

# MONTHLY NEWS of the CONSERVATIVE & UNIONIST WOMEN'S FRANCHISE ASSOCIATION.

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No. 30.

NOVEMBER, 1916.

## OUR WORK.

### The Victoria Hut.

In our last issue we gave a short account of the first fortnight's work in the Y.W.C.A. Rest and Refreshment Room, for which our Association is raising funds and collecting helpers. After the first few days customers multiplied rapidly, and the Hut is now very busy indeed from mid-day onwards with between 400 and 500 dinners to serve during the limited luncheon hours. The early morning and afternoon shifts are comparatively quiet, though during the former some war workers, arriving by workmen's trains, are glad to wait in the rest room or to have a cup of hot coffee or milk; and it is hoped, when the Hut is more widely known, that it may also be used by soldiers and sailors, who are admitted with their families after 3 p.m. Our main *clientèle* consists of women clerks from the banks, public offices, or munition works, hospital dispensers, "v.a.d.'s," ticket collectors, girls from the Government leather works, etc., etc. Many of these become regular customers and bring in their friends; and it is evident that the good plain food and light well-ventilated dining hall, with tables daintily set out, are much appreciated, as is also the small reading room. There can be no doubt that canteens such as this supply a want, which has become really pressing with the increased employment of women. It is not uncommon for large offices to eject all their girls during the luncheon interval, which is often anything but one of rest or refreshment; for if the local eating houses cannot accommodate them, they have no alternative but to wander about the streets until their office re-opens. Such conditions—especially in winter—mean waste of health and working capacity.

The Managing Committee consists of members of both the Y.W.C.A. (by whom the Hut equipment has been provided), and the C.U.W.F.A. The kitchen is served by salaried cooks and charwomen; but active voluntary helpers are still wanted to lay the tables, wait on customers, and wash up glasses and breakfast and tea-things. Any lady wishing to volunteer will be gladly interviewed by Mrs. H. Percy Boulnois, the Helpers' Superintendent, between 11.30 and 12.30 at the Hut, Terminus Place, Victoria, S.W.

Subscriptions to complete the Building Fund, for which our Association has made itself responsible, will also be welcome, and should be sent to Mrs. Fabian Ware, C.U.W.F.A., 48, Dover Street,

## The Literature Committee.

### ENQUIRY ON MATERNITY AND INFANT WELFARE.

In February, 1916, the attention of the Literature Committee was directed to the National Maternity Scheme, issued by the Women's Co-operative Guild in connection with the "Maternity" letters collected and published by them. It was felt that an enquiry into the whole subject would be of great value, and a circular asking for expressions of opinion on the question of the care of motherhood and of infant welfare, with especial reference to the desirability of increasing the present Maternity benefit and removing it from the Insurance Commissioners, was sent out to twenty-seven different social workers, representing various important societies. Among them were Miss Rosalind Paget, of the Midwives' Association; Miss Amy Hughes, of the "Queen Victoria Jubilee Nurses"; Miss Halford, Society for the Prevention of Infant Mortality; Mr. Benjamin Broadbent, Mrs. Pember Reeves, Miss Elliot of the Southwark Health Society, Lady Nott-Bower, Mrs. Gow and others.

The circular was also sent out to Dr. Trueby King in New Zealand, and to representatives of the International Council of Women Workers in Victoria, Queensland, and West Australia. Many very interesting replies were received, and much information has been collected which will be very useful whenever fresh legislation on the subject is proposed.

The Committee are now anxious to get at the *bona fide* opinion of working-class women themselves, which, however, is extremely difficult to do. They have therefore drawn up a set of questions respecting the increase of the Maternity Benefit, the desirability of paying it partly before and partly after confinement, and whether or not it should be paid partly in kind; the necessity for more Maternity Hospitals, Maternity Centres and Health visitors, the question of a sufficient supply of midwives, and of facilities for obtaining milk. We are hoping that the National Union of Women Workers will take up this enquiry, working, of course, through their own organization and in their own way. The question will shortly be brought before their Central Executive; it has already, at our suggestion, been discussed by the London Branch, and we hope they may decide to collect information through their various branches. One of their local Presidents, who is also a member of our Executive Committee,—Mrs. Trustram Eve

—got up a meeting in her own garden last summer, at which 150 working women were present, representing ten different societies. The whole Maternity question was fully discussed and various resolutions were passed. We feel certain that more meetings of the same kind might be organized all over the country. The Mothers' Union have drawn up a set of questions of their own for circulation among their members, and we shall look forward with interest to the results which they obtain. The Parochial Mission Women Fund have also agreed to help as far as they can. Between us we ought to be able to collect some really useful information on this most important subject, which we hope to be able to publish in some form as soon as the enquiry is concluded. SARAH BAILEY,  
Chairman of the Literature Committee.

#### Lectures.

A most successful lecture was given by Mrs. Cameron, F.R.G.S., on the 24th, at 52, Portland Place, by kind permission of Lady St. Helier. Lady Craggs took the chair. The subject was the German Colonies in Africa, which the lecturer had visited shortly before the war. A collection was taken, to enable us to send a regular parcel to one of our prisoners in Germany.

The subject of the next lecture, which will be held on Tuesday, November 28th, at 3 p.m., is the "Mystery of Easter Island." The lecturer, Mrs. Scoresby Routledge, M.A., F.R.Hist.S., has recently returned from her long voyage in the Southern Seas. The lecture will be illustrated by lantern slides. Early application (enclosing 3d. stamp for postage), should be made for the remaining tickets.

#### Council and Annual Meeting.

The quarterly meeting of the Women's Council of the Association will be held on Tuesday, November 14th, at 11 a.m., at 14, Wyndham Place, W. (by kind permission of Mrs. Fabian Ware), and the annual meeting on Wednesday, November 15th, at 3.30 p.m., at 32, Sloane Gardens, S.W. (by kind permission of Mrs. Gilbert Samuel).

#### National War Savings' Committee.

A campaign is at the present moment being waged in favour of national economy, and special appeals are being made to women as the class of the community who have most largely the spending power. They are being urged on every hand to economise in dress, food and every form of household expenditure. Suffragists will learn with indignation, not unmixed with amusement, that on the body responsible for this campaign, which is the National War Savings' Committee appointed by the Treasury, there is not, at the present time, a single member with any claim to expert knowledge on such subjects. As originally constituted, it had the assistance of one woman—Miss Mona Wilson—but according to the latest edition of its "War Savings' Handbook," it now consists of twelve men only. Comment is superfluous.

### WOMEN'S POLITICAL POSITION AFTER THE WAR.

Mr. John Galsworthy recently made the following stirring appeal in the *Observer* for the grant of the Parliamentary vote to women:

"The women of Britain have put themselves and their claims aside, to work and suffer for the country of which they are not yet citizens. It will be too black altogether if, after all they have gone through, they are again refused admittance to that citizenship.

*Women who do not want the vote need never exercise it; women who think the vote bad for their sex will still be as free as air, when the vote has been given, to organise their sex against use of the deadly thing. But to continue after this war to debar from being citizens, if they so wish, the hundreds of thousands of women who have served as loyally as men, and suffered more; to hang up again in hopeless chancery a measure of common justice that has long commended itself to nearly all the best minds in the country; a measure that, but for political accidents, would have already been granted, would be an unspeakable piece of national folly and ingratitude. We are not so foolish and ungrateful as all that; there is surely now a general will to give the vote. What our minds must be turned to is the need, at the conclusion of the war, or even before, to have ready some means by which that general desire may be carried into effect, and women welcomed into the body politic, before the old deadlock difficulties and heart burnings can begin again.*

It is not my part to suggest to superior wisdom what those means should be; but perhaps one may express the personal conviction that a measure of universal suffrage, granting one vote to every man not debarred by misconduct, above a certain age (not necessarily so young as twenty-one), and one vote to every woman not debarred by misconduct, over such higher age as would equalise the voting power of the sexes—that such a measure would not affect to any appreciable extent the balance between the great parties in the State, and would ensure that those parties in future sprang from the main cleavages of human nature rather than from the accidents of privilege. Is it too much to hope that, in heroic times, such a measure might be passed by consent? Too much to expect that after this struggle, where all stand shoulder to shoulder, we shall feel that a man, however poor, and a woman, however humble, has a stake in the country, which has done so little for him or her, yet for which he or she is suffering perhaps more than the rest of us, and, extending the hand of fellowship, say: "It is time you stood shoulder to shoulder with us in peace as well as in war." The voteless man! The woman! How many of the first will have given their lives; how many of the second their hearts! Have heroism, death, sacrifice, gone by privilege of property or sex in this war? Shall we really take the lives, the wounds, the sufferings of the many men debarred from citizenship by mere lack of property; of innumerable women debarred by—nothing but the

lack of legislation, and just say: 'Thank you, helots!' For, in a real democracy, what is he or she who has no vote save a helot, at the absolute disposal of the enfranchised community? It is as the symbol of freedom that the vote is so precious! Granted! But if, from the infancy of this country, we had not been sticklers for symbols, should we now be the free people that we are—as peoples go?

If there is not to emerge from this community of suffering some community of fellowship and gladness, some sweeping out of old rancours from our hearts and of prejudices from our brains, and a resolve to fight the contests of the future with a greater generosity—then Peace will be a sorry festival.

#### Suffrage Victory in British Columbia.

The women of British Columbia have been given provincial Suffrage by an overwhelming referendum vote. This is the fourth Canadian province to take such action within the year, for the electors of Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan have enfranchised women within the last nine months. The new law will come into force on March 1st, 1917. The total Canadian area where women vote comprises over a million square miles, and includes such important cities as Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Victoria, Regina Brantford, and Vancouver.

The public feeling in favour of women suffrage has grown fast in British Columbia. When in the Spring of this year the Provincial Parliament voted to have a referendum on soldiers' voting rights, Premier Bowser said that any legislation which would grant votes to soldiers should also grant them to women.

A number of Canada's representative women have recently sent a statement to Suffragists throughout the Dominion. They say:—"Perhaps it may seem to you that this is not a favourable time to prosecute Franchise work. The great problem which confronts us all is the winning of the war; and it would be unfortunate to disturb anyone from his patriotic duties. We realize this, but are also impressed with the fact that until we are given our full rights as citizens, we shall be seriously handicapped in dealing with the many problems arising from the war." The last sentence contains a profound truth, and one which women in England should take to heart.

#### Votes or Influence.

Adapted from the *New York Tribune*.

We cannot understand how any student of anti-suffrage literature can admit the necessity of special legislation to allow the soldiers at the Front to vote.

The vote is not a privilege, but a duty.

These young men are already sufficiently occupied with their military duties. We must not thrust this additional burden upon them.

Besides, they are now represented by their fathers and mothers at home.

Every soldier knows that his interests are dearer to his father than his own.

If he asks to cast his own vote, he is practically declaring that his father is not to be trusted.

Besides, soldiers do not want to vote. Very few of them have come to their legislators personally and asked for this privilege.

It is dangerous to force the vote upon an unwilling or indifferent electorate.

The vote would introduce dissension into the regiments.

We must protect our Army from the slightest contamination of politics.

Soldiers, soldiers at the border,  
Keeping everything in order,  
Do you think you really would be  
Pleased, as "anti's" say we should be,  
To have other people say  
What you wish election day?  
Soldiers, would you really rather  
Have your vote cast by your father?  
Or, while working for the nation,  
Do you feel some irritation,  
That hot, weary and remote,  
You are not allowed to vote?  
Does it seem iniquitous?  
Soldiers, soldiers, think of us!

Batches of Australian nurses recorded their votes at the Australian Imperial Forces Headquarters at Westminster, for the referendum which was taken on the question of conscription among the members of the Australian Naval and Military Forces in Great Britain.

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#### LECTURES.

Wed., Nov. 1, 7.30 p.m.—House Dinner. Mr. HOLFORD KNIGHT. "Changed Views on the Woman Question." Chairman: Lady Nott-Bower, P.L.G.  
" " 8, 8 p.m.—Mrs. CHARLES BEATTY. "The Khaki Woman." Chairman: H.H. The Rance of Sarawak.  
" " 15, 8 p.m.—Mr. J. T. GREIN. "Some Confessions of a Dramatic Critic." Chairman: Mr. Goldfinch Bate.  
" " 22, 8 p.m.—Mr. GEORGE LANSBURY. "Women in Industry." Chairman: Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P.  
" " 29, 8 p.m.—The Rt. Rev. The LORD BISHOP OF KENSINGTON. "Women and the Church." Miss Maude Royden.

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WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS, at 3 o'clock.

- Nov. 1.—Mrs. ZANGWILL. "Picking up the Pieces." Mrs. Corner.  
 " 8.—Miss MARGARET HODGE. "How Anti-Suffragists are made in our Nurseries." Miss F. A. Underwood.  
 " 15.—The Rev. HUGH CHAPMAN. "Woman the Liberator." Mrs. Despard.  
 " 22.—Mrs. CAMERON GRANT. "The Fleshpots of Egypt." Mrs. Mustard.  
 " 29.—Miss ZABELLE BOYAJIAN. "Women of the near East." Mrs. Despard.  
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### DISPENSING.

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