

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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INDUSTRIAL UNREST.

ATTITUDE OF THE EDUCATED CLASSES.

When the Apostle wished to comfort the infant Church, he told it that its tribulations were no "strange thing." These times of industrial turmoil were not unexpected; they have existed after other wars, they will recur again. The educated classes are those who above all should "keep their heads." It is foolish to close the eyes to the unpropitious signs, but no man can think clearly if he is in a state of alarm, and nothing causes a stampede like fear. The individual who, because property is threatened, may be heard saying hard and "reactionary" things every time there is a strike, has as truly lost his sense of proportion as the Bolsheviks themselves.

Secondly, if the country is to progress peaceably, it is obviously the duty of those who have had wider opportunities to enter as far as possible into intelligent understanding of the aspirations of Labour. Unfortunately, Labour at present looks with suspicion on all who are of a different position or turn of mind; none, for example, of the Women's Labour Associations, which were invited to attend, would come to our recent non-party Conference on Municipal Government. This, however, renders it all the more important that our side should endeavour to keep open the door to prevent divergence of opinion degenerating into class war. If they are right let them teach; if we are right, let them learn from us.

Thirdly, the right attempt to see what is to be said from the view point of an opponent must not, as was the case with the Pacifists, be allowed to undermine Principle and Common Sense. Those who aspire to keep the nation on sane paths must dare to be unpopular, they cannot "follow a multitude to do evil," even under the sacred name of "Democracy." The Bible teaches that men are naturally selfish, but also that they have in them a Divine spark, and in our schemes for social generation we need to recognise both these facts, exalting neither at the expense of the other. It is out of fashion for men to "reverence their betters," but they will never themselves rise unless they can see and respect what is above them. Culture, self-control,

acquaintance with the best traditions of English life, these wherever they are found are good things. Those who possess them are trustees; while they are not entitled to think contemptuously of those less fortunate, neither have they nor others, through any abstract desire for equality, the right to belittle them. We want to level up, not down.

Some of the most valuable intellectual help which can be given to the nation at the present time is a knowledge of great economic facts; for "if they are put out of the door, they come in by the window."

If the division of riches is unfair it should be remedied; but men need to learn that wealth is not a fixed sum to be scrambled for, it is continually being made and destroyed. If the sense of security and of incentive to work, whether for the individual or family be taken away less is created and everyone is the poorer.

Lastly, if the educated classes really wish to help their country in the present crisis, as they did during the late war, it is useless to say that these views are truisms, and hold them as pious opinions only. If extreme minorities get undue power, it is the fault of the inert majority; yet how many, who are the first to say "somebody should do something," decline even to join, or to trouble to get their friends to join, some association like ours. When those who are best informed see the country going wrong, they are bound in honour to do their best to put it right. For if they hold their principles honestly, they believe that they conduce in the greatest degree to the public good. Their views and actions are therefore not in contra-distinction to sympathy with Labour but its highest, because its most thoughtful expression.

Let all work be done joyfully and in hope, remembering that "thoughts are things" and also that we have in our hands a still higher power through which, as the poet has told us, "the whole round earth is every way, bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

Our Work.

CONFERENCE ON MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

A Conference was held under the auspices of the Association in the Caxton Hall on October 10th on the subject of Municipal elections. Invitations were accepted by the Women's Local Government Society, Women's Citizen Association, Women's Municipal Society, and other bodies. Lady Trustram Eve presided.

Lady Betty Balfour proposed the first resolution, which dealt with the desirability of increasing interest in these elections, and suggested as a practical step that those present should visit women's societies and institutes in their own districts and impress on them the importance of local administration.

Mrs. Gilbert Samuel, O.B.E., who is a candidate for the Borough Council of Chelsea, thought it would help matters if councillors addressed their constituents from time to time on local affairs, and if the public were encouraged to exercise their right of attending council meetings.

The second part of the agenda dealt with the manner in which the selection of municipal candidates lies entirely in the hands of the political party caucus. It was introduced by Lady Nott Bower, and elicited an interesting discussion. The subject is one of considerable difficulty, on which there are, even among ourselves, various shades of opinion. Mrs. Hubert Walter, whose interesting article we publish elsewhere, suggested that it might aid to solve the problem if representation was proportional. A resolution was carried to the effect that it is desirable that candidates should be chosen on a wider basis than at present.

SPEAKERS' CLASSES.

Miss Lucy Bell has given a second successful course of lessons to speakers. It was attended not only by beginners but also by those who have had considerable experience in addressing public audiences.

Forthcoming Events.

A series of political debates are being arranged. The first is to take place at the Caxton Hall, on "The Nationalization of the Drink Traffic," on a date shortly to be announced, and others will follow on current political questions. It is hoped that they may increase our knowledge, and at the same time afford an opportunity for those of our members who desire practice in public speaking.

The Council Meeting will take place on November 10th, at 49, Mount Street, by the kind permission of Lady Selborne.

The Annual General Meeting will be held on November 20th at 52, Portland Place, by the kind permission of Lady St. Helier.

The Municipal Elections on November 1st.

BY MRS. HUBERT WALTER.

*Member of Executive Committee, C.W.R.A., and
Municipal Reform Candidate for Chelsea Borough
Council.*

There has been no municipal election since 1912. The Borough Councils elected then for three years' service, have served for seven. This was, of course, inevitable, as no election could have been tolerated during the war, but the result was equally inevitable and unfortunate; the public, always too indifferent in matters of local government, having lost the control given by the ballot, lost yet more their interest. Conditions were abnormal. Many councillors were called away on military service, many more undertook other kinds of war work. Exceedingly heavy burdens were laid on the rest. Who does not know of the extra administrative duties thrown upon the Mayors and their colleagues from the organization of Food Control and War Savings Committees, to the provision of Christmas plum puddings and knitted comforts for the troops?

During these years the public conscience awakened more than ever before to the evils around; and while people became more and more clamant for decent living and housing conditions, work of the first importance had to be cut down. All building had to stop, condemned houses had to be reprieved, urgent structural repairs had to stand over. The impossibility of obtaining labour and raw materials impeded almost every reform and improvement, except the provision of Welfare Centres, which have multiplied all over the kingdom.

But the end of the war could not mean an immediate return to normal conditions. Borough Councillors came back slowly to civil life, and some of those who had done yeoman's service during the past seven years felt themselves tired and old at the end. I think it is one of the dangers of the present time that those who administered the old world ably and well, wish to attempt to run the new world in the old way, a new world which they do not entirely understand, nor yet approve of. All honour and thanks to them for their past service; but surely it is essential in the public interest that, with a number of honoured exceptions, new and young men and women should tackle the problems of what we call reconstruction? Continuity and experience are priceless legacies which the old Borough Councils must leave to the new ones; but it is doubtful whether in these days of momentous and critical change, the claim that "I have served for thirty years on the Council" is the indisputable title to re-election which the speaker assumes.

The Party machines have extraordinary power in these matters, because an astonishing number of people are prepared to vote the whole ticket—blue, red, or yellow—according as they are accustomed, without investigation or enquiry. The party caucus have, therefore, a grave responsibility in nominating candidates, whom they hope

to carry *en bloc*. It would seem to be a serious mistake that the only vacancies available for new candidates, should be in place of the small number of councillors who voluntarily retire. It should not be a case of "once a Borough Councillor always a Borough Councillor"; and a man who has shown himself lazy or inefficient or obstructive, should not be accepted as a matter of right, and wafted back on the strength of a strong party organization.

No expert will attempt to forecast the result of these elections. A large number of women have recently been enfranchised (married women over thirty now have the vote on their husband's parliamentary qualification), and the uncertainty of their action introduces a disconcerting element into the more or less reasoned forecasts of previous years. The paramount question is, what will be the attitude of the women voters to the women candidates? The advantage of collaboration between men and women in work, which includes housing, public health, sanitation, welfare centres, playgrounds, etc., is obvious; but it is an open question whether this view will be widely accepted by the illiterate woman accustomed all her life to male government. There is little doubt that the women's vote was cast heavily against women in the Parliamentary elections, and it is probable that this was due to sex prejudice, and not to a reasoned conviction that women are not at present qualified to make good Members of Parliament.

Anyhow, this question will be asked at the polls on November 1st, and on a large scale. In 1912 forty-two women stood in London, and twenty-two got in; this time, as far as is at present known, over one hundred are standing, and more are being adopted every day. There is even some ground for thinking that the spectacle of women of different parties competing against one another is not otherwise than agreeable to those who object to having any women on the Borough Councils at all.

A great responsibility will devolve on the Councils now to be chosen, and therefore on every local government elector who, by using, or failing to use his vote, has equally contributed to the result of the election. Let no one suppose that they can escape their share of the burden by avoiding the poll on November 1st, and leaving the decision to other people. At the worst they risk seeing those candidates elected whom they know to be dangerous as extremists—at the best they see the people who are to be responsible for governing their borough for three years returned by a small poll which greatly impairs their authority. How often have we been reminded in the past months that the Coalition only represents half the electorate; can we divest the remaining 50 per cent. of a large measure of blame that they allowed it to be so?

The ensuing three years will be very critical ones. The Housing question cannot be postponed, and it must be settled for better or for worse. It is a prominent plank on the programme of all the parties, and the principal one on the

programme of the Labour Party. It is essential that it shall be tackled at once, with resolution, with courage, and with statesmanship. Obstruction in this matter is a public danger, and it is the first duty of the Municipal Reform Party to prove by their deeds, when they are returned to power, that they are a genuine reforming party, with the interests of the working people sincerely at heart. Any failure in resolution to carry Housing reform can only play the game of the extremists. They already represent the Conservative Party as reactionary and selfish, intolerant of change, blind and indifferent to the interests of Labour. God knows how falsely. But it is a case for action and not for words, and the record for achievement in the past months is not a very inspiring one. We stand at a parting of the ways. Change is inevitable. We can only choose whether it shall be brought about now by the constitutional party, or whether it shall be brought about violently later on by a subversion of all the theories of individualistic government which have been the heritage of our people for hundreds of years. The Labour Party frankly say that they aim at "utilizing and democratizing the machinery of Local Government" in order to evolve "a new and better social organization based on the common ownership of the means of production, and the best obtainable system of popular administration of each industry or service." In so many of the aspirations of the Labour Party for the better life of the people, better conditions for the women in the home, we Conservatives sympathize fraternally. It is in the means by which these ends are to be achieved that we join issue with them. We must resist with all our strength the attempt to force Socialism upon us through the poll on November 1st; but we can only permanently defeat it if we courageously and systematically carry out our own policy of reform, removing those just grievances which alone provide scope for agitators.

We must see to it that the Borough Councils of the next three years shall be vital bodies, representing all parties, all classes, both sexes. They must be qualified to discuss with knowledge and sympathy divergent interests and different points of view. They must realise, underlying everything, a common unity of aim in the betterment of the conditions of life of the citizens.

News from Abroad.

Italy.—Italy's Premier announced in the Chamber of Deputies that 11,000,000 women will have votes, and will outnumber the male electors.

Germany.—It has generally been suspected that women are less advanced in their politics than men. In the Cologne municipal elections the votes of the sexes have been counted separately, and the result fully bears out the general impression. Of the men, 41,312 supported the Centre and Conservative parties, and 56,558 the Socialists and Democrats. The women's vote was the other way—58,412 to 38,391.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

THE WATCHWORD.

"Good-bye for the present," said her ladyship, gathering up her gold vanity bag and half-a-dozen other chatelaine trifles off the luncheon table. "I'll see you all later on at Swan & Edgar's."

It was the third time I had heard practically the same remark that same morning. First in the Park, then later on at a private view I had dropped into before lunch; and now again at the smartest restaurant in Town.

My curiosity was aroused. What was it that was attracting everyone to the Great Corner Shop in Piccadilly, I wondered.

Of course I realised that Swan & Edgar's was the most central meeting place in Town, set as it was in the middle of shopland, near to all the smartest clubs and restaurants and within easy reach of everywhere—both by tube and 'bus. But I also realised that there must be something more than mere convenience of location to attract fair femininity there.

I determined to go and see what it was for myself.

I set off with the intention of merely strolling through the shop, seeing what there was to be seen, and spending an idle quarter of an hour, at the most, to satisfy my curiosity.

But the fascination of the place took such a hold of me, that instead of spending my prescribed quarter of an hour I stayed the entire afternoon, and I've made two appointments to return to-morrow. I've felt the fascination for myself, and I've added a fresh rendezvous to my list and a new pleasure to life.

For Swan & Edgar's presents an eldorado to feminine visitors. It combines all the best points of a shop and a store in one.

Here you find the widest choice of things sartorial to be seen in London. The show-rooms represent Paris in tabloid form. In every department you find the pick of all the choicest models selected from a dozen famous French houses and displayed under one roof so that customers can view them with the maximum of satisfaction and the minimum of trouble. Here you can compare toilettes from Worth with creations of Callot, Madelaine, or Georgette, and you are able at a glance to take in all the various characteristics that prove so alluring in each.

The predominating characteristic of this old-established House (1812) is individual attention that concentrates upon catering for customers' special requirements.

You can stroll through each department without being crushed or made conspicuous by being the sole customer, as is the experience of many in exclusive dressmaking establishments.

Here you find companionship without crowds.

You can walk everywhere, see the new fashions and familiarise yourself with all the latest modes in half the time it takes to read about them.

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Small wonder that the Great Corner Shop at Piccadilly Circus is the favourite rendezvous and that "meet me at Swan & Edgar's" has become a Watchword in Society to-day.

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LECTURES

Wed., 29th Oct. 8 p.m.	"Marriage and Divorce Laws" Mr. J. WELLS THATCHER (Barrister at Law). Chairman ... Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN, J.P.
Wed., 5th Nov. 8 p.m.	"Indian Womanhood" Chairman ... Mrs. DESPARD.
Wed., 12th Nov. 8 p.m.	"Women, the Law, and Lawyers" Mr. HOLFORD KNIGHT (Barrister-at-Law). Chairman Mr. J. WELLS THATCHER (Barrister-at-Law).
Wed., 19th Nov. 8 p.m.	"The Preservation of Village Life" Mr. WARWICK DRAPER. Chairman ... Miss HADOW.
Wed., 26th Nov. 8 p.m.	"Delinquent Children" Mr. CLARKE HALL, J.P., K.C. Chairman ... Dr. ETTIE SAYER.

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