WOMEN

1. This Conference reiterates its firm conviction that women should be adequately represented :

- (a) On the Central and Provincial Legislatures.
- (b) On District, Municipal and other local Bodies.
- (c) On Commissions and Committees affecting women and children.
- (d) In the interest of women and children this Conference recommends to the Government of India to include women in their delegations to the League of Nations and to other International Assemblies.

2. **Women in Departmental Services.** This Conference urges that no sex disqualifications should be shown for debarring women from services in any department of Government. (Nagpur 1937.)

3. This Conference fully adheres to the stand it has taken in regard to the question of Franchise in all its bearings as pertaining to the status of women in the future Constitution of India. It expresses its firm belief in perfect sex equality and demands that women shall possess equal citizen rights with men. No disability either legal or social shall be attached to women on account of sex, or in regard to public employment, office, power or honour and in the exercise of any trade or calling.

4. This Conference congratulates Mrs. Anna Chandy on her appointment as the first woman Munsiff in India, in Travancore State.

(Nagpur 1937.)

5. This Conference stands united :

- (i) in its protest against the Communal Award as touching the womanhood of India, and
- (ii) in its demand for a system of Joint-Electorates, and further resolves
 - (a) that a representative Committee of ten persons including the Chairman and the Organising Secretary of 1932 be appointed and authorised to formulate detailed proposals in regard to the enfranchisement of women and their representation in the future Constitution of the country;
 - (b) that the above-mentioned Committee of ten or a lesser number chosen from amongst themselves shall be its representatives at the joint meetings of the three Women's Organisations (A.-I.W.C., N.C.W.I. and W.I.A.);
 - (c) that the National Council of Women in India and the Women's Indian Association be requested to appoint their similar Committees and that the Joint Franchise Meeting be postponed until after the return of the members of the Round Table Conference and publication of the decisions of His Majesty's Government on the subject.

6. Franchise

- (a) This Conference reiterates its demands regarding franchise and the status of women in the future Constitution of India as placed before the Joint Parliamentary Committee in London by our elected representatives, and fully endorses the statements made by them before the same Committee.
- (b) A cable to the above effect be sent to the Secretary, Joint Select Committee, and the Secretary of State for India.
- (c) A special Session of the Conference to which representatives of the National Council of Women in India and the Women's Indian Association be invited, shall be called after the publication of the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee, to determine what the attitude of the representative woman-

hood of India should be in case their repeated demands are ignored.

7. This Conference expresses its profound indignation and disappointment at the omission of the right of Franchise or of candidature for election to the Legislatures of the following Provinces :—

Bengal, Assam, North-West Frontier Province, Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara, and strongly recommends that these omissions be removed forthwith.

8. **J. P. C. Report:** Whereas the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report on the White Paper, as a whole, and in particular where its recommendations concern the status of women in the new Constitution fall far short of our demands, we do hereby state in unequivocal language our strong disapproval of and inability to accept the same. We give reason for our dissatisfaction in the appended statement.

Statement

We feel that the Joint Parliamentary Committee was animated by a genuine desire to bring women in greater numbers on the electoral roll and give them a definite place in the legislatures of the new Constitution. For this spirit of sympathy with us, as also for their unqualified recognition of the part the women must play in the public life of the Country, we place on record our sincere appreciation. At the same time, however, we feel constrained to express in no uncertain terms our inability to accept the recommendations, as they stand, for the following reasons :

- (a) We claim that there should be a declaration of rights in which the removal of sex disabilities should be clearly stated. We draw attention to the fact that the word "Sex" has been omitted from "Eligibility for holding Public Office, etc." *vide* para 367, Vol. I (Part I). While feeling keenly this omission as a grave injustice to us in spite of our repeated demands in this connection, we hope that the same may even now be rectified.
- (b) The greater number of women enfranchised under the recommendations are going to be the wives and widows of property holders and to this number have also been added the wives of men with the military service qualification of the vote and the pensioned widows and mothers of military officials and sol-

diers. Our reasons for our strong objection to this method of enfranchisement have been stated in clear language on more than one occasion. They still hold good and we regret that in spite of our protests the qualification wholly unacceptable to us is being sought to be imposed on us. We reiterate our belief in equitable methods of election and attach equal importance to the quality as well as the quantity of the women's vote. We object strongly to the doubling of the vote for any vested interests as being against all canons of justice for the poor who constitute India's main population and against all democratic principles. We again urge the acceptance of our proposals for the introduction of adult suffrage in urban areas for purpose of increasing our electoral members.

(c) In our opinion far too much weight has, from the outset, been laid on administrative difficulties where women are concerned. This opinion is practically strengthened by the numbers of "Pardah" women who went to the polls in the recent Legislative Assembly Elections. We protest strongly against the invidious differentiations that have been made between the provinces in regard to literacy and property qualifications. "Application" conditions and other details including the omission of the wives and widows of those holding the educational qualification if the "Wifehood qualification" is unreasonably persisted in.

(d) We have not swerved from our conviction that we do not, on principle, approve of reservation of seats in Legislatures for ourselves or for any particular interest. Nevertheless, seeing that this expedient may unfortunately be imposed on us during the transition period, we deplore the entire omission of women from the Assemblies of several Provinces and the total exclusion for whatever reason of women of the North-West Frontier Province, from all citizenship rights including Franchise. We feel very strongly that in the case of these provinces where women may be said to be less vocal, the exclusion of their representatives from the Legislatures constitutes a grave omission and neglect of the very causes for

which we stand. We also claim that no disabilities shall be attached to women in any province that may be newly created.

- (e) If certain selected Provinces are definitely to be burdened with Second Chambers we see no reason whatsoever why women should not be accorded a *definite* place in all these as well as in the Council of State. We regard such as our inherent right and must, therefore, protest against this omission.
- (f) With Lord Lothian we are "Unrepentant believers in a system of direct election" and we, therefore, object with all possible emphasis to indirect election at any time and for any one. We refuse, likewise to accept nomination for the Legislature for ourselves, knowing by bitter experience that the "safeguards of nomination" have been ineffective and useless in the Legislative Assembly.

Conclusion

"While mentioning the above details we wish to make it quite clear that if we had secured or secure for ourselves all that we had wished or wish to secure, and if, at the same time, we felt that the recommendations, as a whole, were not in the true interests of India, we would, as women, the natural guardians of future generations, feel it our bounden duty to deny all special privileges for ourselves for the sake of the common good. In the light of general criticism of the Report we know that the recommendations are not acceptable to all shades of representative opinion in the country. We therefore join in this widespread protest and still hope against hope that a new Constitution may eventually be created such as will meet with general approbation.

9. This Conference reiterates its disapproval of the following franchise qualifications for women provided under the Government of India Act and urges their modification in accordance with its previous memorandum at an early date (a) Wifehood qualification; (b) Application condition.

10. In recording once again its sense of disappointment at the electoral proposals, this Conference continues to stand by its former demands for:—

- (a) Direct Election;

- (b) No separate electorates for women;
- (c) Non-reservation of seats on a communal basis. It further notes with regret the discrimination made between the different provinces as regards the literacy qualification, *e.g.*, Bengal, N.-W.F.P., and Orissa.

11. While we are convinced that the new powers given to women by the India Act are not adequate, this Conference exhorts all women to use to the fullest advantage such powers as they have obtained at present.

12. (a) This Conference is emphatically of opinion that the time has come when woman should take her legitimate share in the Government of her country, Central, Provincial and Local.

(b) While we are opposed on principle to the reservation of seats for women in the Legislatures, we emphatically protest against the differentiation made in this matter in the Frontier Province and Assam and suggest that this error be rectified forthwith. (Ahmedabad 1936.)

13. **Women in legislatures:**—This Conference congratulates all women M.L.A.'s and members of the Upper Houses, and hopes that they will work for women's cause and sponsor bills on urgent social reform in the legislatures. It feels particularly gratified that the U.P. Assembly have taken the lead in appointing Mrs. Pandit as the first woman Minister and also congratulates other Provincial Legislatures who have appointed women as Deputy Presidents and Parliamentary Secretaries.

(Nagpur 1937.)

14. **Representation of Women:**—This Conference requests the British Parliament to safeguard the interest of women by making provision in the Instruments of Instructions that are to be framed for the Governor-General and the Governors, that women should be given chances of association in the administration of every province as well as in the Central Government especially in the departments of Health, Education and Labour. Provisions should also be made for at least one woman to be appointed to each Provincial Public Service Commission. It calls upon the Government to establish Women and Children's Bureaus in every province.

15. This Conference reiterates its demand for an Indian woman elected by the principal Indian Women's Organisations to be included in the Government of India Delegation to Geneva.

16. In view of the fact that the Council of the League of Nations has decided to invite the Government of India to be represented on the Advisory Committee for the Protection and Welfare of Children and Young People for a period of five years and as this is pre-eminently a sphere where women can make a valuable contribution, the Government of India should be approached by the A.-I.W.C., the N.C.W.I., and the W.I.A., jointly with a view to the appointment of an Indian woman of our choice on this Commission.

17. **Status of women in India:**—This Conference is of opinion that the status of women in India should be included in the inquiry on the status of women by the League of Nations.

18. This Conference places on record its high appreciation of the truly enlightened action taken by H. H. the Gaekwad of Baroda in passing Hindu Women's Divorce Act and also for legislating for the removal of the Legal Disabilities of Hindu Women.

19. (a) This Conference is of opinion that for any enactment concerning the welfare of women and children, the Government should consult representative women's organisations in India with a view to ascertain the true merits of such enactments.

(b) It is also of opinion that women's organisations should be similarly consulted by Government in the matter of Memoranda, etc., bearing on matters affecting women and children, sent abroad or published by them.

(Ahmedabad 1936.)

F. PREVENTION OF TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

1. In view of the legislation pending and affecting the education of girls—such as Child-marriage and Devadasi—this Conference urges Government to nominate without delay at least two women to the Central Legislature.

2. This Conference supports all efforts that are being made in the country to suppress immoral traffic in women and children, and in particular it supports the Madras Brothels Bill and Prevention of Devadasi Dedication Bill and all other Bills on similar lines. It is also of opinion that women should be equally penalised with men for keeping brothels.

3. This Conference congratulates the States of Travancore and Cochin on the abolition of Devadasi service in temples and gives its whole-hearted support to Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty's Bill for the

prevention of dedication of women and girls to service in Hindu temples. It calls upon all Constituencies where this practice exists to educate public opinion against it.

(a) This Conference congratulates the Portuguese Government on passing a law forbidding *Shesh Vidhi* (i.e., a mock marriage which initiates girls into an immoral life) and urges the Government of India and all Provincial Governments to take similar steps immediately.

(b) This Conference appeals to its own members and to the public to aid in every way in establishing:

- (i) Rescue Homes for each Province;
- (ii) In educating public opinion against traffic in women and children;
- (iii) In taking steps to bring in legislation where necessary for the closing of brothels and in asking Government to appoint women officers for the proper enforcements of the Acts already in existence.

4. (a) This Conference requests the authorities to take more rigid steps towards the prevention of traffic in women and children and urges the necessity of a much larger number of rescue homes.

(b) This Conference views with grave concern the increased number of cases of abduction of women and as a practical measure to check this evil urges, the Railway authorities to appoint women officers at Railway Stations who may render assistance to women travellers.

5. **Immoral Traffic:**—This Conference whilst appreciating the efforts already made to suppress the traffic in women and children in India, calls upon its Constituencies—

- (i) To study the legal, moral, educational and rescue questions concerned, in their local areas,
- (ii) to promote, where necessary, adequate and effective and legal penalties against brothel-keeping and procuration and legal protection for women and children; where the local bills are not satisfactory, to introduce and secure wide support for the needed amendments.
- (iii) to urge upon parents the duty of giving graded instruction as to the moral and social uses of the creative instinct so that

boys as well as girls may be adequately taught and thus helped to make right choices in life.

- (iv) that where rescue work has not yet been started, a real attempt should be made to secure and train workers and start homes,
 - using the help of experienced women already serving in the moral and social hygiene field for such training.
- (v) The urgent need of women to offer for service as probation officers, moral welfare workers and magistrates is also emphasised by the Conference.

6. **Abduction of women:** In view of the appalling number of cases of abduction of women and children, this Conference strongly urges the Government and the general public to take vigorous steps to eradicate this evil.

- (a) **Legislation.** This Conference supports all bills and amendments which, in every Province of India, aim at the prevention of immoral traffic in women and children.
- (b) It strongly urges upon its Constituencies the study of local conditions in connection with cases of trafficking and segregated brothel areas.
- (c) When facts have been obtained, a vigorous protest against such crimes, by approach with the facts to the Governments, Municipal or Local Government Authorities or persons concerned in responsible positions. Where legislation does not exist, the same to be promoted, with adequate punishments effectively enforced.
- (d) **Moral Education:** Realising that the survey above suggested and adequate legislation against trafficking in women and children will not, of themselves, effectively remove the danger to health and morals arising from commercialised vice, this Conference stresses that the education of individuals in their moral and social responsibility is essential.
- (e) This Conference urges that in each Constituency a co-operative attempt shall be made during the coming year, to secure such progressive health and moral welfare education as shall tend to a higher standard of personal conduct as well as a high standard of public opinion in these matters.

7. (a) This Conference requests the authorities concerned to take more rigid steps towards the prevention of traffic in women and children and urges all Provincial and Local Governments and the public to make immediate provision for Rescue Homes where such do not exist.

(b) **Brothels at Fairs:** This Conference expresses its emphatic protest against the practice of opening brothels in Sind and elsewhere during Melas (fairs) as these have a degrading effect on the morals of the people, and urges the authorities concerned to take immediate steps to suppress them. (Ahmedabad 1936.)

8. **Traffic in women and children.**—This Conference is of opinion that Acts for the suppression of traffic in women and children be introduced in all Provinces and Indian States, where they do not exist, and to provide for suitable amendments to such Acts in the provinces, where they are in force, to make them stricter and more effective, and urges the Legislature to introduce such Acts and amendments at an early date, for establishment of Remand and Rescue Homes for Women and Children, so that the Acts can be effectively enforced. (Nagpur 1937.)

9. This Conference congratulates the Government of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore for having placed on its Legislature the "Act" for the suppression of immoral traffic in women and children.

(Nagpur 1937.)

10. **Crime against children.**—This Conference urges that separate Children's Courts should be established for trying juvenile offenders and in these courts at least one Magistrate should be a woman.

(a) This Conference urges women to come forward to undertake this work.

(b) It recommends that special provision be made for children sentenced for short periods.

(c) This Conference is of opinion that an All-India Children's Act on the lines of the Bombay and Calcutta Acts is necessary to give protection to all children under the age of 18 and it further urges upon all women to study the question of Juvenile Delinquency in all its aspects and co-operate in establishing clubs, shelters and Homes for the reformation of these delinquent and destitute children.

- (d) This Conference expresses its keen regret at the attitude of the U.P., the Mysore, and the Frontier Councils towards the Bills for the care of neglected, destitute and feeble-minded children, and urges upon the members of those Councils to promulgate such legislation as will punish traffickers in vice and rescue minor girls from houses of ill-fame.
- (e) It congratulates the Madras and Bombay Councils for having passed and enforced the Act for the closure of houses of ill-fame and the Calcutta Council for having appointed a Select Committee to consider further amendments to the Bill in order to make it more effective

11. Protection of Children.

- (a) This Conference impresses upon the authorities the necessity for the introduction of Children's Acts in all Province of India where such Acts are not in existence.
- (b) This Conference urges upon all individuals and organisations engaged in Social welfare work to take all possible measures for the care of neglected, destitute and feeble minded children.

(Ahmedabad 1936)

12. **Child protection.** This Conference is emphatically of opinion that Children Acts should be introduced at an early date in places where ever they do not exist, both in the Province and the States. (Nagpur 1937).

G. Harijan Work:

1. This Conference supports all efforts that are being made in the country to remove untouchability and supports Mr. Jayakar's Bill to remove disabilities affecting the untouchable classes of Hindus, pending in the Assembly.

2. This Conference notes with profound sorrow that in spite of active propaganda, the treatment meted out to Harijans continues to be so inhuman, and calls upon its constituencies to co-operate with all agencies striving for the abolition of untouchability within the country.

3. This Conference gives its whole-hearted support to Mr. R. K. Shunmukham Chetty's Bill to remove disabilities affecting the untouchable caste of the Hindu community, and calls upon—

- (a) The members of each Constituency to educate public opinion in favour of the removal of Untouchability.

- (b) This Conference congratulates all the States that have opened their temples to the so-called untouchables and makes a special appeal to Travancore to follow their good example and thus give the lead to South India.
- (c) This Conference requests the Zamorin to open the temple of Guruvayur to the so-called untouchables.
- (d) This Conference whole-heartedly supports the Anti-Untouchability Bill to be introduced in the Assembly and the Madras Council by Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer and Dr. Subbarayan respectively, and appeals to His Excellency the Viceroy and the Government of India to give their immediate assent to the same.

4. This Conference congratulates H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore on the noble step taken by him in the cause of the freedom of the Harijans. It also conveys a special message of joy and gratitude to H. H. the Maharani Setu Parvati Bai that this step should have been taken during her tenure of office as our President. It earnestly appeals to all other Indian States and those in authority over temples in British India to follow the courageous lead of Travancore. (Ahmedabad 1936).

H. Indigenous Industries and Rural Reconstruction.

1. This Conference urges that in view of the poverty of the country the public be requested to encourage and support indigenous industries and calls upon the Government to open industrial centres and to give special grants to such institutions as provide industrial training for girls and women.

2. This Conference while reiterating all its former Resolutions on Indigenous Industries, is firmly of opinion that the encouragement of such is essential for the industrial and economic development of the country and appeals to the public to use Swadeshi.

3. Swadeshi.

This Conference is strongly of opinion that it is essential for the industrial and economic development of the country to encourage indigenous industries and appeals to the public to use Swadeshi articles in particular Khaddar (hand spun and hand woven fabrics).

4. **Village work and Swadeshi.** This Conference strongly appeals to every one of its members to take an increasingly active part

in rural work and to restrict all their purchases to Swadeshi and products of cottage industries. (Ahmedabad 1936).

5. **Encouragement of Swadeshi.** It is the firm belief of this Conference that women can help tremendously the economic progress of the country by using and advocating the use of Swadeshi articles.

(Nagpur 1937).

6. This Conference views with grave concern the conditions of life in general in Indian villages particularly in regard to education and sanitation and exhorts its Constituencies and other Women's Organisations throughout India to form Local Committees to consider practical projects for rural reconstruction.

7. (a) Inasmuch as on the economic, hygienic and moral uplift of the villagers of India depends the real progress and prosperity of our Country, this Conference welcomes the formation of the All-India Village Industries Association and resolves to co-operate whole-heartedly in this work. We call upon all, and in particular women, to devote as much time and energy as lie in their power to the work of this Association and we confidently hope that the Government will also do everything possible to further a cause which all well-wishers of India have at heart.

(b) Realising that our work in general suffers greatly owing to a lack of wholtime workers, we appeal to local self-governing bodies as also public spirited persons to form and maintain Training Centres in every Province for social workers and thereby recognise social service as a definite branch of work for the uplift of the masses.

8. (a) While we are glad that some of our Constituencies have taken practical steps for the amelioration of the condition of the rural population we feel strongly that our efforts should be redoubled in this direction. We exhort every Constituency to carry out a constructive programme of village reconstruction in one of its village at least during the year.

(b) Industrial development of the country is an essential factor in relieving the great problem of unemployment. It is necessary, therefore, for the Government as well as the people to help in every way to develop indigenous industries in the country. With this end in view, the Conference urges the women in India to encourage Swadeshi by using articles made in the country as far as they are available.

(c) As a means of implementing the popularisation of Swadeshi articles each Constituency shall appoint one member on its permanent Sub-Committee who shall in communication with the Secretary of the indigenous Industries Sub-Committee and with the similar member of the Committee in each Constituency to make a report every three months as to the Swadeshi articles available in each Constituency.

9. **Rural Uplift.** This Conference views with grave concern the conditions of life in general in Indian villages particularly in regard to education and sanitation. We confidently hope that the Government will do everything possible to further the cause which all well-wishers of India have at heart, and support the request of the Karachi Constituency to enable it to carry out the Constructive programme which it has in view about the Chanesar village by extending the help sought for by the local workers of the A.-I.W.C. (Nagpur 1937).

I. Miscellaneous.

1. **Beggar Problem.** This Conference, while strongly disapproving of the prevalence of professional begging, urges legislation for its prevention, and calls upon:

- (a) the public to co-operate by diverting their charities in this sphere towards the creation and support of institutions and for the provision of Beggar Homes, Work Houses, Infirmaries and Leper Asylums;
- (b) the local bodies to provide such Homes where they do not exist - and to enforce any legislation for the eradication of this evil.

2. This Conference wishes to record its great appreciation of the munificent donation made by H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore, from his privy purse, towards the foundation of a home for the destitutes in Travancore.

3. **Legislation for Beggars.** This Conference strongly disapproves the prevalence of professional begging and urges legislation for its prevention, and calls upon the public to co-operate by diverting their charities in this sphere towards the creation and support of institutions, and for the provision of Beggar Homes, Work Houses and Infirmaries and enforce legislation for the eradication of this evil. (Nagpur 1937).

4. **Women in Jails.** This Conference draws particular attention of the various provincial Governments to the extremely unsatisfactory

condition of women in jails and calls upon them to take effective measures for their mental and moral uplift. (Nagpur 1937).

5. Abolition of Capital Punishment. This Conference wholeheartedly supports Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh's Bill now before the Assembly for the abolition of Capital Punishment.

6. Cinema Films.

(a) This Conference reiterates the urgent necessity of a far more rigorous censorship of films and posters.

(b) It resolves that it is essential to have rigid censorship of films relating to India manufactured in India or outside India and shown abroad inasmuch as some of these create a wholly wrong impression on foreigners of our civilisation and are detrimental to the interests of our Country.

(c) It calls upon Local Governments to appoint at least one woman as member of every Board of Censors.

7. **Restriction of Sale of Opium.** This Conference strongly protests against indiscriminate sale of opium and suggests a register should be kept of addicts to opium, and opium supplied only on medical certificate—as it is done in other countries.

8. **Legislation Enforcing Prohibition.** This Conference wholeheartedly supports the policy of prohibition initiated by seven provinces.

(a) It calls upon its branches and members to render all help they can towards the attainment of this desirable goal.

(b) It appeals to the remaining provinces and all Indian States to follow this lead and bring in the necessary legislation in their areas also.

(c) It is of opinion that the policy of prohibition should be enforced also in the case of *ganja*, opium, cocaine, and all other drugs of recognised harmfulness. (Nagpur 1937).

9. Opium and other Harmful Drugs.

(a) This Conference resolves that the Government of India be asked to undertake an inquiry and find out the exact amount of opium needed for medical purposes in India with a view to the curtailment and gradual reduction in poppy cultivation, and also for reporting to the League of Nations which is preparing for an Opium Conference in 1939-1940.

- (b) Registration of opium addicts and smokers must be undertaken in each Province by a Provincial Government Department created specially for registration of opium addicts and opium smokers.
- (c) Each person desiring to be registered should be certified by a doctor appointed by Government.
- (d) A minimum dose to be fixed, and sealed packets of different weights to be made up by a Central Government Department administered in the same manner as the postal and revenue stamps department. No dose to be given to an uncertified person; any person wanting to have more than the standard dose—to be certified by a Board of Directors appointed by Government.
- (e) Licensed opium shops to be abolished and Government opium depots to be opened.
- (f) In case of smokers no prescribed dose of opium be given unless and until the dross from the previous dose is returned. Medicated Opium according to the League of Nations prescription should replace opium sold in its present form.
- (g) The allotment of the doses of opium to addicts should be under the direct supervision of a Medical or Health Department created specially for this purpose, with instructions to reduce the dose gradually and to refuse to give any more to those who have reached the minimum. Such persons may be kept under observation in a special central sanatorium for a prescribed time and prophylactic treatment may be given to them.
- (h) That each unit of the A.-I.W.C. should consult a panel of medical practitioners to find out the exact amount of opium necessary for medical needs for that particular area. That such information should be sent to the Convener of the Opium Sub-Committee of the A.-I.W.C. That Government should also undertake to register *charas*, *bhang* and other dangerous drug addicts and take the same measures for restriction of sale and gradual elimination of production of these drugs.

(Nagpur 1937).

10. This Conference demands that in future all Conferences and Commissions appointed to deal with questions of the national welfare of India should include women representatives well acquainted with Indian conditions.

11. This Conference call on the organised political parties to put up women candidates at each election.

12. In view of the widespread awakening in the outlook of women this Conference considers it imperative to form :

(a) Centres for the practical training of Social workers in both rural and urban areas.

(b) Centres for Social work.

13. **Hardships of Third-Class Railway Passengers.** This Conference notes with concern and extreme regret that in spite of repeated requests from the general public the condition of Third-Class Railway passengers, particularly women, remains, a matter of little concern to the Railway authorities.

It is high time that steps were taken to provide even an elementary standard of comfort for those passengers who constitute the large majority of the travelling public. (Ahmedabad 1936).

14. **Facilities for Third-Class Railway Passengers.** This Conference requests the railway authorities to add more third-class carriages to avoid unhealthy over-crowding of passengers in third-class compartments and appeals to the railway companies to make separate arrangements for issuing tickets for men and women 3rd class passengers on railway stations, especially on stations of pilgrimage where the necessity is very great. Besides, wherever it is possible, women ticket officers and ticket examiners should be provided for, and there should be separate entrance and exit for women on railway stations. (Nagpur 1937).

15. (a) **Protest against the drama entitled "The Rani of Jhansi."** This Conference records its emphatic protest against the attempt made by one Mr. Phillip Cox who in this drama entitled "The Rani of Jhansi" has cast serious aspersions on her moral character. This is in direct variance with all admitted historical facts. This Conference takes writings of this nature as an insult to the womanhood of India, and exhorts the Indian public to carry on country-wide propaganda against all such mean attempts so that foreign writers may not dare to distort historical facts to suit their malicious ends,

(b) This Conference emphatically protests against the statement made by Miss Sorabji in her letter to the *London Times* on the subject of child marriage. It considers it most objectionable as expressing views which are not held by Indians and regrets that Miss Sorabji continues to misrepresent her own country in a manner which is detrimental and degrading to herself and the nation.

(c) This Conference also calls upon the Government and the women of foreign countries in particular to use their authority and influence in disallowing unfair and nefarious propoganda from being used against us whether in the Press by way of news or articles in Journals or books or by the showing of films. (Ahmedabad 1936).

16. **Obscene advertisements and publications.** This Conference emphatically protests against various newspapers and magazines publishing obscene advertisements and literature as these constitute an insult to womanhood. It appeals to the Press as a whole to see that this pernicious practice is abolished. It also urges the Government to take more drastic steps to make the provisions of the Indian Press Act sufficiently effective to put down this demoralising aspect of the Press. (Ahmedabad 1936).

17. **Obscene literature and advertisements.**

(a) This Conference lodges its emphatic protest against the circulation, overt, as well as covert, to obscene literature throughout India.

(b) We have cause to believe that such obnoxious literature is provided by small bookstall holders for the younger generation, that is, to students of schools and colleges and of both sexes.

(c) We therefore request the authorities concerned to take drastic and immediate steps into the matter and stamp out the evil as soon as possible and give every encouragement to the publication of better literature.

(d) We further request the public and Government to censor all such journals and newspapers that continue to indulge in the pernicious practice of publishing obscene and outrageous articles and advertisements which constitute an insult to womanhood in general and violate all the laws of decency in a manner that cannot be tolerated by any civilised nation.

(Nagpur 1937).

18. **Compulsory Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths.** This Conference desires to impress on the Government of India and the States the necessity for the immediate introduction of Bills for the compulsory registration of births, marriages and deaths. (Ahmedabad 1936)

19. **Recording of Marriages, Births and Deaths.** This Conference recommends that all Municipalities and local authorities in British India and the States should pass rules and regulations for compulsory official recording of all marriages and deaths. (Nagpur 1937).

20. **Evil Social Customs.** This Conference expresses the emphatic protest against such evil social customs as undue expenses on occasions of marriage and death, sale of brides and bridegrooms, dowry, prejudice against widow remarriage, polygamy, intensive intercaste marriages, and purdah. (Nagpur 1937).

21. **Cruelty to animals.**

(a) This Conference expresses its disapproval and disgust at all forms of cruelty to domestic and other animals in India, not only on human but also on economic grounds, and because of the psychological effects such cruelty has on the minds and character of children, and recommends that some of the small books and pamphlets published by various Animals Welfare Societies in several vernaculars should be introduced as Readers in Rural Schools and distributed by Rural Reconstruction and Village Uplift Societies.

(b) This Conference urges Government to take legislative steps to protect milch kine in India, regard being had to the fact that India is mainly an agricultural country, and that sufficient supply of cow's milk is not available. (Nagpur 1937).

III. LABOUR

1. (a) This Conference recommends to its Standing Committee Members to inquire into the agricultural and indigenous industries of their areas and to get into touch with Co-operative Societies and in other ways to foster such industries and report to the Sub-Committee appointed by the Conference to deal with this question.

(b) This Conference recommends to its Standing Committee to inquire into the conditions of women and children employed in organised

labour areas and report to the Sub-Committee appointed by the Conference to deal with this question.

2. In all factories where there are a considerable number of women employed, this Conference resolves that the following are essential:

- (a) The employment of a woman doctor to ensure ante- and post-natal care and attention during child-birth for the mother and medical care of the children.
- (b) The establishment of Maternity Homes and an adequate supply of trained help.
- (c) The establishment of creches and nursery schools.

3. (a) This Conference reiterates the need for the immediate appointment of at least one Woman Factory Inspector for every large Industrial area, with full powers under the Act.

(b) This Conference considers that these Inspectors need not necessarily be doctors but should have a thorough knowledge of workers and requests agencies engaged in the training of social workers to consider the question of providing special training, at least until there is a body of experienced women Inspectors available.

4. **Housing Facility for Labourers.** This Conference is of opinion that the labouring population should have healthy dwelling-houses with plenty of air and light, facilities for water and its disposal and proper sanitary arrangements. (Nagpur 1937).

5. Since the whole standard of family life is dependent to so large an extent on housing conditions, mill-owners and local bodies in co-operation are urged to see that the workers are housed with adequate regard to health decency. This Conference considers that a separate cooking place and a verandah or courtyard besides the living room are minimum necessities and anything falling below this standard does not fulfil the above conditions.

6. In view of the urgent necessity of removing illiteracy from the industrial population in the shortest possible time this Conference urges:

- (a) That part-time education be made compulsory for all half-timers up to the age of 15 years, and where conditions make it desirable millowners should co-operate with the local authorities in the provision of such education.

- (b) Millowners are urged to give greater attention to adult education which should be specially suited to adults and need not necessarily follow the curriculum of ordinary schools.
- (c) Local authorities are urged to provide playgrounds in all industrial areas.

7. Since the States have often led the way in matters of social reform, the Princes and their Councils are urged to enforce in their territories at least as high a standard of factory conditions and legislation as that obtaining in British India.

8. This Conference desires that a thorough inquiry should be made into the condition of women mine-workers and urges the Standing Committee to take early steps in the matter.

9. This Conference calls upon the Government of India to take necessary steps immediately to implement the Report of the Whitley Commission with regard to labour conditions of women and children in India.

10. This Conference expresses its regret that the Assembly had failed to ratify the International Labour Convention to fix the minimum age of Indian children in non-industrial occupations and urges on the Government of India and the Assembly the need in India to legislate against the employment of Indian children under 12 in regulated non-industrial occupation.

11. This Conference fully supports the Bill prohibiting the pledging of child labour in regulated and unregulated industries and requests that persons besides guardians and parents who pledge child labour or act in collusion with parents and guardians be penalised.

12. The All-Indian Women's Conference approves of the provisions of the Bill introduced by the Government of India in the Legislative Assembly to regulate the payment of wages to classes of persons employed in industry.

13. This Conference approves of the provisions of the Bill to amend the Workmen's Compensation Act subject to the following modification that to the list of the dependents of a workman entitled to claim compensation be added widowed daughter-in-law and brother's widow.

14. This Conference is emphatically of opinion that a woman representative on behalf of the women workers in factories, mines, plan-

tations and other industries be deputed by the Government of India as a delegate or an adviser to the International Labour Conference to be held at Geneva.

15. This Conference draws the attention of the Government of India to the following recommendations of the Royal Commission on Labour and urges for early legislative measures.

- (a) Rigorous action should be taken against those factories where conditions in regard to humidification are worst.
- (b) First aid boxes should be provided in all the factories using power and in departments of factories employing over 250 persons.
- (c) Comprehensive Public Acts should be passed in all Provinces.
 - (i) Where pipe-water supplies are not available, special precautions as to purity should be taken.
 - (ii) Where Industry begins to develop in a new area, it should be the duty of employers to provide suitable water to their workers.
- (d) Naikins (women jobbers) should be excluded from the engagement and dismissal of labour.
- (e) Every factory should be compelled to maintain separate and sufficient latrine accommodation for males and an adequate staff to keep them clean.
- (f) Creches should be provided for children up to the age of six years where considerable number of women are employed. This requirement should be statutory for places employing 250 women or more. The Factories Act should embody this with discretionary power to Local Governments in regard to factories with fewer women. The organisation of factory creches should be the duty of the women inspectors.
- (g) Women factory inspectors should be appointed in every province. They should be of Indian domicile and not less than 25 years of age and their pay should be adequate to attract the right type.
- (h) Maternity benefit legislation should be enacted throughout India on the lines of the schemes operating in Bombay and Central Provinces.

- (i) The scheme should be non-contributory.
- (ii) In the first instance, the entire cost of the benefit should be borne by the employer.
- (iii) The rate of benefit given by the Central Provinces Act is suitable for general application.
- (iv) The maximum benefit period should be 4 weeks before and 4 weeks after child-birth.
- (v) Administration of the Act should be entrusted to the factory inspection staff and wherever possible to women factory inspectors.
- (i) Maximum daily hours of work for children should be five hours.
- (j) Employers should arrange to give children at least one rest interval.
- (k) No child who has been employed full time in a factory should be allowed to work overtime or to take work at home after factory hours.
- (l) No child under the age of 14 years should be permitted to work in or about the mines.

16. This Conference strongly supports the Minority view of the Royal Commission on Labour in India as regards raising the minimum age of employment in factories from 12 to 13 years for a period of 5 years and thereafter to 14 in conformity with the standard laid down in Article II of the International Convention.

17. Owing to the increase of unemployment by the closing down of several mills and factories, the Conference feels the necessity of appointing a Committee to look into the hardships suffered by women and children in these areas and inquire and report as to what measures are advisable for relief especially in the case of children of unemployed labourers.

18. (a) We agree with the recommendations of the Investigation Committee that it would be a retrograde step to go back to employing women underground and as recommended by the Royal Commission on Labour this process of elimination be completed by 1939.

(b) We also urge that simultaneously, the women who are being deprived of work be found other employment on the surface, on the lines suggested in the report of the Committee.

19. Recommendations of the Mining Enquiry Committee :

- (a) We note with great regret that no action has been taken by the authorities in the mining area regarding recommendations made by the Investigation Commission of the All-India Women's Conference which visited the mines last year.
- (b) We regret that no action has been taken to discontinue the Outstill System in Bihar and urge that this system be abolished as soon as possible.
- (c) In continuation of the resolutions passed last year regarding the women in the mines we recommend that the Conference should support a woman organiser for one year to study the situation caused by the elimination of women from underground work, and the possibilities of alternative employment.

20. Women workers eliminated from mines. This meeting of the All-India Women's Conference strongly urges the Government and the authorities concerned to take immediate action for the provision of suitable employment for women workers eliminated from mines and the fixing of adequate minimum wage for men mine workers whose family income has been reduced by such elimination. (Nagpur 1937).

21. We regret that the recommendation of the League of Nations regarding the minimum age of child labourers has not been acted upon by the Government of India in the Factories Act, and record that in our opinion no child under 14 years should be employed as a labourer.

22. As the newly amended Factory Act does not make the provision of creches compulsory for employers of women labour and as it is now believed by authorities that much of the infant mortality in India is due to the neglect of children of working mothers, we strongly urge the Government to remove this important defect so that creches are made compulsory throughout India.

23. As women are sometimes forced to carry heavy loads which is detrimental to their health, it is desirable that a maximum load should be fixed for them by the Government. We therefore recommend that investigations should be made regarding this maximum weight, and legislation enacted accordingly.

24. All-India Maternity Benefit Act. This Conference is of opinion that an All-India Maternity Benefit Bill on the lines of those passed in Bombay, C.P. and Madras be introduced in the Legislative Assembly.

It further recommends that the Constituencies in the different Provinces work for the passage of such a Bill.

25. (a) This Conference while advocating the introduction and passing of Maternity Benefits Acts throughout India regrets that, where such do exist, the application of them in practice is causing unemployment amongst women labourers. It calls upon the authorities concerned to look on this matter in a humane rather than in a mercenary spirit and upon those in charge of these measures to find ways and means of so framing the provisions that the danger of the unfortunate results now obtaining may be eliminated.

(b) The Conference further urges the immediate introduction of an All-India Maternity Benefit Act. (Ahmedabad).

26. This Conference also congratulates the Government of His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore for passing the "Maternity Benefits Act" by which women working in factories are given leave on full pay for four weeks before and four weeks after confinement. (Nagpur 1937).

27. **Minimum age and hours of work.** This Conference wholeheartedly supports Mr. Bakhale's Bill introduced in the Bombay Legislative Council to prohibit the employment of children under 12 in shops and urges that All-India legislation on similar lines limiting the hours of work and fixing a minimum age of employment of children in non-industrial undertakings be introduced.

28. **Unemployment.** This Conference is of opinion that the relief of unemployment should invite the serious attention of the Government of India and that in formulating any schemes for the amelioration of this long-standing evil, an effort should be made to utilise the labour resources of India for the supply of the necessaries of life at a cheaper price to the workers themselves. (Ahmedabad).

29. **Social Insurance.** In view of the suffering, industrial workers undergo, due to loss of income on account of sickness maternity, death of wage-earners, occasional unemployment etc., this Conference recommends that schemes of Social Insurance should be introduced in British India and the States as early as possible. (Ahmedabad).

30. **Unregulated Industries.** This Conference urges upon the Government the necessity of introducing legislation to regulate the condition of hours of work in unregulated industries.

IV. GENERAL

1. Believing that the welfare of nations and classes depends on the building up of a new order :

- (a) We lend full support to all efforts that are being made and will be made in the future for the surmounting of barriers of race, creed, caste, nationality and promoting the spirit of international reconciliation and good-will.
- (b) We desire to express once more our condemnation of war as a crime against humanity and our whole-hearted sympathy with all those men and women who are striving honestly for world disarmament.
- (c) We dedicate ourselves in our own homeland to the supreme task of creating around us a spirit of true patriotism and love of humanity so that rising above the narrow confines of communities and provinces we may see fulfilled the vision of a larger India ready to take her rightful place in the world comity of nations.

2. **International Peace.** In the name of humanity the All-India Women's Conference hopes earnestly for the establishment of a permanent World-Peace by the speedy restoration of international relations based on mutual tolerance and harmony.

3. This Conference, realising the vital importance of Disarmament for the peace and the happiness of the world, urges the women of India to give their whole-hearted support and sympathy to the World Disarmament Conference to be held in Geneva in February, 1932, and calls upon all Governments to reduce their Army and Navy.

4. **Protest against wars of aggression.** While the memory of the cruel rape of Abyssinia is still fresh in our minds, and the horrors of the fratricidal warfare in Spain continue to haunt us, Japan's ruthless aggression against China has come, as it were, as a further blow to shatter all our hopes of peace. We are bitterly disappointed at the incapacity and inability of all the so-called great powers of the world to put an end to the injustices consequent on the oppression of the weak and poor. We are convinced that increasing armaments of warfare by land, sea and air, and the harnessing of the knowledge of science for the purpose of destruction are not going to bring peace to a troubled and stricken world. We feel

that it is through the weapons of love alone that a new order can be ushered in. Standing on the threshold of another year we dedicate ourselves to non-violence in thought, word and deed, and appeal to women throughout the world to join hands with us, for we are confident that this doctrine alone can quell the desire for possession, can save the nations from racial jealousies and communal strife and protect humanity from oppression and exploitation. (Nagpur 1937).

5. This Conference calls upon all communities in India to live together in amity and work in harmony with one another for the common welfare of the country and appeals to all women to make special endeavours to achieve this object.

6. **Peace Resolution.** Conscious of the gravity of the situation to-day in the world and believing that a new order is an imperative need we wish to stress once more our abhorrence of war as a solution of any problem. We declare ourselves in utter and eternal opposition to all oppression and exploitation. We have been pained and horrified at the betrayal of Austria and Czechoslovakia, at the abetment from outside and continuance of the internal strife in Spain, at the merciless persecution of the Jews, at the deplorable interference and cruelties in Palestine and at the unjustifiable aggression in China. The inability of the so-called Great Powers of the world to put an end to all this woe and misery is proof enough of the futility of their methods of approach. We are convinced that it is only through the banishing of all greed for possession that the shadow of war and armed conflict itself can be removed. We, therefore, protest against the mad race in the building of armaments that continues unabated. We appeal to the women of the world to unite on the platform of non-violence and actively demonstrate that by this power alone can the forces of hatred and the desire for possession be brought under control and a real and lasting peace established. (Delhi 1938).

7. **Istanbul Resolution.** The Conference supports wholeheartedly the following resolutions passed at the Congress of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship at Istanbul 1935.

- (a) **Legal Rights.** That a Woman unmarried or married should have full personal and civil rights, including the right to the use and disposal of her property; that she should not be under

the tutelage of her husband and should have the same rights over her children as the father; that she should have the same rights as a man to retain or to change her nationality.

- (b) **East and West Co-operation.** Where this Congress believes in the interest of true progress, the women of every country must advance on the lines of equality and justice, it pledges its hearty support to all the women of the West as well as of the East whether they struggle for the eradication of their special legal, social and economic disabilities and for the recognition of their rights to equal citizenship in their respective national units or whether they are in danger of losing these legal, political, and economic rights which they have achieved.

Welcoming the co-operation of the women of all parts of the world, the value of which has been strongly emphasised by this Congress, it expresses the wish that the women of the East and of the West be linked by ties which will grow closer and consequently serve the interests of Universal peace.

8. (a) This Conference endorses the decision of the Standing Committee for the establishment of a Permanent Central Office at Delhi at the earliest possible opportunity.

(b) It therefore makes a special appeal to the general public to contribute liberally and to the constituencies to do all in their power to raise funds for the early realisation of the project. (Ahmedabad 1936).

9. This Conference puts on record its appreciation of the recent circular issued by the President of the Indian National Congress directing the Parliamentary Committees to put up women candidates for the general seats. (Ahmedabad 1936).

STATEMENT REGARDING REGISTRATION

The All-India Women's Conference has been duly registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 on the 18th July, 1930.

Memorandum of Association of the All-India Women's Conference

1. The name of the Conference shall be "The All-India Women's Conference."
2. The Conference shall not engage in party politics but unite on such points as affect women and children.
3. The objects of the Conference shall be:
 - (a) To promote in India the education of both sexes at all stages;
 - (b) To deal with all questions affecting the welfare of women and children.

Signature of Witnesses.

(Sd.) Sarojini Naidu
,, Sushama Sen
,, Margaret Cousins
,, Rameshwari Nehru
,, A. L. Huidekoper
,, Sharifah Hamid Ali
,, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyaya

4. The Standing Committee Members become the Governing Body of the Association.

THE CONSTITUTION OF A.-I.W.C.

ARTICLE I.

Name :

The name of the organisation shall be "The Association of the All-India Women's Conference," hereinafter to be called the "A.-I.W.C."

ARTICLE II.

(a) Policy :

The A.-I.W.C. shall not belong to any political organisation nor take an active part in party politics, but shall be free to discuss and contribute to all questions and matters affecting the welfare of the people of India with particular reference to women and children.

(b) Aims and Objects :

1. To work actively for the general progress and welfare of women and children.
2. To inculcate in women and children the deals of true citizenship.
3. To promote education along right lines.
4. To work and press for social reform.
5. To strive to establish equal rights and opportunities for all.
6. To work for a united India.
7. To set and demand a high moral standard in all departments of life.
8. To stand for international goodwill and world peace.

ARTICLE III.

Composition :

(a) Patrons.

(b) Office-Bearers.

(c) Standing Committee.

(d) Branches.

(a) Patrons :

(i) Past Presidents.

(ii) By special invitation of the A.-I.W.C.

(b) Office-Bearers :

(i) President and Chairwoman.

(ii) Six Vice-Presidents,

Note: A Chairwoman of the Standing Committee shall be elected for the year from amongst the Vice-Presidents in case the President does not desire to fill the office.

- (iii) Treasurer.
- (iv) General Secretary.
- (v) Organising Secretary.
- (vi) Sectional Secretaries (if required).

Note: No paid officer of the A.-I.W.C. shall be entitled to vote.

(c) Standing Committee :

- (i) The Office-Bearers.
- (ii) Member-in-charge of Special Subjects.
- (iii) Branch Representatives.
- (iv) The Liaison Officer in India.
- (v) The Secretary of the All-India Women's Education Fund Association.
- (vi) Conveners of Sub-Committees whenever such Sub-Committees are appointed.
- (vii) Members co-opted for special purposes.

(d) Branches :

Areas in Provinces and States, as decided on by the Standing Committee from time to time.

Note: Patrons shall be entitled to attend the Conference of the A.-I.W.C. and to vote at the open sessions.

Life Associates under the old Constitution will have the right of attending the open sessions of the Conference and voting as hitherto.

ARTICLE IV.

Agencies of Work :

The work of the A.-I.W.C. shall be carried out through :

- (i) The Standing Committee and its Executive;
- (ii) The Branches, Sub-Branchees and their Committees, by means of :
 - (a) Conference.
 - (b) Meetings.
 - (c) Correspondence.
 - (d) Publications.

ARTICLE V.**Conferences :****1. The All-India Conference :**

- (a) Conferences of the A.-I.W.C. shall be held periodically, at a time and place fixed by the Standing Committee.
- (b) The following shall be entitled to attend :
 - (i) Patrons.
 - (ii) Standing Committee Members.
 - (iii) Branch Delegates.
 - (iv) Reception Committee Delegates.
 - (v) Special Delegates (by invitation by the Standing Committee).
 - (vi) Visitors (not allowed to participate in the deliberations).

Note : Life Associates under the old constitution will have the right of attending the open Sessions of the Conference and voting as hitherto.

II. Branch Conferences :

Public Conference shall be convened annually by all the Branches and Sub-branches of the A.-I.W.C.

ARTICLE VI.**Branches :**

1. Each Branch shall carry out the ideals of the A.-I.W.C. and work under its direction.
2. Each Branch shall frame its own Rules and Regulations in conformity with the Articles, Bye-Laws and Regulations of the A.-I.W.C. such Rules and Regulations and any alterations thereto being subject first to the approval of the Standing Committee.
3. Each Branch shall be responsible for its own finances.

ARTICLE VII.**Finance :**

1. All moneys received shall be held in deposit by the Treasurer, at a Scheduled Bank, in the name of the A.-I.W.C.
Cheques shall be signed by any two of the following Office-Bearers.
President, Treasurer and General Secretary.

2. Each Branch shall send annually to the Treasurer, before July the 1st, a minimum affiliation fee of Rs. 25.

ARTICLE VIII.

I. Bye-Laws :

1. The Standing Committee shall have power to make Bye-Laws and Regulations for carrying out the work of the A.-I.W.C. and to alter them and add to them from time to time as occasion may require.
2. These Bye-Laws and Regulations may not be altered or added to except by the Standing Committee, at one of its meetings, by a two-thirds majority of the members present, and provide that:
 - (a) notice of such proposed alteration or addition shall have been sent in writing, by registered post, to every member of the Standing Committee at least three months before the meeting, and
 - (b) the Bye-Law in question has been in existence for at least a year.

II. Alteration of Constitution :

The Constitution of the A.-I.W.C. may not be altered except at a Conference Session by a two-thirds majority of the members present, provided that a notice of such proposed alteration shall have been sent in writing, by registered post or under certificate of posting to every member of the Standing Committee at least three months before the conference.

THE ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S EDUCATION FUND ASSOCIATION

(As the All-India Women's Conference is strongly represented on the Governing Body of the All-India Women's Education Fund Association, which came into existence through the Conference after its first Delhi session, it recommends this Fund to all those interested in the development of girls' education along the lines of its Memorandum).

MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION

1. The name of the Association is "The All-India Women's Education Fund Association."

2. The objects for which the Association is established are:—

(1) The management of the Fund known as "The All-India Women's Education Fund."

(2) The promotion of the education of women and girls of India including—

(a) The aid of any schemes for the furtherance of education in all its branches, of the women and girls of India as may from time to time be recommended by the Conference known as the All-India Women's Conference or under such other name as the Conference may hereafter be registered (hereinafter and in the Rules and Regulations of the Association referred to as the All-India Women's Conference).

(b) The institution of propaganda for the education of the women and girls of India.

(c) The increase of the supply of better trained teachers, having particular regard to the inclusion of training in domestic subjects.

(d) The encouragement of the production of better text-books and attractive and suitable literature in the vernacular.

(e) The exploration and initiation of schemes for the education of children of Kindergarten age, for the extension of suitable education amongst children in rural areas, for the support where possible of approved schemes which already exist, and for the provision of suitable housing accommodation for women teachers, especially in rural areas.

- (f) The extension of facilities in existing educational institutions for courses of training in home-craft, fine arts, domestic science, physical culture and other suitable subjects.
- (3) The purchase or acquisition on lease, or in exchange, or on hire or otherwise, of any real or personal property, and any rights of privileges necessary or convenient for the purposes of the Association.
- (4) The erection, construction, alteration and maintenance of any buildings necessary or convenient for the purpose of the Association.
- (5) The sale, improvement, management and development of all or any part of the property of the Association.
- (6) The promotion and establishment of branches and of other societies or associations with similar objects particularly in the constituent areas of the All-India Women's Conference, and the affiliation or amalgamation of such societies or associations with this Association.
- (7) The doing of all other such things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects or any of them.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

I. MEMBERSHIP

1. There shall be the following grades of members of the Association:—

- (a) President. (b) Patrons. (c) Vice-Patrons. (d) Life Fellows.
(e) Life Members. (f) Members.

2. The President shall be elected at a General Meeting for a period of three years.

3. The Patrons of the Association shall be donors of sums amounting in the aggregate to not less than Rs. 20,000, and such other distinguished persons as the Governing Body may think proper to appoint. Every patron shall be at liberty to appoint a representative to attend and vote at the General Meetings of the Association on his or her behalf.

4. Vice-Patrons shall be donors of sums amounting in the aggregate to Rs. 10,000. Life Fellows shall be donors of sums amounting in the aggregate to Rs. 500. Life members shall be donors of sums of not less than Rs. 100.

5. Members shall be persons who pay an annual subscription of not less than Rs. 5, such subscription shall be due in advance on the 1st November in every year.

6. The Governing Body may elect any person to honorary membership of any grade in recognition of services rendered to the Association.

7. The Honorary Secretary of the Association shall maintain a register of members of the Association and this register shall be open to inspection.

II. GENERAL MEETING

8. (a) The Annual General Meeting of the Association shall be held once a year at Delhi at an interval of not less than 10 and not more than 15 months. The Executive Committee, however, shall have power to alter the venue for any especial reasons. (Notice of such Annual General Meetings shall be given at least one month before the date fixed, and such notice shall specify the business to be transacted. Members of all grades shall be entitled to attend and to vote on any question that may be submitted to the meeting for determination.)

(b) At such Annual General Meeting the report and balance sheet for the past year, and the budget for the next year, shall be presented and an Auditor appointed for auditing the account of the next year. Any other business may be brought forward with the assent of the Chair.

9. (a) An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association may be convened at any time by the President for any purpose connected with the Association and shall be convened on the written requisition of at least 30 members stating the object of such meeting.

(b) At least 18 days' notice shall be given of such meeting, with the agenda to be brought before it, provided that accidental omission to give such notice to any member shall not invalidate any Resolution passed at such meeting, and no business other than that specified in such agenda shall be transacted.

10. (a) All General Meetings of the Association shall be presided over by the President or in her absence by the Chairwoman of the Governing Body, or in absence of both by some other person elected by those present,

(b) All questions shall be decided by the votes of the members present, taken by show of hands, but anyone present may demand a division which shall forthwith be taken and the result declared by the officer presiding.

(c) In case of equality of votes, the officer presiding shall have a second or casting vote.

THE GOVERNING BODY

11. (1) The Governing Body of the Association for the purpose of the Act XXI of 1860 shall consist of the President and 21 members including an Honorary Secretary and an Honorary Treasurer, all of whom with the exception of the Honorary Treasurer, shall be women.

(2) From and after the Annual General Meeting of 1938 the Governing Body shall consist of:—

(a) the President, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer.

(b) nineteen members of the Association elected triennially as follows:—7 elected by the Association and 12 elected by the Standing Committee of the All-India Women's Conference of whom 2 shall be from Indian States.

(3) The members of the Governing Body shall all be members of the Fund Association.

(4) Casual vacancies among office-holders or members of the Governing Body shall be filled by the Governing Body and any person so chosen shall retain his or her office so long as the vacating member would have retained the same if no vacancy had occurred: In the event of a vacancy or vacancies occurring among those members elected by the Standing Committee of the All-India Women's Conference, the Governing Body shall fill it or them from among names submitted to them by the said Standing Committee. No action of the Governing Body which may be otherwise valid, shall be rendered invalid by reason of any such vacancy remaining unfilled, provided, however, that the number of vacancies so remaining unfilled shall not at any time exceed 3 (three). An absence of 12 months out of India shall constitute a vacancy.

(5) The Governing Body shall have power, when necessary, to co-opt persons having expert knowledge in any Branch of the Association's work. The number of persons so co-opted shall not at any one time exceed five. Any co-option shall cease at the will of the Governing Body.

12. The Governing Body shall hold their Annual Meeting on the same day and at the same place as and immediately after the Annual General Meeting of the Association or at such other place and time as the Executive Committee may decide. The Governing Body shall, at the Annual Meeting, elect from among themselves a Chairwoman who will preside in the absence of the President and a Vice-Chairwoman who in the absence of the Chairwoman shall conduct her duties and exercise her powers. In the absence of both at any meeting, such meeting may elect its own Chairman from those present. Any vacancies in these offices shall be filled up by the Governing Body.

13. Ordinary meetings of the Governing Body shall be held at such place and time as may be fixed by the Executive Committee. The annual budget and report of the Association shall be considered at one such meeting in each year.

14. An extra ordinary meeting of the Governing Body may be called at any time by the President or Chairwoman.

15. Upon a requisition in writing made by any five members of the Governing Body stating the object the President or Chairwoman shall call an extraordinary meeting.

16. Eightee days' clear notice of any meeting of the Governing Body, specifying the place, day and hour of the meeting and the general nature of the business to be transacted shall be given to every member of the Governing Body by notice sent under postal certificate, provided that the failure to give such notice to any of the members shall not invalidate any resolution at such meeting.

17. At a meeting of the Governing Body in members must be present in person to form a quorum.

18. if no quorum is present within an hour of the time fixed for a meeting of the Governing Body, the meeting shall be held after an interval of 24 hours. If there again be no quorum, only urgent business may be transacted, and at such meeting three members shall form a quorum.

19. In the event of an equality of votes at any meeting, the presiding officer shall have a second or casting vote.

20. (1) The Governing Body shall at their annual meeting elect the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer. They may also appoint an Honorary Assistant Secretary and an Honorary Assistant Treasurer.

These shall not, *ex officio*, be members of the Governing Body but in the event of the absence from any meeting of the Secretary or Treasurer they shall act in their respective office as members of the Governing Body. Persons holding these Offices shall be eligible for re-election. Any vacancies in these offices occurring during the year shall be filled up by the Governing Body.

(2) All other appointments shall be made by the Executive Committee.

21. The Governing Body, subject to these Rules, shall have general control of the affairs of the Association with authority to make standing orders regulating its own procedure, the procedure of the Executive Committee, and the powers and duties of its officers. In particular it shall provide for a proper record of all proceedings, and for an accurate account of all receipts and payments to be opened to the inspection of the auditor.

22. In addition to the powers and authorities conferred on them either by Statute or Rules of the Association, the Governing Body shall have power to do all such acts as are to be done by the Association, with the exception of those which by these Rules or by Statute are expressly directed to be done by the Association in General Meetings.

IV. COMMITTEES

23. The Governing Body shall at their annual meeting elect an Executive Committee of eight members besides the office-bearers. Any vacancies in the elected members of the Executive Committee occurring during the year shall be filled by the Executive Committee.

This Executive Committee will perform the current duties of the Association and such other duties as the Governing Body may prescribe. The transactions of the Executive Committee shall be duly recorded and laid before the Governing Body at its next meeting for information or confirmation. In case of emergency the Executive Committee may perform any duty and exercise any power of the Governing Body. The Executive Committee may appoint any sub-committee and delegate to it any powers which may be necessary, but the proceedings of such sub-committees shall in every case be reported for information or confirmation to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall meet at such time and in such places as they think proper and at all their meetings four shall form a quorum.

24. The Chairwoman, Vice-Chairwoman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer, shall be ex officio members of the Executive Committee. The Honorary Secretary shall be ex officio member of all Sub-Committees (In the absence of either Honorary Secretary or Honorary Treasurer their Assistants, if any, act as members of the Executive Committee and any of Sub-Committee).

25. (1) All matters affecting the finance of the Association shall be referred to the Executive Committee before being determined by the Governing Body.

(2) The Executive Committee shall scrutinise the accounts of the Association and shall consider the Report of the Auditor. It shall also prepare the annual budget and submit it through the Governing Body, the General Meeting of the Association.

26. When a Branch of the Association is formed, or any other body having for its objects the purposes for which the Association is established desires affiliation, the case shall be examined by the Executive Committee before being submitted to the Governing Body, and no such branch shall be recognised or body affiliated without the vote of the Governing Body. It shall be a condition of recognition or affiliation that each such branch or body shall have a regularly constituted committee, and shall pay an annual affiliation fee to be fixed by the Governing Body, and that its accounts be audited by an auditor approved by the Governing Body.

27. Unless otherwise desired by them, branches and affiliated bodies shall remain independent in the administration of their funds and in the conduct of their operations but they shall furnish to the Governing Body such reports and information as may be required by the Governing Body and shall assist by correspondence and conference in the furtherance of their common objects. The Governing Body shall have power, subject to the Rules to assist branches and affiliated bodies in such manner and to such an extent as it may consider to be conducive to the objects of the Association.

28. The Governing Body shall be at liberty to appoint sub-committees for such purposes and with such powers as they may think proper.

V. GENERAL

29. All moneys at any time standing to the credit of the general account which shall not be required for current expenses, and which the

Governing Body shall not determine to transfer to the Building or any other accounts, shall be invested by the Honorary Treasurer, with approval of the Executive Committee in securities authorised by law for the investment of trust funds.

30. The Bankers of the Association shall be the Imperial Bank of India and also if necessary the Central Bank of India Ltd.

31. The Executive Committee shall provide a seal and also provide for its safe custody, and the seal shall never be used except by the authority of the Executive Committee previously given and in the presence of two Members of the Executive Committee who shall sign every instrument to which the seal is fixed, and every such instrument shall be countersigned by the Honorary Secretary or some other person appointed by the Executive Committee.

32. If any corporation, firm, school, college or body of trustees makes any subscription or donation to the Association, the privileges which such subscription or donation carries shall be exercised by a person whom the above-mentioned may from time to time nominate for a period not exceeding ten years to be determined by the Governing Body.

33. (1) None of these Rules shall be repealed or altered and no new Rules shall be made except by Resolution passed by majority of not less than three-fifths of the members of the Governing Body present at an ordinary meeting and confirmed by Resolution passed by a subsequent General Meeting of the Association.

(2) Interpretation of these Rules shall be vested entirely in the Governing Body.

Bye-Laws for the Election of Members to the Governing Body.

1. The Executive Committee shall conduct all elections to the Governing Body.

2. Every candidate for election to the Governing Body shall be a member of the Association and shall be nominated by a member of the Association. Nomination forms for membership for the Governing Body shall be posted to each member of the Association in such form and at such time as the Executive Committee may think proper. No person can nominate herself or himself.

3. The nomination forms must be returned to the Honorary Secretary of the Association by the date fixed for that purpose

accompanied by the consent in writing of the candidate nominated.

4. All nominations shall be scrutinised by the Executive Committee who shall have absolute discretion to reject any nominee. Notice of the names of all candidates so nominated together with voting papers in the form approved by the Executive Committee and instructions as to voting shall be posted to each member of the Association. The voting papers must be returned to the Honorary Secretary in special envelopes provided only for this purpose by the date fixed in the notice.

5. The voting papers shall be opened and scrutinised at a meeting of the Executive Committee or by the Honorary Secretary and two scrutinisers appointed by the Executive Committee. The votes for candidates will be counted separately and the candidate or candidates, as the case may be, receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. In the event of two or more candidates for one vacancy heading the poll with the same number of votes, the chairwoman of the Executive Committee shall exercise a casting vote.

6. The declaration of the Chairwoman of the Executive Committee declaring the candidates elected shall be final, and shall be reported to the Association at the Annual General Meeting. Successful candidates shall be notified immediately of their election.

7. If, during the interval between the posting of the nomination papers and the counting of the votes, a candidate, nominated by a member of the Association, is elected to the Governing Body by the Standing Committee of the All-India Women's Conference her name shall be removed from the voting paper.

8. The Standing Committee of the All-India Women's Conference shall have power to nominate not more than 3 (three) names for each vacancy occurring during any year in the Governing Body among its representatives. In the event of these nominations not being sent in to the Honorary Secretary of the Association within one month of the request for such nominations, the Governing Body shall fill the vacancy or vacancies themselves.

9. In order to simplify elections for office-holders of the Executive Committee nominations for these should be sent in by the members of the Governing Body to the Honorary Secretary at least 3 (three) days before the Annual General Meeting.

HISTORY OF THE ALL-INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

1. Origin of the All-India Women's Conference.

The All-India Women's Conference owes its origin to a circular letter from Mrs. Margaret E. Cousins who, in the autumn of 1926, as Secretary of the Women's India Association, Adyar, Madras, addressed an appeal to women all over the country to form local committees and hold Constituent Conferences in each of the Provinces and in certain other clearly defined districts and Indian States, for the purpose of declaring their views on problems of education.

The original stimulus which gave rise to Mrs. Cousins letter was an appeal made by the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, at the Prize-Giving function of the Bethune College, Calcutta, in which he called on Indian Women to "*tell us with one voice what they want, and keep on telling us till they get it.*" Mrs. A. L. Huidekoper, an ex-Principal of the Bethune College (who, we are glad to say, is still one of our very active members), made use of this appeal as the basis of two articles which were published in *Stri Dharma*, the monthly magazine, of the Women's Indian Association, and it was after this that Mrs. Cousins took up the matter in the way just described. Her appeal met with a wide and enthusiastic response, and Constituent Conferences were held in 22 places during the months of September to December, 1926, and the First All-India Women's Conference was organised to take place at Poona, where it was duly held from January 5th to 8th 1927, under the distinguished Presidentship of Her Highness the Maharani Chimnabai Saheb Gaekwar of Baroda,—Mrs. Cousins being the first Honorary Organising Secretary. The Resolutions passed at that Conference related almost without exception to education, ranging from matters concerning Primary Schools up to those relating to College and Adult Education. The sole exception was a Resolution condemning the practice of early marriage, as it interfered with education and supporting Sir Hari Singh Gour's Age of Consent Bill, which was then about to come before the Legislative Assembly.

2. The Second Conference :

In 1928, the Second Conference was held in Delhi under the Presidentship of Her Highness the Begum Mother of Bhopal, the proceedings being opened by Her Excellency Lady Irwin (Lady Halifax). In addition to

reaffirming most of the Resolutions of the First Conference, notable Resolutions were passed relating to Rai Saheb Harbilas Sarda's Bill for the restraint of Early Marriage, which was at that time under consideration, as well as urging the Government to give representation to women in the Central Legislature, so that they might be able to express their views on pending measures affecting the interests of women and girls. The Second Conference was noteworthy also as the origin of All-India for Women's Education.

3. The Third Conference :

The Third Conference, that of 1929, was held at Patna, with Her Highness the Dowager Rani of Mandi as President. It was on this occasion that the scope of the Conference was definitely widened to include Social Reform and a separate Section for Social Reform was created to work on lines parallel to those of the Section concerned with Educational Reform. Three Sub-Committees of the Educational Reform Section were appointed to carry on work throughout the year in the following directions :

- (a) The drafting of a special curriculum for schoolss, based on the ideals underlying the Resolutions passed by the Conference.
- (b) The revising and creating of new text-books.
- (c) The investigation of the conditions of the training of teachers in all parts of India. Under the Social Reform Section also a Sub-Committee was appointed to carry on the campaign to raise the age of marriage.

4. The Fourth Confaeence :

By 1930, when the Fourth Conference was held in Bombay under the Presidentship of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the increased efficiency of the organisation had become very noticeable : and the Honorary Organising Secretary, Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, was able to report the accomplishment of a large amount of very effective work done by the constituent bodies in many parts of India. Prominent among the list of reforms effected through the support of the Conference and its members was the passing of the Sarda Act which, (while in the opinion of the Conference the age-limits specified in the Act were much too low, and the Act possessed some other obvious defects) was yet a bold step in the right direction. Following up that success the Social Reform Section of the Conference took a very active part in the agitation for Reform of the Laws of

Inheritance as affecting women, while on the educational side an immense amount of useful constructive work, in addition to propaganda, was done by local members and committees of the Conference and its Constituencies, in such directions as the opening of New Girls' Schools, Industrial Schools, Schools for children of the Deprssed Classes, Adult Education, Prison Visiting, Relief to Women passengers on the Railways, and Child Welfare and Maternity work. A new field of work, that in connection with female labour, was opened up through the opportunity of giving evidence before the Labour Commission, while by the delegation of distinguished members to International Conferences, such as the Berlin International Congress of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, the work of the Conference became known to women of other countries and *vice versa*.

It was in 1930, that the Committee of the Education Fund which had been registered the year before as "the All-India Women's Education Fund Association," decided to make a full inquiry about a suitable education for girls. An All-India Committee was appointed to investigate this matter. The members of the Committee made inquiries in their own provinces at first and then met together at Pachmarhi, C.P., in July and made their Report.

5. The Fifth Conference :

The Fifth Conference was held at Lahore, in 1931 with Dr. (Mrs.) Muthulakshmi Reddi as President. Although the year 1930-31 had been one of great difficulties owing to the pre-occupation of the country with political matters, it was nevertheless a year in which the work of the Conference made great forward strides. The number of Constituencies had by this time risen to 33, and many more schools, hostels and centres for adult education were reported as having been started through the efforts of members. The institution of the observance of March 1 as 'Women's day,' and the holding of meetings in almost all the Constituencies on that day to popularise and explain the work of the Conference, was another noteworthy innovation. Vigorous and well-timed propaganda was carried on with a view to safeguarding the Sarda Act from amendments designed to nullify its usefulness; work was continued, in the direction of getting the laws of inheritance amended, and new work was undertaken in Baroda towards getting the State to lead the way in putting on the Statue Book

a Divorce Act for Hindus. There were increasing signs all over the country that the propaganda of the members of the Conference in their various Constituencies was beginning to bear fruit in the changed attitude of the public towards the amelioration of the conditions of women in general, their better education, their proper representation in legislative and administrative bodies, and in the judiciary as Honorary Magistrate. The question of abolition of untouchability began to be tackled, too, in some Constituencies, notably in Madras, and while the attempt to deal with Labour questions (for which the formation of a special Conference had been contemplated) suffered a temporary setback owing to the disturbed conditions of the times, the keenness of members to tackle that among the other many difficult problems of the day, was intensified rather than diminished.

6. The Sixth Conference :

It was in 1932, when the Conference had Madras as its venue, and its President was Mrs. P. K. Ray, that it was clearly seen that although the constitution of the Conference debarred it from taking part in *Party* politics, it could not, if it were to perform its function of establishing women in their rightful position in the state and in society, avoid concerning itself with politics in the widest sense of the term. The status of women in the new constitution of India, particularly in relation to their fundamental rights, their representation in the various bodies and the conditions of their enfranchisement, was a matter of vital importance not only to politicians, but to the whole country: and it was overwhelmingly felt that every opportunity must be taken before the constitution was actually drawn up in details, to impress upon those concerned in framing it, views of nearly half of those who would have to abide by it when framed. To this end, in April, 1931, a representative meeting was held in Bombay, under the Presidentship of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the outcome of which was that the All-India Women's Conference, the Women's Indian Association, and the National Council of Women in India, conjointly drew up a Memorandum to be placed before the Franchise Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference. In May this Memorandum was submitted to all the Constituencies, with an invitation to them to give their considered opinion upon the views stated therein, and again in its final form, before it was actually submitted to the Franchise Committee, the Memorandum was

circulated to the Constituencies, from which no dissentient opinion was received. I need hardly remind you that the essential points which were decided to press in the Memorandum were as follows :

- (1) Equal rights and obligations of all citizens without any bar on account of sex.
- (2) No disability to attach to any citizens by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office of power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.
- (3) Adult suffrage.
- (4) Women to fight elections on equal terms with men, in mixed general electorates.
- (5) No reservation of seats for women as such, nor special nomination or co-optation.

A deputation of ladies belonging to the All-India Women's Conference also waited on His Excellency the Viceroy, in May, and presented a Memorial asking for women to be represented on the Round Table Conference.

The Social Reforms Section was kept busy again this year in agitating against the attempts to amend the Sarda Act. Rai Saheb Harbilasji Sarda's Bill to secure a share for Hindu Widows in their husbands' family property was very widely supported in the Constituencies. The year was also noteworthy for the number of laws passed in Indian States, safeguarding women's rights, or enhancing their status.

The work of the Education Section went forward with unabated vigour on the usual lines, progress being made with the scheme for opening a Women's College for Home Science, Educational Research, and Training of Teachers. The Text-book Sub-Committee made considerable progress with its arduous labour, as did also the Sub-Committees on Labour, and Indigenous Industries.

7. The Seventh Conference :

The Seventh Conference met at Lucknow in 1933 under the Presidentship of Lady Ramanbhai Nilkanth. In the work of the preceding year, that of representing the viewpoint of Indian Womanhood on the constitutional question had remained uppermost, owing to the fact that

the Indian Franchise Committee was occupied with its labours in India during the cold season of that year, and the Standing Committee of the Conference felt it obligatory that it should continue to press the views laid down in the Memorandum presented the year before to the Round Table Conference. Nine members of the All-India Women's Conference gave evidence at various centres, that of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur (Chairwoman of the Standing Committee) being specially noteworthy for the firm stand which she made upon the principles laid down in the Memorandum in spite of the fire of searching cross-examination. From the point of view of immediate results however, those efforts were, alas! in vain, and the publication of the Communal Award was the signal for an outburst of protests from our Constituencies.

The work of the Social Section went on apace; in many Constituencies the earnest practical efforts towards the removal of untouchability and caste restrictions proved conclusively, to those who have eyes to see, that women are not—as they are usually supposed to be—the custodians of orthodoxy and conservatism. In many of the State Constituencies as well as those of British India there was a strong movement in favour of providing for divorce in Hindu society, and its equalisation for men and women among Muslims. The promotion of the cause of Swadeshi and of indigenous industries was also a very important feature of the year's work, as was also the number of instances in which members of the Conference were successful in contesting on terms of equality with men, elections for seats on Municipal Corporations and academic bodies of Universities.

The opening of the Lady Irwin College for women, at Delhi, on November 10, 1932, was the event of the year in the Educational Section,—concrete evidence of the value of the work which had quietly and steadily been proceeding since the starting of the Education Fund four years ago. Important as was that event, however one must not allow it to overshadow all the other less spectacular day-to-day work of members in the Constituencies, for without that real underlying zeal for the educational uplift of women, throughout the land, in villages as well as in towns in quiet and devoted care and service, as well as in laying of foundation-stones and presiding over public meeting, our Conference would have never grown into the solid organisation that it now is,

8. The Eighth Conference :

Our Eighth Session was held at Calcutta, Lady Adbul Qadir being the President on that occasion. The most prominent feature of the work of 1933 had again been the political one. Owing to the publication of the White Paper in which it was seen that the attempt made by our representatives in 1931 and 1932, to gain equal status had completely failed. It became necessary therefore to frame a second memorandum in which while it was reiterated that the proposals contained in the first Memorandum provided the only satisfactory solution, the White Paper proposals were examined and a clear statement made as to how far they could be regarded as even an adequate "second best" or not. This Memorandum was submitted to the Joint Parliamentary Committee of the British Parliament, and later, three elected members representing our Conference, as also the National Council of Women In India, and the Women's Association, were invited to London to give evidence before the Joint Parliamentary Committee. Suffice it to say here that through Memorandum II and the firm stand taken by our delegates in giving their evidence, we showed that, while willing to adopt an accommodating attitude in regard to details during the period of transition we stood immovably for the principle of equal status and against that of communal and special representation.

One very useful outcome of the political work outside India has been the many contacts that our delegates made with women's organisations of other countries and with institutions of international scope including the various organisations connected with the League of Nations.

Wider and wider through the scope of our activities has become, it must not be thought that this had the effect of making the current of local work flow more sluggishly. On the contrary, the work of the Educational and Social Reform Sections grows even more intensive as it grows extensive. As a whole our Movement gathers force every day from new streams of local enterprise.

9. The Ninth Conference :

The Ninth Session of the All-India Women's Conference held its sittings in December, 1934, at Karachi under the Presidentship of Mrs. Rustomji Faridoonji. Practical achievement was the key-note of the Conference in the year 1934—for, in spite of many handicaps particularly of funds and workers the reports of work in the various Constituencies

showed that a distinct advance was being made due to the unbounded enthusiasm of the members. For Bihar Earthquake Relief Fund the Constituencies of the Conference itself raised over thirty thousand rupees, apart from the fact that they helped in the collection of other Central Funds.

The extracts relating to women in the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee were studied in detail by the Conference, and deep disappointment was felt that the clear demands of Indian women were being ignored and it was decided that even at that eleventh hour efforts should again be made to impress on the British Parliament the united desire of Indian women for a non-communal electorate for women at least and their dislike of the wife-hood qualification which was being imposed on them. A resolution to this effect was forwarded to the Secretary of the Joint Select Committee and to the Secretary of State for India through the Liaison Officer, and this resolution was reiterated unanimously at the Half-yearly meeting.

A successful effort was made during the course of the year to create a widespread demand for the appointment of a Commission on the legal disabilities of Indian Women, which would suggest reforms in the light of modern conditions. An All-India Day was held on November 24, 1934, when meetings were held in every Constituency, and thousands of signatures were collected to support this demand. Until there is success in obtaining a more equitable system of laws, this work will be continued, as the members of the Conference feel that they cannot carry out their duties as citizens as long as they are hampered by legal restrictions both personal and civic.

The interesting report of the Committee appointed by the Conference to investigate the conditions in mines, and its suggestions regarding the women eliminated from underground work aroused a great interest in the conference and the desire there evinced to help the unfortunate women miners showed clearly how real was the claim that the conference aimed at improving the condition of women of all classes.

A notable feature of this year was that for the first time a permanent contact was made with the British Women's Organisations. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was appointed as the Liaison Officer for the Conference to keep in touch with Mrs. Lankester the Liaison Officer of the British Women's

Organisations appointed for the same purpose. The presence of distinguished Special Visitors like Dr. Maude Royden and Mrs. Corbett Ashby during the Conference session was a proof of the great interest evidenced by women in the ideals and problems of each other.

Year by year the activities of the Conference are increasing and the success with which it is tackling every new problem is abundant proof that the women of India are not only conscious of their duties but intend to contribute their due share in the task of nation-building.

10. The Tenth Conference :

The Tenth Session was held in Trivandrum in December 1935 under the presidentship of Her Highness Setu Parvati Bayi Saheba of Travancore. Her guidance and keen interest in the proceedings of the Conference and in the discussions made this one of the most successful sessions.

It was the first time that the Conference was held in an Indian State, a State where the percentage of literacy amongst women is higher than in any other part of India, where the purdah system is unknown and where women have equal rights and privileges,—in other words where women's rights are recognised.

An important feature of the year's work was the tremendous increase in the number of constituencies which have taken up village uplift work in earnest and have already achieved considerable progress. Rural-work, Maternity and Child welfare centres have been organised and systematic course of lectures on sanitation and health arranged.

The Sub-Committee on the Child Marriage Restraint Act did good work during the year. A Bulletin was issued giving the statistics of child marriages in our country. A good deal of propoganda was done during the year through the Press to create public opinion in favour of amending the Sarda Act. It is a matter of pride to note that Mr. B. Das was given permission to introduce a Bill in the Legislative Assembly to amend the Sarda Act and most of his amendments were based on the suggestions made by the Conference.

The immediate necessity for a common language for India was recognised by the Conference. A Sub-Committee was appointed to report on the ways and means that could be adopted for the realisation of this ideal. Another Sub-Committee was appointed for the spread of literacy in the country. It was realised that unless a concerted and intensive

campaign against illiteracy is organised, the moral and material progress of the land is bound to be hampered.

The work of the Liaison Group which was appointed for the first time last year had gone on well during the year. The establishment of this contact with the British women's organisations has been of great service to the Conference. The Group as a whole, worked increasingly to press the demand of the Conference concerning franchise and did their best to educate public opinion in England. The Group also arranged busy programmes for Conference members during their stay in England. This gave them an opportunity of speaking about the Conference. Ample publicity was given in English newspapers to all they said and did on behalf of the Conference.

The Constituencies had collected funds in the previous year for relief of people in Bihar stricken by the earthquake; this year also funds were raised in the same way for the Quetta Earthquake Relief. Special mention must be made here of the organised help that was given by the members of Constituencies in Central Punjab, Sind and North-West Frontier Province to the refugees in Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and other places.

With regard to franchise there was nothing much left to be done. All efforts to alter the qualifications for franchise mentioned in the Government of India Bill were of no avail; repeated demands, representations, and statements met with but little success and the Government of India Bill was passed into an Act. A resolution was passed reiterating the disapproval of the Conference of the franchise qualifications but urging on the women to use the powers granted to them by the Act, however inadequate they may be.

There was a lively discussion on the question of Birth Control during the proceedings of the Tenth Session. The Conference was fortunate in having Mrs. Sanger, one of the prominent workers in the United States of America, whose vast experience and knowledge was helpful. The Conference passed by a large majority the resolution supporting the necessity for instruction in methods of Birth Control through recognised clinics.

Notable visitors from foreign countries, U.S.A., England, Japan and China were present at this Session. It was a source of great encouragement and inspiration to all. The women's cause is the same all over the

world and it gave one an opportunity of exchanging ideas and learning one another's experiences.

The number of Constituencies and members had been increasing during the year. The report of the work done in the different constituencies show that women are taking a much great interest in social work. The activities had increased and most constituencies had undertaken practical work in some direction.

11. The Eleventh Conference :

The Eleventh Session of the A.-I.W.C. was held at Ahmedabad in December 1936, under the Presidentship of Mrs. M. E. Cousins. We entered this year into the second decade of our work. It is gratifying to note from the work of the past ten years that the A.-I.W.C. has now taken its rightful place as a representative and fully established women's organisation in India. This year more concentration was given to the need for medical inspection in schools and to the opening of hostels for girls and for the removal of illiteracy by starting even night schools. The year 1936 should be mentioned for the outstanding event of the year, *viz.*, the opening of the State Temples of Travancore to all classes of Hindus by H. H. the Maharaja of Travancore, when H. H. Maharani Setu Parvati Bayi, his illustrious mother, was our President. A great deal of propaganda work was carried out by our Constituencies by holding meetings and enlisting public support for the Social Bills introduced in the Legislative Assembly—*e.g.*, Dr. Deshmukh's Bill to amend the Hindu Law governing Hindu Women's Right to Property, Mrs. B. Das's Bill to amend the Sarda Act in order to make it more stringent, Dr. Bhagwan Das's Bill seeking recognition of inter-caste marriages, and Mr. Hafiz Abdullah's Muslim Personal Law Application Bill,—and to urge their adoption by the Assembly.

Our Constituencies also tried to introduce improvements with regard to sanitation, health and education in the villages and this year was also devoted to the uplift of Harijans. Leper relief, tuberculosis work, maternity and child welfare, encouragement of indigenous industries were dealt with during the year. The Special feature of this year was the work done by our Franchise Sub-Committee for the enrolment of women voters for the new Legislature, Municipalities and District Boards. At the request of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship,

a Memorandum on the Political, Legal, of Social and Educational Status of Women in India was submitted to the League of Nations and the Government of India. The question of a Central Office to meet the expansion of our work was also considered and a scheme for the same was also prepared. We had this year Special Visitors from England, Australia and other visitors from U.S.A. and Holland who attended the conference.

12. The Twelfth Conference :

The Twelfth Session of the All-India Women's Conference was held at Nagpur in December, 1937, under the Presidentship of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur.

The most notable of the year 1937 was the inclusion of about 60 women in the Legislatures of the various provinces, which was possible on account of the facilities given to women to contest elections held under the Government of India Act 1935. One of these, namely, the Hon'ble Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit was elected to be a Cabinet Minister which shows the gigantic strides made by the women's movements in the country. A few of our women have been elected as Deputy Speakers of various Legislatures and some have been appointed Parliamentary Secretaries.

More constructive work was undertaken by the Branches. The Standing Committee considered the draft curriculum of girls' primary schools in India, and the suggestions made by us were considered helpful by the Educational Commissioner to the Government of India. Some of the Constituencies have started conducting village schools and also other useful village work, such as, adult classes, night schools, etc. A scheme has been prepared by the Convener of the Common Language Sub-Committee, which is expected to be useful for solving the common language problem.

The Standing Committee prepared a programme of legislation for improving the social status of women and the same was forwarded to the Prime Ministers of the new Provincial Governments and to the new women members of the Legislatures. Also brochures dealing with such vital problems as child marriage, birth control, temperance, etc., have been prepared in different vernaculars and forwarded to local committees. Much propaganda was done and meetings were held regarding the legal disabilities of women and resolutions expressing public opinion in the matter were forwarded to proper quarters.

Mrs. S. C. Mukerjee, an ex-Chairwoman of the Standing Committee,

was appointed by the Government of India as Indian delegate to the Conference of the Central Authorities of the League of Nations in Eastern Countries for combating traffic in women and children, held at Bandoeng, Java, in February, 1937. An excellent report on the women suffrage movement was prepared by Rani Lakshmibai Rajwade, which is expected to educate women on the subject.

Mr. Ekstrand, Director of Opium Traffic and Social Questions Section of the League of Nations, visited India on his way back from Java and gave lectures under the auspices of the A.-I.W.C. stressing the work to be done for children suffering from physical and mental congenital defects and some of our Constituencies have started work on the lines suggested by him.

Propaganda against child marriage was vigorously carried on and steps were taken to file complaints and to prosecute cases against offending parents and priests, with some measures of success.

Mrs. Grace Lankester, our Liaison Officer in England, was present at the Nagpur Session. It is gratifying to note that our Liaison work is getting on satisfactorily. There has been increasing contact with other countries in the world and an invitation was received from British Guiana to attend the Centenary Celebration of the Indian Emigration.

Untouchability work has been pushed ahead, and as a result some Municipalities have thrown open tanks and wells to Harijans. One of our Constituencies is running free Harijan School. Following the example of the Travancore State, some other Indian States have allowed Temple entry to all Hindus. Some members of our Constituencies are paying regular visits to Jails and provincial and State Governments are being urged to taken steps to improve the condition of women prisoners, as also to provide suitable occupations for women labourers eliminated from the mines.

Swadeshi Exhibitions were held in many Constituencies and there was a large sale of Swadeshi articles. A directory of Swadeshi articles has been prepared. The Indigenus Industries Sub-Committee prepared a Scheme which was forwarded to the Director of Industries in various provinces and states. A Scheme for unregulated industries is in hand.

New Sub-Constituencies have been opened at Bhusawal, Kirloskerwadi, Bijapur, Belgaum, Patan, Mehsana, Visnagar, Navsari, Amreli,

Surat, Broach and Rajpipla. This brings the list of sub-constituencies to more than 100. There are now 38 working Constituencies.

The most important development this year was the Resolution tabled at the Session at Nagpur for widening the scope of the Conference by amending Article II of the Constitution so as to enable the Conference to take part in the progressive welfare of the people of India in all directions and not merely in educational and social spheres. To this resolution several amendments were tabled. For want of the necessary four-fifths majority required for changing the Constitution, the question remained undecided. But the discussion showed a keen desire amongst the members to widen the scope of the activities of the conference.

13. The Thirteenth Conference :

The Thirteenth Session of the All-India Women's Conference was held in Delhi in December, 1938, under the Presidentship of Rani Lakshuibai Rajwade. The Conference had distinguished visitors, Miss Mary A. Dingman, President of the Peace and Disarmament Committee of the International Women's Organisations, Mlle. P. Hage of the International Labour Office, Geneva, Mrs. Ali from Japan, Mrs. Harlow from the United States of America, Miss G. F. Greig of Australia, and Miss Agatha Harrison. Most active work was done in the removal of illiteracy and this was not restricted to towns but was extended to the villages as well. Schools have been started for Harijans and practical knowledge on subjects of sanitation and hygiene given. The Conference studied in detail the Wardha Education Scheme and a practical scheme of working Nursery schools was drawn up.

A Common Language Sub-Committee carried its work and suggested a constructive scheme which was followed by many Branches. The social work of the Conference has been extensive. Public opinion was created regarding bills introduced in the Provinces and in the Central Legislature in particular dealing with Divorce, Monogamy, Restraint of Polygamy and the Legal Disabilities of women.

Exhibitions of the products of agriculture and of various industries, such as home-craft, painting, leather-work, clay-modelling, needle-work, etc., were held.

Considerable attention was given to maternity and child welfare. Several of our Branches conduct maternity and child welfare clinics. The

Health Sub-Committee devoted itself to improving the sanitary conditions prevailing in the schools of their Province and persuaded the authorities to improve conditions of living of the workers. Indigenous industries were encouraged by helping the sale of the products of cottage industries by canvassing orders for them.

Another important feature was the promotion of inter-communal harmony by the formation of what is called the "Family Circle" which includes men and women of all castes and creeds and communities.

Propaganda against child marriage continued as before.

The Liaison Group in England continued its work of giving publicity to the work of the A.-I.W.C. abroad.

The newest venture however is the publication of a journal belonging to the Conference.

The work of the Conference has extended and there are now 40 Branches and 150 Sub-Branches. New Branches were opened in Jath and Kathiawad during the year. Work in several other Branches was reorganised through the services of an Organising Secretary.

14. The Fourteenth Conference :-

The XIV session of the Conference was held in Allahabad under the presidency of Begam Hamid Ali. Owing to the International situation overseas members were not able to come. The Conference continued its work but the horror of totalitarian wars and the insecurity of small states were too near and recent not to have brought out the wholesale condemnation of such wars by the Conference. The procedure followed in the previous conference held at Delhi was continued at Allahabad. The group discussions naturally reduced the time available for plenary sessions but it was felt that free and frank discussions and exchange of experiences were more valuable and educative than platform oratory.

A very significant feature of the year was the recognition given to the Conference by the National Planning Committee by appointing its President Rani Lakshmi Bai Rajwade as the Chairwoman of the Woman's Role Sub-Committee. Under her able guidance this committee with its groups scattered all over India did good work which was publicly acknowledged by no less a person than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Liaison group in Great Britain continued its work of not only giving publicity to the women's work in India but also of creating public opinion to recognise the just claims of this country in the political sphere.

The creation of a new liaison officer for South Africa was another feature of this session.

For the first time the General Secretary of the year was made responsible for the Bulletin of the Conference and with the help of the President and Patrons and other members of the Conference four issues of the Bulletin were published with two supplements, one on Education and the other on Health.

The appointment of an Organising Secretary for the United Provinces was followed by further activities in this direction and resulted in the organisation of a new Branch in Dehra Dun and the re-organisation of the Benares unit. The total number of Branches at present is 35, the number of units 121, and total membership is 8607.