

MONTHLY NEWS
of the
**Conservative Women's Reform
ASSOCIATION.**
NEW ISSUE.

President: THE COUNTESS OF SELBORNE.

Chairman of Executive Committee: LADY TRUSTRAM EVE.

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The Depreciation of the Pound.

Readers of *Monthly News* are sure to be sorely distressed at the decline of the pound in America, and in common with the general public no doubt ask themselves whether we are not heading for National bankruptcy. We must own that the financial aspect is dark and stormy, though with the refusal of the Lancashire cotton spinners to buy cotton at 13s. to the £, a gleam of light is discernable. This gleam becomes a steadier ray when we read the optimistic views of Sir Edward Mackay Edgar. Sir Edward Mackay Edgar is the head of the firm of Sperling & Co., a firm which has often financed American enterprises; and after a recent visit to America, Sir Edward Mackay Edgar accorded an interview to the *New York Times* representative in London.

"When I was in New York the other day, I found people talking as though Great Britain was bankrupt. They were very kind about it, and wanted to help us, and had no idea of taking advantage of our extremity, but they frankly thought we were done for. Of course, as you know, that is all nonsense. There is no lack of credit facilities at this moment in Great Britain. Anyone can get all the money he wants for a sound enterprise. London is still as much as ever the centre and clearing house of international trade and finance. Our capacity for production has been immensely increased by the war, and directly our workmen settle down to work we shall go bounding ahead.

"What I think misleads many of our friends in New York is the decline of the pound sterling as measured in American dollars, and the spectacle of the debt which the British Government owes the American Government. But the fall in the value of sterling hurts America more than it hurts us. It forces us to cut down our American purchases to a minimum. It operates as effectively as heavy exports against the shipment of American goods and products abroad. It hampers America in getting rid of the immense stocks or commodities of all kinds which she accumulated at war prices. It therefore tends to bring about a state of congestion, which can be relieved only by selling at a loss, by diminishing production, or by lowering wages; and in the present temper of American labour and with the bitter outcry against the high cost of living, none of these alternatives is pleasant.

"The truth is that production prices and wages have reached such an inordinately un-economic point in the United States that some-

thing is bound to give way. As for the British debt, I look upon it as a bond of commercial union between the two lands. As America cannot proceed against us for the recovery of the sums owing to her, she is compelled by her own interests to assist our prosperity and join in putting our solvency and our ability to pay off our loans beyond question. But, in any case, except so far as they affect the course of exchange, these inter-governmental debts are a minor matter. They have very little to do with commercial and international finance.

"Some Americans seem to think New York will displace London in world finance. The Americans certainly will not do it by making loans to Governments; I doubt whether they will do it in any event. The advantages of experience, habit, geographical position, and the possession of unique facilities which Mr. Vanderlip freely concedes to London are very real advantages. That is proved by the fact that London is to-day doing as much business as ever.

"But there is another reason for British confidence. You can get a safe 7 per cent almost anywhere you like in America. How can a country of which that can be said, a country that is still amazingly under-developed and under-populated, and that offers within her own boundaries limitless opportunity for development, play a big part in international finance? Where is the inducement? Why should the American investor venture into an unknown field and run greater risks for the sake of getting smaller returns? Therefore, I think London will long continue to hold her own in international trade and finance.

"It is the same with shipping. I have some very big shipbuilding interests in Great Britain, and I do not fear American competition. Why not? Well, for several reasons. One is that American yards cannot yet turn out special ships for special trades. That is the backbone of the British mercantile marine. Secondly, their costs of construction are very far ahead of ours. Thirdly, the expenses of operating American ships are at least 30 per cent heavier than ours. Fourthly, they have not even the beginning of that wonderful network and organization of shipping agencies which our people have built up all around the world. Fifthly, a mercantile marine, while a necessity to Great Britain, is a luxury to America. Sixthly, the American instinct for the sea has been very greatly impaired in the United States, and an ordinary American can always get a better paid and more congenial job on land.

"So, too, with foreign commerce. America made a magnificent burst into the arena during the war, but I doubt whether she will be able to maintain it. Here, again, the element of compulsion is lacking. Our foreign trade is absolutely vital to us; to Americans it is merely a convenient way of disposing of their surplus. America is so huge; her command of her own market of 110,000,000 people so secure, and her domestic demands likely to be on so prodigious a scale, that ten years hence you may easily find that the smaller profits and longer credits of international trade will have little attraction for her people.

"Again, America is reaching the end of some of her most valuable raw materials and natural resources. Already she is importing oil for her own consumption; she will soon be importing copper—perhaps even wheat. Her 'magnates' are rightly and shrewdly looking ahead and scouring the world for reserves of basic metals and minerals that will make good their own dwindling supplies; but wherever they turn they find that British enterprise has been before them. We hold many of these essential key positions in our own hands. Even if they do not lie inside the British Empire, they are controlled by British capital. America, one of these days—and not very distant days, either—will have to come to us for the oil, copper, and perhaps the iron ore she needs, just as she has to come to us for wool. That is why I, for one, am not greatly disturbed by America's competition.

"The social and industrial difficulties ahead of her are at least as menacing as any that confront us—in my opinion they are more so. Try to look ahead ten or fifteen years, and you will see, I think, that it is the Americans, and not ourselves, who have greater cause for uneasiness. What it really comes to is that we are in the same boat, and have everything to gain by pulling together. Commercial partnerships and understandings between groups of Englishmen and Americans who are engaged in the same lines of business are in my judgment the most fruitful form that an Anglo-American alliance could take."—Unknown Source.

Labour Minister and the Unemployment of Women.

Every woman in England to-day, should feel deeply grateful to Sir Robert Horne for having appointed the Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment to be a standing Committee, to deal with special schemes of work and training, for unemployed women, of which, alas, there are very many in this country at the present time, or those whose earning capacity has been seriously impaired by war-time conditions. The residue of the Queen's Work for Women Fund, as well as £500,000 from the Executive Committee of the National Relief Fund, has been put at the disposal of the Committee, and Mr. F. G. Bowers (Accountant-General, Ministry of Labour), has been appointed by Sir Robert Horne to be its financial adviser. The Committee, which is formed in great measure from the Committee which administered the "Work for Women" Fund, and comprises Lady Crewe, (Chairman), Miss Mary R. Macarthur (Hon. Secretary), Mrs. H. J. Tennant (Hon. Treasurer), Lady Askwith, Miss Lilian Barker, Miss Margaret G. Bondfield,

Mrs. Austen Chamberlain, Mrs. Gasson (Women's Co-operative Guild), Miss R. E. Lawrence, Miss A. Susan Lawrance (L.C.C.), the Hon. Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, Miss Violet Markham, Lady Middleton, the Hon. Lily Montagu, Dr. Marion Phillips, Lady Roxburgh (Secretary, Queen's "Work for Women" Fund), and Miss Squire, has already met to discuss its new programme. It will have the co-operation of the Training Department, and of the Employment Department of the Ministry of Labour. Invitations have been made to the Universities, and the Local Education authorities to give whatever help they can towards the provision of maintenance scholarships. The object of those scholarships is to qualify women as teachers of physical culture, domestic science, etc., or for public health work posts under the Ministry of Health. In open cases it is hoped to train women for the profession of the law or of medicine, while a larger number will receive facilities to qualify in the higher grade branches of cookery and of clerical work. If the assistance of the local authorities is secured, special schemes are under contemplation, whereby women of suitable qualities will be specially instructed, with a view to their further training under the terms offered by the Local Education Authorities. Ex-service women and other war-workers whose training has been interrupted and stopped by the war and its attendant results, will be given first consideration, though any woman is eligible whose need can be proved to bring her within the scope of the Committee.

Here and There.

Twenty-seven out of the necessary thirty-six States in America have ratified for Suffrage.

The New South Wales Board of Trade has fixed the living wage for women at 39s. a week. It is chiefly made up of £1 1s. od. board and lodging, 10s. 6d. clothing, boots and toilet requisites, with the residue for sundry expenditure.

The Ministry of Health issued in December a circular called Circular 40, containing recommendations on the Co-option of Women on Housing Committees. The recommendations are first, that any exhibition of plans should take place at the earliest possible date before their submission to the Commission, in order that the Local Authority may have every opportunity of receiving suggestions from women.

Secondly, that where women are co-opted on to a Housing Committee, the claims of working women may have special consideration. Thirdly, Dr. Addison strongly recommended that every Urban district should have its Women's Advisory Committee, for the formation of which the members might be secured by invitation of the Local Authority to representatives of women's organizations, or social workers within their area.

A movement has been started in the Eastern States of America for a considerable rise in teacher's pay. Immediate increases of salaries are said to be the only remedy to prevent the closing of schools in this district.

Account of the Ball.

The Conservative Women's Reform Association held a Ball at the Hyde Park Hotel on Tuesday, February 10th, which was a great success, and resulted in quite a substantial sum, to be used for propaganda purposes. The Conservative Women's Reform Association was successful in gaining many distinguished patronesses, who gave Dinners and brought Parties to the Ball. The following were present:—The Countess of Selborne, Winifred, Countess of Arran, the Lady St. Helier, Lady Worthington Evans, Lady Trustram Eve, Lady Wright, The Hon. Mrs. John Bailey, Mrs. Donald Van den Bergh, Miss Edmonds, Miss Gilstrap, Mrs. Kenyon-Slaney, Mrs. Gilbert Samuel, Mrs. H. J. Torr, Miss Balfour, Mrs. Scholefield, Mrs. Dugald Stuart, Lady Ware, Mrs. Robert Witt, and others.

Newman's band was an inspiring influence; and as the arrangements at the Hyde Park Hotel are well done and the floor good, the Ball went with spirit, and everyone apparently enjoyed themselves. The Conservative Women's Reform Association was determined to limit the sale of tickets to the number of dancers really possible on the floor space. This met with much approval from the dancers present, who very much dislike the Charity Ball squash.

It is quite possible that the Conservative Women's Reform Association may wish to make the Ball an annual event. As a definite fund, apart from ordinary receipts, it is very useful to the working of the Association.

The Ministration of Women.

On February 10th, at the Southern Convocation in the Lower House, where the Dean of Westminster presided, Canon Temple presented a report of the Joint Committee on the Ministry of Women. In their report, the Committee stated that they were in agreement with the proposal that women should be allowed to speak and pray in consecrated buildings, under regulations laid down by the Bishop at services or meetings other than the Liturgical services of the Church—that is, the Order of Holy Communion, and Morning, and Evening Prayer, and the Occasional Offices.

The Committee:—"To look to the past for guidance and tenaciously to cling to mere precedent, is incompatible with belief in the present guidance of the Spirit of God."

Canon Temple, in submitting the report, said that there were devoted daughters of the Church, who were asking the reason of the continued prohibition against their ministration if it was that of custom alone, were not the times now ripe for recognition of the changed status of women a corresponding alteration in that custom? After an amendment, the Dean of Canterbury moved:—"That in view of the statements of St. Paul on the subject of the uniform practice in Church in the past, it is not desirable to grant the permission proposed in the resolution before the House." This was first agreed to as an amendment, and then voted upon a second time as a substantive resolution, and adopted. This decision having been reached, the remaining resolutions on the subject were dropped.

The Rev. E. D. L. Harvey (Vice-Chairman of the West Sussex County Council and Chairman

of the Health and Housing Committees), gave a most interesting lecture at the Caxton Hall on Wednesday, February 4th, on "Health Acts, Past, Present, and Future."

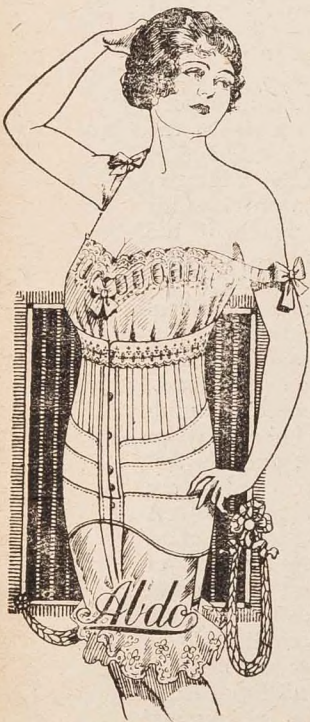
In opening, he said there is hardly a subject which is of such vital interest to women as that of Health; but in their enthusiasm for new reforms, they should not forget the work done in the past. He then gave the following important facts:—(a) In 1848 the first Health Act was passed; in 1871 the Local Government Board was formed to control all matters of Health. This Board brought in the Public Health Act of 1875, which is the foundation of all existing Health Acts, and exists to this day. It is contained in many volumes, and consists of many sections which deal with drainage, infantile diseases, adulteration of foods and drugs; in fact, this Act may almost be called the Magna Charta of Health. (b) Though during the last forty years the death rate of people under forty-five has been reduced 50 per cent., it was found when the men were examined in 1914 that much remained to be done. Housing is of paramount importance, and in 1890 the Local Authorities were given the power to build houses for the working classes, and the County Council have to inspect them. In 1909 an Act called "House-Town Cleansing" was passed, which provides for open spaces as well, and under which, if the Local Authorities do not erect houses, any four inhabitants can compel them to build fifty in the towns, twenty-six in the suburbs, and sixteen in the country districts. In 1902 the Midwives Act was brought in, reducing the number of deaths from 160 per 1,000 to in 1917 100 per 1,000. Three-quarters of the births are attended by midwives without doctors; therefore the necessity for properly trained midwives is great, and the Act provides that only midwives with two years' *bona fide* experience before the Act can practice. A very important section of the Children's Act of 1909 was that which enabled the forming of Maternity and Child Welfare Centres; and a great deal more could still be done, if a branch dealing with mothers before the birth of the child could be instituted. He then explained the Insurance Act of 1911 and the most recent Food and Drug Acts, including the notification of diseases in Animals' Act (1911).

In conclusion, the Lecturer said that he had tried to point out a few of the Acts that had been passed; and he hoped that in future the Ministry of Health would have the control of all matters dealing with Health, and that people in the advanced stages of tuberculosis and cases of venereal disease should be compelled to go into hospitals for treatment. The Lecturer then said that he would be pleased to answer any question. The Hon. Mrs. William Cecil said she thought if a man was compelled to go into a hospital for consumption, his wife and family should be paid a separate allowance, as often the victim to this disease concealed it, in order that they could continue to earn their living. Mr. Harvey said that he was thinking of cases which were too bad for work. Lady Edward Spencer Churchill asked if there was law for the rich and one for the poor in cases of scarlet fever? Mr. Harvey said that it was the business of the Medical Officer to decide whether the case must be moved; and if it was properly nursed at home it was alright.

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WEEKLY LECTURES.

- Wed., 3rd Mar. "The Russian Problem" Mr. AYLMER MAUDE.
8.15 p.m. Chairman ... Mrs. PERCY BIGLAND.
- Wed., 10th Mar. "Physical Strength as a basis of Freedom" Dr. CHRISTINE MURRELL.
8.15 p.m. Chairman ... Mr. J. Y. KENNEDY.
- Wed., 17th Mar. "Nationalism versus Internationalism" GENERAL STONE.
8.15 p.m. Chairman ... Miss PRENTICE.
- Wed., 24th Mar. "The Loves of the Roman Classical Poets" Mr. J. WELLS THATCHER (Barrister-at-Law).
8.15 p.m. Chairman ... Mrs. WOODWARD.
- Sat., 27th Mar. Musical Evening. (Details announced later).
5.30 p.m.
- Wed. before Easter. No Lecture.

Invitations to Lecture given to non-members on application to Secretary.

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