

THE
WOMAN'S LEADER
AND THE COMMON CAUSE

Vol. XIX. No. 10. One Penny.

REGISTERED AS
A NEWSPAPER.

Friday, April 15, 1927

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Annual Subscription for Postal Subscribers: British Isles and
Abroad, 6/6.

Common Cause Publishing Co., 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1

LATEST NEWS.

We are delighted to state that the Prime Minister has promised to bring in a bill next session extending the franchise to women at the age of 21, on the same terms as men.

NOTES AND NEWS.

The Promised Land.

We feel confident that before these lines are in print the Prime Minister will have given the definite assurance which every experienced politician who knows all the facts—including the psychological facts as to the characters and reputations of Ministers—has been expecting, that the Government faced with its own irrevocable pledges of two years ago will yield to the necessity of making the plunge, even if it be true, as it probably almost certainly is, that to many of them this is a most distasteful necessity. It is reported that two Cabinet meetings were held on Tuesday, and it was only after "long and anxious consideration given to every aspect of the question" (*The Times*) that the decision was arrived at. At the time of going to Press, the announcement has not yet been made, and it is therefore impossible to say that it will not leave room for some possible anxiety lest there should be a slip between the cup and the lip. Such slips are always possible until a measure is actually on the Statute book. Therefore the watchful eye and the hand on the tiller of the woman's suffrage movement will still be needed, and no one who knows the personalities of the leaders of that movement will doubt that this will be fully realized.

Restrictive Legislation for Women in the House of Commons.

On Friday, 27th March, the Labour party will be introducing its Factories Bill, which we understand will be based on its own Bill of 1924. It will be remembered that although in that Bill many forms of protection were imposed on men as well as women, including night work in bakeries, the differences in the regulations proposed for men and women respectively were substantially the same as in last Session's Bill. The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship has therefore approached the Labour party urging them to substitute the terms of the Washington Hours Convention, which applies to both men and women for the regulations which apply to the hours of women only. They have further been asked to include men in the regulations referring to weight lifting and the cleaning of machinery

in motion, and not to include a clause giving the Secretary of State power to exclude female young persons from any industry unless he is also given power to exclude male young persons, or to link together women and young persons in any of the provisions of the Bill.

Mr. Harney will shortly be introducing under the Ten Minutes Rule a Lead Paint (Protection against Poisoning) Act Amendment Bill, which has been drafted by the N.U.S.E.C. and which is to amend the Act so that women should not be excluded from the industry of painting buildings. In the course of his speech, Mr. Harney will press for an inquiry into the relative susceptibility of men and women.

Parliament (Qualification of Peereesses) Bill.

Lord Astor intends shortly to introduce this Bill, which he has re-drafted in order to meet certain of the objections raised during former sessions. It answers the argument brought against earlier Bills that Peereesses are specially excluded from the House of Lords by their letters patent empowering the Crown to change these when it so desires. As the Crown is to be allowed to exercise its discretion in this respect it would guard the Upper House from containing what might be considered in some quarters an unduly large number of women. The effect of the Bill would be not to put Peereesses on quite the same footing as English Peers, as they would not obtain their seat by reason only of their peerage but to give them a status not unlike that of the elected Scottish and Irish Peers.

Nationality and Population.

A Bill which simplifies the process of the naturalization of foreigners has just recently become law in France. The object of this Bill is to secure for the country more readily as from naturalized subjects the services of the large resident foreign element, the majority of which comes from the adjoining countries—Italy, Spain, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Switzerland. It is significant to note what a large proportion of these come from Italy. This influx of Italian immigrants has indeed necessitated an amendment that naturalized foreigners shall not be eligible for any public office until they have been French subjects for ten years. The new measure affects the nationality of women to the extent that the French woman who marries a foreign husband retains her own nationality unless she formally decides to adopt that of her husband; those married to foreigners before the law comes into force can with their husband's consent return to their French nationality. This proposal admittedly has its origin in the failure of the attempt to raise the birth-rate and to lower the high infantile mortality rate, which is increasing rather than decreasing. In an article on the subject in the *Observer* a French correspondent frankly states that increased man power for military purposes is the real objective, as the present state of affairs means that large numbers of the population are not liable for service. While appreciating the straits to which a nation may be pushed when surrounded by potential enemies we feel that our French neighbours should persevere in a determined effort to educate the population in matters relating to public health. Changes in the nationality law may be desirable and any freedom given to the married woman is acceptable in our eyes, but not as a counsel of despair.

Married Women in Factories.

A body called the International Federation of Christian Textile Workers' Trade Unions, which recently met in conference at Antwerp, seems to have spent most of its time drafting resolutions calling upon the International Labour Office to undertake the progressive suppression of married women's work in factories. The grounds they put forward were that

such work was injurious to the health and morality of married women, bad for the future generation, and destructive of happy family life. They added that in order to minimize hardship either the husband's wages should be increased or a system of family endowment might be inaugurated. In short, this International Federation seems to have done as much mischief as it could to every cause which enlightened married women have at heart. We may therefore note that, although it claims to speak for organized labour, although it has been in existence for twenty-five years and claims to comprise twelve national organizations, its aggregate membership is only 167,573. The number of women members is not stated. Influence, however, does not correspond with figures of membership. Small dissentient bodies of this sort are frequently created and maintained either to create a *locus standi* for certain persons, or to give a democratic appearance to policies conceived in a very different atmosphere. We hope therefore that the feminist movements of the countries represented at this conference will inquire into the credentials of this group, as well as its composition, and see to it that its resolutions are received at Geneva with no more respect than is their due.

The Trade Disputes Bill.

Sir Thomas Inskip stated a week ago that the Trade Disputes Bill is intended to be largely for the protection of the womanhood of the country. We may therefore perhaps be excused if we devote a few lines of THE WOMAN'S LEADER to discussion of its merits as a Bill, apart from the broader political issues. It seems to be generally admitted that it is loosely drafted. We are implored by both Liberals and Conservatives not to make up our minds about it until we have heard ministerial explanations. This is both true and wise. It will be a great pity if members and speakers generally commit themselves over Easter to attitudes which prove, upon explanation, to be ill-founded. On the other hand, we must remember that under the English constitution what passes into law is the wording of the act and not the intentions of Parliament. Ministers may make admirable statements which command the assent of all reasonable people, but these will go for nothing whatever if the judges decide that the words of the statute must bear a different interpretation. Another point to which we should like to draw attention is that the Bill apparently contains no provision for declaring a threatened strike illegal before the men actually cease work. We all know that many people, especially English people, who would be unwilling to break the law deliberately, would be merely stiffened in their resolution to continue fighting if they were told, after they had "come out" in what they believe to be the defence of justice, that their strike was illegal. This tendency would be stronger if a Conservative Government were in power, particularly since so large a proportion of our present judges have been appointed because of their services to the Conservative party. Small strikes often break out without warning—and are generally discountenanced by the Trade Unions concerned. But large strikes are almost always preceded by weeks if not months of negotiation, and it will be a pity if some use is not made of that time to acquaint the workers with their true position.

The Bill and Women's Societies.

One clause of the Bill affects us personally—that which regulates the organizations of which established Civil Servants may become members. They are prohibited from joining any organization of which "the primary object is to influence or affect remuneration and conditions of employment of its members unless the organization is an organization of which the membership is confined to persons employed by or under the Crown." Further regulations prohibit organizations consisting only of Civil Servants from being associated directly or indirectly with any political party or any organization which included political objects. Should this become law it would prevent organizations such as the Federation of Women Civil Servants and the Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries from being affiliated to any of the non-party women's organizations which have political objects.

Local Elections.

It is not yet possible to give the full results for the recent Urban District Council Elections. At Mexborough Mrs. Singleton, the first and only woman on the Council, was second on the poll with 1,035 votes, and we are glad to note that the Marple Council now includes a woman member. The voting

varied considerably in various places; in some areas the usual apathy being shown whilst in others considerable interest was evoked, and a fair proportion of the electors voted. In two of the Northwich wards polls of 51 and 48 per cent were recorded, and the number of votes cast in Barmouth was a record for the town. In the Guardians Elections at Salford only 8,347 of the 36,184 electors—a percentage of 22.7—voted, which was 2 per cent less than at the election three years ago.

The Burden of Citizenship.

The Irish Free State Senate has once more shown itself to be on the side of "the angels," or, to use the favourite phrase of the Minister of Justice, of "the small minority who seek to drag on their weaker sisters." The Jurors' Bill came before the Senate last week, when the clause exempting women from jury service was reached, Senator Sir Edward Coey Biggar, for many years Chief Medical Officer of the Local Government Board, moved an amendment by which women would be restored to the old position. Sir Edward supported his argument by instances drawn from his own knowledge of the valuable work done by women on local bodies and in various other forms of public service. Senator Mrs. Costello pointed out that the only satisfactory way of dealing with the matter would be to put these duties on women and enforce them. A suggestion to meet the difficulty by establishing a voluntary panel was rejected by Senator Mrs. Wyse Power, speaking for the Irish Women Citizens' Association, as unconstitutional and exposing women to misrepresentation. Another Senator reminded the House that Dublin University had been the first to open its doors to women and the Free State should not now give a lead in the opposite direction. The Minister, in reply, refused to accept the amendment. He pleaded the cause of the women in the country who had to travel long distances. The mind wandered to the weaker vessels in the country, who trudge over mountain and bog on the way to fair or market. The Minister will, we suppose, organize at once a service of motor vehicles to bring the children of the scattered cabins in Connemara or Kerry to the schools. With a final offer of a voluntary panel, the Minister closed, refusing to "impose the burden of citizenship regardless of sex." The amendment was carried by 19 votes to 10. The Bill will now go back to the Dail.

Four Brave Frenchwomen.

Four brave Frenchwomen were honoured at the Mansion House last week when they received illuminated addresses and annuity certificates, the proceeds of a fund raised by *The Daily Telegraph*. Madame Belmont Gobert and her daughter, Madame Lesur, kept a British soldier hidden for nearly four years in a wardrobe which has since been purchased for the Imperial War Museum. This feat, incredible in view of the fact that German soldiers were billeted in the same house, escaped detection, but Madame Cardon and Madame Baudhuin were both discovered and imprisoned, narrowly escaping sentence of death for heroic efforts to hide British soldiers. Sometimes such golden deeds of heroism escape from oblivion but many more are unknown and unsung.

The Example of Gloucestershire.

A debate much about the level of the majority of debates on this subject took place at the quarterly meeting of the Gloucestershire Standing Joint Committee last week on the motion of Miss Hartland to employ some women police in the county. The Chief Constable, when asked for his opinion, stated that though at a recent meeting of chief constables, a resolution against the use of women police was passed, he himself believed that they would be able to perform useful work. Miss Hartland's motion, altered so as to give the number of women as not more than four, was carried by 23 votes to 14. We wish that chief constables in other parts of the country would show the same liberal spirit expressed not only by approval of the appointment of women but by a promise that if women were appointed every effort would be made to make their work as effective as possible. Simultaneously we see that Dresden has established women police on lines similar to those adopted under the direction of Commandant Allen during the period of military occupation.

POLICY.—The sole policy of THE WOMAN'S LEADER is to advocate a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women. So far as space permits, however, it will offer an impartial platform for topics not directly included in the objects of the women's movement but of special interest to women. Articles on these subjects will always be signed, at least by initials or a pseudonym, and for the opinions expressed in them the Editor accepts no responsibility.

VICTORY IN SIGHT.

The omens are propitious. A change has come over the atmosphere. The organs assumed to be most in touch with Government opinion, such as *The Times*, *Observer*, and *Yorkshire Post* have admitted, reluctantly perhaps in some cases, that the Government is definitely and irrevocably pledged to equal voting rights for men and women at the next General Election. How irrevocably can only be understood by those who have read the ipsissima verba of the Government's pledge given through the mouth of the Home Secretary on 20th February, 1925, with the Prime Minister sitting by his side. Not a word of that speech, delivered over two years ago, has, so far as we know, been publicly repudiated by any member of the Government. The more salient portions of it were circulated by the N.U.S.E.C. as a last-minute message on the eve of the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, at which it was reported that the final decision would be made. We print to-day once again, those parts of this summary which constitute the actual pledge:—

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks: I quite agree with the Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. A. Henderson), that there are terrible anomalies in the present system of woman suffrage. . . . These are anomalies which must be dealt with and I say at once, will be dealt with and swept away. *Hon. Members*: When? *Sir W. Joynson-Hicks*: During the life-time of the present Parliament. . . . I have the authority of my Right Hon. Friend, who is at my side, to say, as all the House knows would be the case, that he stands by that pledge. One of the attributes of my Right Hon. Friend is that he does stand by his pledges, and I say to-day he stands absolutely, textually, and in spirit by that pledge. What does that pledge mean? . . . There is no dispute whatever as to the Prime Minister's pledge or its meaning and intention, and we do mean to carry out that pledge. We do mean to give equal political rights to men and women, but we desire to do it by agreement. . . . The Prime Minister adheres to his statement. It will be carried out. *Hon. Members*: When? *Sir W. Joynson-*

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER.

BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.

The principal event of the week has been the introduction of the Trade Union Bill. It goes a good deal further than was expected. As anticipated, it deals with the general strike and with mass picketing, but it also changes the basis of the political levy, forbids associations of civil servants to affiliate with any political party, and prevents local authorities from discriminating between trade unionists and non-unionists in making appointments. And there are other provisions of a somewhat wide character. It is too early to assess its political reactions. The Labour party would have had a better case had they not expressed their determination to oppose the Bill before they saw what was in it. Some Conservatives are uneasy and consider the measure goes too far. It is probable that the Liberal party will join forces with Labour in a combined assault upon the Government. The second reading of the Bill will show political groupings more distinctly, and, owing to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's holiday, Mr. Baldwin has postponed this.

On Monday, 4th April, there was a further discussion on the Ministry of Labour, and a somewhat discursive debate dealt with unemployment insurance, trade boards and other matters. Mr. Hayday showed, as he always does, that no one knows more than he of the complicated enactments governing unemployment. To tell the truth, however, the ground had for the most part been covered so often that very little new emerged.

On Tuesday, 5th April, the Government of India (Indian Navy) Bill passed third reading and the Pacific Cable Bill got through Committee. At night, Mr. Rhys Davies endeavoured to persuade the House that all farming ills, both for the farmer and the farm worker, would be remedied by state ownership and co-operative buying and marketing. He was on firm ground as long as he described the unfortunate position of agriculture, but when he went on to describe his remedy he did not carry so large a measure of conviction. Sir Granville Wheler made a strong case against government ownership, and thereafter the debate swung to and fro, being composed of assertion more than argument.

Hicks: It will be carried out by this Parliament. *Viscountess Astor*: Votes at 21? *Sir W. Joynson-Hicks*: Equal rights for men and women. *Miss Wilkinson*: Are you going to take the vote from some of the men? *Sir W. Joynson-Hicks*: It would be exceedingly difficult to take away anything that the men have at the present time. It shows the difficulties of the situation. I have tried, really in a non-party spirit, to put before the House the difficulties and I have pledged myself and the Government, of which my Right Hon. Friend is the Leader, again in the spirit and in the letter to that pledge which has been referred to to-day, and that pledge will be carried out.

It seems scarcely credible that any reputable politician or newspaper would have the temerity to maintain after this that the Government is not pledged to equal voting rights. Yet the *Daily Mail*, in two leading articles within a few days of each other, has maintained this, while piteously exhorting the Government to remember its pledges as to anti-waste and anti-Bolshevism—the two subjects which at present completely block up the somewhat limited mental vision of our unesteemed contemporary. Fortunately, *The Times*, *The Observer*, and *The Yorkshire Post* are of a different mental calibre. They at least know a pledge when they see one, however much they may dislike it. The opposition papers of course are for the most part on our side already, though none of them have spoken out with the clarity and fullness that we might have expected.

At the time of writing, we are still waiting the Prime Minister's promised statement. If our hopes are fulfilled, there is certain to be a storm of opposition in certain quarters, and it is imperative that the facts should be made known.¹ We advise our readers to procure for themselves the leaflet referred to above, and if events prove it to be necessary, to secure publicity in their local Press for its contents. Meanwhile we hope that the good news we anticipate will have time to spread from Land's End to John o'Groats before the lull of a precious Easter holiday.

On Wednesday, 6th April, came the debate on China. It was remarkable for two features. In the first place, it saw the definite withdrawal of Mr. Wheatley from the front bench to join the Clyde group, and this was taken to symbolize a political, as well as a physical, departure. It has been common property that Mr. Wheatley has been getting more and more out of sympathy with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and he can be now regarded as taking up a mighty detached position on the left flank of the Labour party. The other notable incident was a brilliant speech by Mr. Mitchell Banks, fiercely attacking Labour policy on China. Perhaps, however, the epithet "over clever", which *The Times* used of this speech, best describes it. Mr. Wheatley was equally violent in the other direction, and, in the opinion of most members, these two speeches cancelled out, both representing an extreme standpoint. But there is one point in favour of both. They were incisive speeches, making a large use of invective, and delivered with the gloves off. They did not, however, go outside the rules of Parliamentary debate; and for this reason were far more effective than the more crude methods adopted by some members, and members on all sides of the House. To tell another member to hold his tongue, or not to be a fool, not only lowers Parliamentary discussion, but is singularly ineffective. Yet both these outbursts have taken place. Those that make them should remember Disraeli's unchallengeable saying, that insolence is not invective and petulance is not satire.

At night there was a long wrangle about food and fuel prices which lasted until 11 o'clock.

On Thursday, 7th April, the Landlord and Tenant Bill, bombarded by the Labour party for not going far enough, and by some Conservatives for going too far, sailed successfully down the middle road. On Friday, 8th April, a Bill for the registration of architects was somewhat roughly handled, and was only saved by being sent to a Select Committee.

¹ Copies may be had (6d. a dozen) from N.U.S.E.C., 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.

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Societies Work—our Speciality.

THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CONFERENCE.

By E. DOROTHEA LAYTON.

Women must always be vitally interested in the maintenance of peace and the production of a high standard of living for all the peoples of the world. Nothing is more likely to bring these two things about than a free and friendly interchange of goods between the different countries. Any international action which can help to bring this about is of inestimable value.

It is for this purpose primarily that the League of Nations has called the Economic Conference, which will meet in May, 1927. Governments will not be officially represented, but leading business men and economists from all the countries in the League of Nations and also from the U.S.A. will be sent there by their respective governments.

It will be remembered that the very first conference called by the League of Nations was a Conference of Financiers, which met in Brussels in 1920. The proposals made at that conference have really been used as a basis for the financial readjustment of the countries of Europe to after-war conditions. Also, the permanent Finance Committee which it set up has been largely responsible for the reconstruction of Austria and Hungary, and indirectly to a great extent for the Dawes plan for Germany. Germany's entry into the League of Nations on a footing of equality with the rest of its members, the settlement of the question of reparations, and still more the fact that the violent fluctuations in the value of various currencies which took place between 1919 and 1926 have subsided and been succeeded by comparative stability, present a suitable moment for an economic conference to be called. The League's conference at Brussels was the first step in this process of tranquillization—but it was limited to questions of currency and public finance. The forthcoming conference has a much wider field to cover and more difficult problems to tackle.

Before the war, trade between the nations was growing rapidly in spite of tariffs and the efforts of certain countries to make themselves self-supporting and independent of their neighbour. It is estimated that in the forty years before the war the world's foreign trade increased threefold, which means that the countries of the world were becoming more and not less interdependent. Tariff barriers were plentiful enough, but they were in many cases moderated by a network of commercial treaties, most of which have ceased with the war, and not been recreated.

During the war the blockade of the Central Powers, and with them the neutral states of Europe, also the fact that the economic efforts of the allies were entirely concentrated upon war work, and all other activities were rigorously suppressed, while on the other hand, the ships of the world, much reduced in numbers and in the routes they could take by the submarine campaign, were needed for carrying troops and munitions, forced distant countries, and indeed many European countries, into a position of economic isolation. Australia and Canada, for example, began to build up their own industries. The countries at war, particularly France, Germany, and Great Britain, rapidly developed their steel and engineering plant to meet the increasing demand for munitions.

With the end of the war, the blockade was withdrawn, and the submarine campaign ceased, but the countries were suddenly faced with a completely different situation. The creation of a number of new states, each urgently desirous of strengthening their individual nationalist interests, the general feeling of insecurity and suspicion which made each country afraid of depending on other countries for food or munitions, the breakdown of credit, and the instability of currencies, all tended to maintain this policy of isolation. All kinds of obstacles to trade were imposed, at first often taking the extreme form of absolute prohibitions. Europe to-day has many more customs barriers than before the war, and the tariffs levied are much higher and more complex and vary so constantly that shippers and traders generally have the greatest difficulty in finding out what rates of duty have to be paid. The effect of these barriers is economically disastrous, and constantly causes friction and bad feeling between the countries concerned. It also depresses the standard of living throughout the world. To give one example only in Central Europe:—

Before the war, Austria Hungary had a flourishing cotton industry, the spinning mills for which were in what is now Austrian territory, with the weaving sheds a short distance away in territory that now belongs to the Czechs. Between these two districts the customs barrier now runs, and the duties have been put on so high a level that the trade relations between them have been broken. On the Austrian side new weaving sheds have been built in order to work up the yarn manufactured in the Austrian spinning mills, while across the frontier the Czechs have built spinning mills to manufacture yarns for their looms.

This duplication of plant is clearly a waste of capital, both sets of factories are only half employed, neither can produce economically, and the cost of the goods produced must therefore be much higher than before, and wages and profits very low.

Nations are beginning to realize how increasingly interdependent on one another they are, particularly in Europe. The great secret of America's success is that over that vast continent there are no customs barriers, and therefore industries can concentrate in sufficiently small areas to enable them to make use to the full of the economies of large scale production. This splitting up of Europe into small units is desperately wasteful. Figures prepared for the Economic Conference show that European production as compared to world production is much lower than before the war, and that although production is beginning to recover, world trade, and particularly European trade, is far lower, and shows little sign of normal recovery. Meanwhile a depressed standard of living here or in Germany means a poor demand for cattle from the Argentina, or wool and fruit from Australia, and prevents the United States from marketing a large cotton crop at good prices.

Nations can no longer live unto themselves. The conference will do much if it only shows the price that has been paid for the luxury of uneconomic industries and the absolute necessity of the nations of the world co-operating to prevent this; if it can point out the path along which such co-operative effort can be most usefully achieved, and set up machinery through which an international business and trade point of view can be produced and put into effect. It is to be hoped that it may go even further, and bring about at any rate some stability in the application of tariffs and some agreed plan for general reduction or possibly proposals for a uniform tariff to be applied by all European countries. High tariffs, like heavy expenditure on armaments, prevent the nations of the world from working in peace and amity.

The Preparatory Committee of the Conference has already drawn up a very full agenda, prefacing it with an analysis of the world situation, in which there is a comparison of present production and trade with the pre-war period.¹ This is followed by a study of these figures in relation to the population, and to a statement of the comparative movement of wages. The two very important questions of the effects of varying labour conditions on international trade, and of the world's distribution of raw materials, which is closely linked up with the problem of equal opportunity for sharing in the development of the resources of backward countries, find places on the agenda. The effect upon Europe of reduced economic activity in Russia will be discussed. Women will watch with interest the proceedings of a Conference so intimately affecting their lives at home, and hope that it will be the beginning of a new international spirit in trade and industry, which will help more than anything else to maintain the peace of the world and the well-being of its peoples.

DAME RACHEL AND THE TRAFFIC IN WOMEN.

In a speech at the Guildhouse last week, Dame Rachel Crowdy made special reference to the progress which had been made by Japan during the last four years. In 1924 a notice was sent to every Consul in a foreign country to the effect that the Japanese wished to repatriate every prostitute at the Government's expense, and a few days ago she had received at Geneva a copy of a draft law to be submitted to the Japanese Government this year putting an end to all state regulation and to all registration by 1933. The publication of the recent report will give an added interest to the forthcoming meeting of the Commission of the League of Nations which deals with this problem.

¹ The Memorandum on Production and Trade will be dealt with in our next issue.

THINGS INDUSTRIAL SEEN IN CHINA.¹

By DAME ADELAIDE M. ANDERSON.

VIII.

Very different from the Chékiang Governor was the response of the Military Governor of another great industrial Province, Hupeh. This "Tuchun," H.E. Yao-Hsiao-Nan, on request, promptly arranged a convenient time for a conference, and discussed with interest and sympathy my mission for the welfare of labour, and the outcome of my visits to the large textile and other factories lying in his Province. The conference was at his Yamen at Wuchang, where I was accompanied by Miss Catherine Mackinnon, of the Y.W.C.A., and a Chinese friend, Mr. Liu, to interpret for us, and the Governor subsequently sent his Commissioner of Industry to go over the main points with us. His own refined bearing and alert friendliness gave no apparent support to statements on the other side of the river that he was an addict to opium. Certainly I saw no one on my revisit to Wuchang with the China Indemnity Delegation, nearly two years later, who showed greater courtesy to the foreigner or more capacity to grasp the questions put before him. To my regret I learnt on my return of his untimely death.

This Province was the chief seat of some governmental attempts before the Revolution—and it probably influenced subsequent administrative ideas—to encourage the planting of modern factories. It was difficult to get any exact information as to how those experiments had proceeded but there was reason to believe that two of the cotton mills seen in Wuchang were the inheritors of the experiments. They were entirely worked by man and boy labour numbering about 5,000, and were partly supervised by soldiers. The Chinese lady who took us there knew remarkably little about the work and conditions, and the rapid pace of our soldier-guide through the plant made the visit one of vivid "impressionism" rather than one of close study! Yet it was easy to see that the greater part of the Lancashire-made machinery was old and out of date (bearing dates 1891-5); that the dust was excessive, and that the carding engines were worn out. In spite of being relatively more numerous for the machines than in Lancashire, the male workers as a body looked harassed and roughened. There were tragic legends, current outside, of the terrible accidents that happened in the days when the early workers wore pig-tails, and worked for hours that sometimes lasted from 6 a.m. to 11.30 p.m. The period of employment was now less exacting but everything in these factories was in extraordinary contrast to the very large modern cotton mills, of which one mill employed 8,000 workers, under Chinese management at the other end of the town, outside the old city wall. There the ratio of male to female workers was similar to that in most cotton mills in the Shanghai district and the West. There were, as usual, too many young children, but structural conditions and light were good, the machinery was of the best, from Oldham dated 1922, and some attention was paid to the welfare of the workers, for there was friendly visiting from the American Episcopal Church clergy permitted in the factory. One could not but realize the value of the presence across the river, at Hankow, of some excellently managed foreign factories, where the British Managers had devoted help from Chinese assistants (men and women) in welfare work. There, too, are textile mills of wholly Chinese foundation in which the management aspires to modern ideas of welfare for the workers, where a friendly reception was given me. I met a well-known leader in industrial welfare, Dr. H. J. Shu, Medical Officer of Iron and Steel Works at Hanyang, who has given valuable voluntary help in other industrial plants.

A personal welcome and Chinese help in the three Wuhan cities (Wuchang, Hanyang, and Hankow, the last, as recent events have been made known to British readers, being of most modern growth), was assured me by the kind and helpful introductions of Mr. Z. T. K. Woo, of the Han-Yeh-Ping Iron and Coal Co., and it was encouraging to find managers and their assistants, from factories, giving time to come to my conference in Hankow, on Industrial Law and Inspection, which was arranged by the Secretaries of the Y.M.C.A. Here was one of the heartiest and best attended discussions, of the questions involved, that met me in China. In my stay of eleven days, of which eight were spent in Wuchang, it would have been impossible to overtake the work planned without the great assistance rendered by the use

¹ Previous articles appeared in our issues of 4th, 18th, and 25th February, 18th and 25th March, and 1st and 8th April.

of a steam launch, which the Manager of Messrs. Butterfield and Swire, Mr. Galloway, thoughtfully put at my disposal.

The conference with the Military Governor of Hupeh Province, Yao Hsiao-Nan, towards the close of my visit to the district, was well linked up with the parallel reform movement in the Province of Kiangsu. These two are the most industrialized of the Provinces of China, and it may be recalled that, together their total population numbers over 55½ million. They contain the two greatest trading and industrialized centres of China, Shanghai (International and Chinese) and the Wuhan cities. And the Governor Yao Hsiao-Nan, like Civil Governor Han Kuo-Chuen, asked for a memorandum, which I sent him, on Factory Law and Inspection.

Both Governors received the Chinese version which contains substantially the same material as the Memorandum in Appendix II of the first edition of the Report of the Child Labour Report.¹ The Military Governor told me that he accepted in principle the Peking Provisional Factory Regulations of March, 1923, that he was determined to follow the lead given (a few weeks earlier) by Governor Han in his Ordinance proposing to appoint a Child Labour Commission for the Province of Kiangsu to make inquiry parallel with that of the Shanghai Child Labour Commission, and that when it became possible definitely to apply labour regulations they should be firmly administered in his Province. He perfectly understood, as did Governor Han Kuo-Chuen, that the whole object of this work for the Industrial Committee of the N.C.C.C. was to help the Government of China, local and central, to give effect to its own factory laws in all factories in China, that it was in no way to suggest separate requirements for factories occupied by foreigners, and that I had already conferred with the Minister concerned, Dr. W. W. Yen, at Peking, with favourable results.

(To be continued.)

THE STORY OF OUR ISLAND.²

It does not altogether surprise us to hear that Mr. G. M. Trevelyan's *History of England* was one of the best sellers last Christmas, and that it still ranks in that category. It is so exactly what the plain man and woman want—just as it sets out to be—"an analysis of the social development of the nation in relation to economic conditions, political institutions, and overseas activities." We commend it with great confidence to the particular brand of the public of which a certain proportion of our readers are composed, women whose education in political and constitutional matters has begun late in life and who lack a background to their studies of Modern England. Interest in the historical development of our country began for many with the Great War, and a book that describes the evolution of civilization upon this island from earliest times up to the cataclysm of the war will find many readers among students of the national and international problems of to-day. It appears to us an achievement to produce a book of history which makes its appeal to the average reader as well as the scholar. We advise women who are taking modern political problems seriously to have this book on their shelves and to master its contents.

Z.

A WELCOME NEW VENTURE.

We warmly congratulate the Family Endowment Society on the way in which it has celebrated the third birthday of its Monthly Notes. The pages of the March issue printed for the first time spell progress from first to last, and should strike dismay into the hearts of antagonists of this reform. A new edition of "The Disinherited Family", with a chapter bringing it up to date is announced, and two reviews on recent publications are of special interest. One of these deals with the recent favourable report of the Women's National Liberal Federation and the other by Miss O. Vlasto replies to Professor Gray's recent unfavourable criticisms. Two short but very informative articles discuss family allowances in the Ministry of the Wesleyan Church, and the New South Wales Bill which has now become law. We hope that this important publication will continue and appear in print and predict for it an increased circulation.

¹ Published in the *Municipal Gazette* and obtainable from Messrs. Kelly and Walsh, Shanghai.

² *History of England*, by G. M. Trevelyan. (Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 12s. 6d.)

EQUAL FRANCHISE AND TEMPERANCE LEGISLATION.

By E. M. NORTHCROFT.

Over 1,100 delegates attended the fifty-first annual council meetings of the British Women's Total Abstinence Union, at Westminster Chapel last week. The meetings lasted three and a half days, and were presided over by Miss Agnes E. Slack, the National President, who has travelled 400,000 miles on behalf of temperance.

Reports of nearly thirty departments of work were presented by those in charge of each section, including a descriptive survey, by Miss Agnes Slack, of the activities of the World's Women's Christian Temperance Union, to which the B.W.T.A.U. with a membership of 170,000 is affiliated, and which has auxiliaries in fifty-one countries, with a total membership of nearly half a million women.

Resolutions were carried, recording deep concern that under the British Mandate in Palestine, the number of licensed premises for the sale of intoxicants has enormously increased—from 25 to 300 such places in Jerusalem alone; calling upon the strick observance of the terms of Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, in which provision is made for the "prohibition of abuses such as the slave trade, the arms traffic, and the liquor traffic" in mandated territories; demanding from Parliament that the people shall be empowered to protect themselves against the Liquor Traffic in their own localities by their direct vote, in view of the urgent necessity for curtailing all unproductive expenditure, for developing our home markets, for increasing the efficiency of our workers in all classes of life, for reducing unemployment, for improving the health of the nation, and raising the standard of living and happiness; and congratulating the Scottish workers in the 1926 Local Option Polls on their courageous perseverance against the strenuous efforts of the Liquor Trade, and also on the continued prosperity of those localities which have maintained their No-Licence policy.

The following resolution on Equal Franchise was also passed:—
"That in view of the risks of delay, and the importance of securing during the present Parliament that equality of political rights which the Government has promised, this Conference calls upon the Government to introduce during the present session a measure giving the vote to women at the age of 21, and on the same terms as it is given to men."

This resolution was admirably spoken to by several young "under thirties", which augurs well for the prospects of Temperance legislation in the future, when women of 21 become voters.

THE HUNGARIAN UPPER HOUSE.¹

The Constitution of the Upper House in Hungary has caused heated discussions on the side both of supporters of the Bill and its opponents. It was passed into law on 11th November. Its opponents defended the principle of the Single Chamber and criticized the Bill as reinforcing the oligarchic principle. Its supporters claim that it is more democratic than the former House of Magnates and post-war experience has shown the failure of the Single Chamber System. The Upper House will be composed of six groups each having about forty members. The group of magnates elected on the basis of Land Tax form only a small minority (i.e. thirty-eight members). Two groups double the number of magnates will be elected by County Courts and Boroughs (seventy-six). The fourth group (thirty) will consist of the heads of the Christian Churches, the highest judges, and other dignitaries of the kingdom, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, and the Chairman of the National Bank. This group will also include two Jewish representatives. The fifth group (forty) represents the Universities, Science, Art, Chambers of Commerce, the legal professions, and the Stock Exchange, all elected by their members. All the elected members hold seats for ten years, half retiring at the end of five years. The Government through the Head of the State appoints the sixth group (forty). The Upper House, unlike the old House of Lords, may introduce legislation but not present the Budget. In cases of difference between the two Houses, questions may be referred to a Mixed Commission, and if this fails to promote agreement, the Bill as voted by the Lower House attains the force of law. Both Houses would require to sit in the event of the new election of a Regent.

(Continued at foot of next column.)

¹ Contributed by the Women's International League, 55, Gower Street, W.C.

DEPUTATION TO THE MINISTER OF HEALTH.

A deputation from the National Council of Women of Great Britain was received by the Minister of Health on Tuesday, 5th April, to submit to him the serious menace to the work at present done by women as guardians should the provisional proposals for the reform of the Poor Law be carried into effect. The deputation was introduced by Hon. Mrs. Franklin, President of the Council, the speakers being Mrs. Keynes, J.P., Convener of the Public Service and Magistrates Committee of the National Council of Women; Miss Eleanor Rathbone, J.P., C.C., President of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship; and Mr. J. A. Lovat-Fraser, Joint Hon. Secretary of the State Children's Association. Others present were the Lady Emmott, J.P., Acting Vice-President, and Miss Bertha Mason, Hon. Parliamentary Secretary of the National Council of Women; Miss Scott, P.I.G., Hon. Secretary of the Public Service Committee; and Mrs. Corbett Ashby, J.P., representing the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship; Miss Bradford, J.P., C.C., Miss Honor Lawrence, J.P., Mrs. F. Lewis Donaldson, J.P., Mrs. Hewlett Hobbs, P.L.G., Miss Norah Green, General Secretary and Miss Ridley, Assistant-Secretary of the National Council of Women.

A Memorandum had previously been forwarded to the Minister of Health, outlining the points dealt with.

The Hon. Mrs. Franklin, in introducing the deputation, pointed out that it did not propose to deal with the whole question of the reform of the Poor Law but only in so far as the position of women as Guardians would be affected.

Mrs. Keynes drew attention to the serious loss involved in the withdrawal of a large number of women from the bodies dealing with the Poor Law, which seemed inevitable if the provisional proposals were adopted, and referred to the personal care given by Women Guardians, particularly in connection with the work of Poor Law Institutions.

Miss Rathbone dealt with the two possible ways in which some of the women's work might be retained; co-option was one possibility, but the position of co-opted members was very unsatisfactory and she thought every one was agreed that the mere placing of women on the substituted bodies as co-opted members was not going to restore to them the useful influence they had exercised in the past. The second way was by election, and she pointed out that this opened a very small prospect of any substantial number of women being returned. She urged that it should not be left to the initiative of the Local Authority itself to ask for an increase in its numbers.

Mr. Neville Chamberlain said in reply that personally he sympathised with the point of view of the deputation that under any changes in the administration of the Poor Law the community should not be deprived of the services of women. But it might well be the case that the proposed changes would increase the chances of election for women to County and County Borough Councils, since the electorate would realize the importance of securing the help of women in doing the work for which they were specially qualified. Moreover these bodies could be enlarged to deal with the additional work. He further undertook to bear in mind the desirability of making the co-option of women in certain cases compulsory. The Minister pointed out that changes in electoral areas or methods did not come within the purview of his department, but must be dealt with by the Home Office. As regards any compulsory increase in the membership of Local Authorities, Mr. Chamberlain did not consider it possible to bring any such influence to bear on bodies which were autonomous. He did not agree that, supposing there were a real need for enlargement, there was any likelihood of the Local Authorities failing to ask for it themselves. He thought this would provide an opportunity for getting more women elected.

(Continued from previous column.)

As far as women are concerned, there is no provision in the Bill either for or against; the Boards of the universities could in principle send women if they had women professors. The Lawyers' Board could not, however, because women cannot yet be lawyers in Hungary. With regard to the members elected by the Government, there were rumours some weeks ago of certain women's names, but most of the places were then already filled. Baron Wlassics will be one of the prominent members of the Upper Chamber. It was he who supported the admission of women into the university when he was Minister of Education.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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Parliamentary and General Secretary: MRS. HUBBACK.
Offices: 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.
Telephone: Victoria 6188.

THE EQUAL FRANCHISE CRISIS.

So far there has been no trace of any holiday slackening of work at headquarters; very much the reverse in view of the delay in the Prime Minister's announcement with regard to Equal Franchise. Additional help has been secured, and the officers and staff are coping with a situation which more nearly approaches the events of 1917 and 1918 than any of the recurrent Equal Franchise crises during the last seven years. In view of certain misrepresentations in a certain section of the Press, a new leaflet has been printed with lightning rapidity and hastily circulated. This leaflet contains the whole of the relevant passages in the speech of the Home Secretary on 20th February, 1925. It was sent last Monday to every member of the Cabinet, and to the Press. Copies may be had, 6d. a dozen or in larger quantities for distribution at nominal rates. As we write, we await the Prime Minister's statement which will be announced in a few hours; we are confident that the persistent and faithful work carried on since 1918 will be rewarded by a definite assurance of victory.

WEEK-END SUMMER SCHOOL, MALVERN. 13th-16th May, 1927.

We published last week full particulars with regard to the above School, which promises to be a great success. Those wishing to attend the School should apply as soon as possible, to Mrs. Freeman, Wyche Cliffe, Wyche Road, Malvern. A registration fee of 5s., which will be deducted from the fees for the School, should be paid on application. Among the subjects to be dealt with are: Equal Franchise and other legislation affecting women and children; Women and Social Insurance; the Work of Women Police; the Right of Married Women to engage in paid work and the work of Women and the League of Nations. Delightful expeditions on the Malvern hills, etc., are being arranged for Saturday afternoon, and Mrs. Arthur Bennett, the well-known authority on the geology and history of Malvern, has kindly promised to conduct the ramble on the hills.

PERSONAL.

We deeply regret the death of Miss A. J. Simeon, M.A. Miss Simeon took a leading part at the Oxford Summer Schools and for some time gave valuable help as a speaker for the National Union. Though her great ability, her convinced feminism and her living zeal for justice and reform was handicapped by delicate health, she did more than most to help the reforms for which we stand. Her gentle personality will not be forgotten by those who knew her.

RESIGNING MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

We should like to make it clear in our notes of appreciation of the resigning members of the Executive Committee in this column a fortnight ago, we were not attempting in the short space at our disposal to give a full account of the splendid work they had done. We were rather trying to show the long service rendered by many of them. If we had had more space we should have given further details, as in the case of Miss Fraser, who had been on the Executive Committee since 1914, with the exception of one year, was twice a Parliamentary candidate, and was on the War Mission to U.S.A.

NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

NEWPORT (MON.) W.C.A.

At the Assembly Room of the Newport Town Hall on 23rd March a meeting of the Women Citizens' Association was held to discuss the institution of Women Police in the town. Councillor Brinsmead Williams very ably took the Chair. Miss Tancred, of Glasgow, was the speaker, and very aptly and concisely she outlined the history of Women Police in this country, describing the constitution under which they work, and the duties which they perform. The meeting was easily convinced that the universal establishment of Women Police was a very urgent necessity. Miss Tancred gave several instances of the excellent work which had been done by Women Police dealing with various problems.

In the discussion which followed Miss Tancred's address, not one objection was raised against Women Police, despite the fact that the Women Citizens' Association has not been met half-way by the Chief Constable on this particular question—an antagonism which is apparently grounded on prejudice rather than substantial argument.

The feeling in favour of Women Police ran so high that the meeting passed a unanimous resolution, which is to be sent to the Town Council

and the Home Office, that "Women Police officers are an urgent social necessity."

CROYDON W.C.A.

On Thursday, 24th March, the Croydon Women Citizens' Association held a discussion on the subject of the right of Married Women to do paid work. Speakers, for, Mrs. Layton; against, Miss Frere. About 80 members were present. Miss Frere said this was perhaps the last time she would be speaking on the subject, as the Married Women (Employment) Bill would probably shortly become law. Her remarks about the selfishness of married women who do paid work in an overcrowded profession were applauded, though subsequent speakers mostly emphasized the right of women to decide for themselves.

Both opener and opposer had really the same ideal in their minds, for Mrs. Layton deplored the necessity that causes so many married women to do paid work, and Miss Frere admitted that no hard and fast rule should be made, but exceptional cases considered on their merits. Both speakers thought it right for married women to work as charwomen. No vote was taken.

EDINBURGH S.E.C.

The annual meeting of the Edinburgh S.E.C. was held on 28th March. Miss Frances H. Simson, M.A., presiding. Mrs. Robertson, Hon. Secretary, presented her report, an interesting record of the Society's activities during the year. The financial statement submitted by Dr. Aimée Gibbs, Hon. Treasurer, showed receipts for the year of £391 against £193 for last year. A resolution was passed calling on the Government to introduce a measure giving the vote to women at 21 on the same terms as men. A discussion took place on the clauses relating to compulsory notification and treatment of venereal diseases in the Provisional Orders of the Edinburgh Corporation, and a resolution was passed unanimously calling for their immediate withdrawal on the grounds that compulsory methods are unjust in their incidence, and do not tend to the diminution of the disease.

SUNDERLAND W.C.A.

Under the auspices of the Sunderland W.C.A. and the local branch of the N.U.W.T. a very stimulating and interesting meeting on behalf of Equal Suffrage was held in the Subscription Library Hall in Sunderland on 31st March. The speakers were Miss Macadam, of the N.U.S.E.C., and Miss Agnes Dawson of the L.C.C. Both speakers dealt in a most able manner with independent aspects of the question and won from the audience a unanimous resolution in favour of Equal Suffrage. The Chair was occupied by Mrs. J. S. G. Pemberton, of Ramside, Durham.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE LEGAL AGE FOR MARRIAGE.

MADAM.—In your issue of 8th April you report Lady Astor's dialogue in the House of Commons with the Home Secretary, arising out of Major Hill's question about the law which fixes the age of marriage for women in this country at 12.

Lady Astor is reported to have said that "this is really an old Roman Catholic law . . . and not really a Protestant law." Her ascription of a religious profession to a legal enactment rests, presumably, on the fact that in pre-Reformation days all questions relating to marriage were within the scope of the ecclesiastical authorities. These administered Canon Law which, like the present Law of Scotland, is based on Roman law, that is the law of the Roman Empire.

Canon Law is not, however, a fixed code, but one susceptible of amendment. In 1917, it was so amended that it no longer recognizes as valid the marriage of a girl under 14 completed years of age. On this point, therefore, it is ahead of the law of England.

Yet it is, on the face of it, a terrible thing that a child of 14 should be able to contract a marriage which binds her for life. The framers of the amendment had, however, to guard against the possibility that a girl who was pregnant at 14 might be debarred from a marriage which would make her offspring legitimate. This reason for caution is specifically stated in the Belgian law which fixes the normal age of marriage at 18 for boys, and at fifteen for girls, but provides that exceptionally the marriage of younger persons may be valid, where there are grave reasons for it, such as pregnancy.

The Canon Law adds to its enactment about the age of marriage a recommendation to parish priests to warn their people that they should conform to the good customs of the countries in which they are living.

It may be apposite to state that St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, the feminist society of Catholic women in this country, passed a resolution at its recent annual meeting deploring the fact that twelve is still the legal age of marriage in England, and urging the necessity of immediate legislation to remedy this evil.

HELEN DOUGLAS IRVINE,
Press Secretary, St. Joan's Social and
Political Alliance.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We regret that a letter regarding the nationality of married women has been mislaid, and we hope that our correspondent, whose address we do not know, will write to us again.

DOGS' PROTECTION BILL LIGHTNING CAMPAIGN.

Will you join us in support of Sir Robert Gower's Bill now before the House, and help (1) by writing to your M.P., asking his support; (2) by getting signatures for the Petition to exempt dogs from vivisection—at your home and place of business, at shops, clubs, churches, sports centres, etc.; (3) by helping at open-air meetings; (4) by joining one of the local groups working for the Bill. Particulars from the Secretary, Dogs' Protection Committee, Victoria Station House, S.W. 1.

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