

# State temperance . . .

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"We had strange company on that one," she said. "We had the liquor people on our side, because they didn't want the competition."

She said it was a letter she wrote to former State Sen. Ralph Kelley that helped prompt him to introduce LB221 last session, which raised Nebraska's legal drinking age from 19 to 20.

The WCTU's money comes from annual dues, which are \$3.65 and some fairly large donations, Patzel said.

"We are so fortunate that people in the past have left such large bequests," she said.

Expenses include publication; delegates' trips to national conventions, for which Patzel usually receives \$300 from the state; postage allowances; films, usually one per year at \$300; and youth camps in the summer, which are usually around \$400.

She estimated that the largest expense

is divided equally between the national conventions and the establishment of the youth camps.

The organization, whose primary concern has always been liquor, but which at one time also fought for women's suffrage, has a chapter in every state and in 70 other countries, Patzel said.

### State chapter

Within the state chapter, comprised of approximately 650 members, there are 30 local city branches, she said. Lincoln's branch, which meets on the last Wednesday of every month, contains approximately 75 members.

Some state chapters, such as Ohio and Pennsylvania, have as many as 4,000 members, and California has 17,000, Patzel said.

Nebraska's membership, which had previously been as high as 4,000, has suffered a decline chiefly for two reasons, she said.

First, she explained, there has been an

insignificant increase in the number of working women, which does not leave much time for both active membership and an adequate family life.

Secondly, since 70 percent of U.S. women drink, the WCTU pledge to total abstinence is an obstacle to membership.

"Some people take the pledge so seriously," said Patzel, "that they won't sign it because of the wine used in church services (which they consider a violation of the pledge)."

She could not account, however, for the differences between Nebraska's and other states' memberships.

WCTU's members come from all age brackets, Patzel said, and there are three separate divisions for younger members.

### Children members

There are the White Ribbon Recruits, for 1-6-year olds; the Loyal Temperance Legion, for 6-12-year olds; and the Youth Temperance Council, for 12-18-year olds. Many of these are children and grand-

children of older members, she added.

The WCTU world convention, which will be in Chicago in 1983, is held every three years. The state convention, to be in Grand Island this September, is held annually.

As state president, Patzel plans programs for the state conventions and represents Nebraska at both the spring executive meetings and national conventions.

She was elected president at the 1969 state convention. The position is a five-year term. Beginning in 1974 she sat out for two years, and was then re-elected in 1976. When her term expires this year, she said she hopes to retire.

Even though The WCTU is working ultimately toward prohibition, "we are doing it legitimately," said Patzel. "We really haven't gone in and broken any mirrors over bars, or anything like that," she said.

But, Patzel said, the WCTU will continue to work, as their motto says, "for God and home in every land."

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