

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

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OUR WORK.

Criminal Law Amendment. It is particularly gratifying to the women's organisations who have so persistently pressed that Criminal Law Amendment should be dealt with in a Government measure, to note the announcement in the King's speech. We may feel certain that this is the direct result of the pressure exercised by women through their various Societies, which have co-operated wholeheartedly for this important and almost non-controversial reform.

A Drawing Room Meeting will be held on Thursday, February 23rd at 3 o'clock, at which an address will be given on the "Summary Jurisdiction (Married Persons)" Bill which, under the amended title of "Separation and Maintenance Orders" Bill is to be re-introduced this Session. Last Session the Bill had to be dropped owing to pressure of Government business.

The Committee have been fortunate in obtaining a promise from Sir Robert Newman, M.P. to speak on the Bill as it was presented by him to the House of Commons last Session.

Lecture. On February 3rd, Miss S. Marjorie Fry, J.P. gave a most interesting and instructive address on "Prisons, People and Probation." Lady Edward Spencer Churchill very kindly lent her house, and a crowded audience listened with keen appreciation to Miss Fry's suggestions on Juvenile Delinquency. She expressed the opinion that there would be many less juvenile offenders if school playgrounds were open under proper supervision on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Lady Grogan took the chair.

Monthly News. Our number this month is largely taken up in discussing the County Council Elections. We hope that every member of our Association will not only vote but *work* on this supremely important occasion when the Labour Party are planning an unprecedented effort to capture Local Government for a policy of Socialist experiment.

London County Council Election, March 1922. The Executive Committee are anxious to receive the names of thirty-five members who would be willing to go to North Hackney (in the event of a contest taking place there) to distribute Election Addresses, in order to help the Chairman,

Lady Trustram Eve, who has represented that constituency on the London County Council for the past three years, and who is standing for re-election.

The help would probably be required on Wednesday, February 22nd, Thursday, February 23rd and Friday, February 24th.

All members willing to help are invited to send their names to the Secretary, C.W.R.A., 48, Dover Street, stating whether they would give the whole or half-day on the three dates mentioned. The Secretary would then send full particulars of address of agent, means of conveyance to North Hackney, etc.

Should a contest not take place in North Hackney, would members kindly state also if they would be willing to work in other constituencies, as help is urgently needed to ensure the election of the eleven Municipal Reform women candidates.

THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

The first of the four opportunities for recording our votes which we are likely to have this year will be on March 2nd, when Londoners will be called upon to elect the County Council which is to serve them, and to govern them, for three years. The other opportunities will, of course, be the Guardians' elections in April, the Borough Council elections in November, and the Parliamentary election on an uncertain date, believed by many to be not far away.

The L.C.C. election will take place on Thursday, March 2nd, all over London, and the polling stations will be open from 8 a.m. till 8 p.m.

One hundred and twenty-four members will be elected, two for each of 60 divisions, and four for the city. In 1919 only 34 divisions were contested, and in these less than 17 per cent. of the electorate voted. In 1913, the last election before that, all the seats were contested, and over 57 per cent. voted.

In 1918 the Representation of the People Bill increased the electorate by about 100 per cent., and in March 1919 there were 1,611,995 voters on the register, approximately half and half men and

women. This year it is calculated that there will be slightly more.

It may be of interest to mention that the expenses of candidates are limited by Act of Parliament to £25, plus an additional 2d. for each elector above the first 500. When candidates run together the possible expenses of each are reduced by one-fourth. In Deptford, for example, with 45,805 electors the expenses were, in 1919, £402 for one candidate, or £603 for two jointly; in Holborn, with 20,680, £193 and £289 respectively. These figures show what a large amount of voluntary unpaid work must be put in if education of the electorate is to be attempted.

The Progressive party were in power from 1900 till 1908, since which time the Municipal Reformers have held the reins.

It is difficult to give figures, and to discuss usefully, the number of candidates standing for the different parties, because these figures vary from day to day, and will continue to do so until the final date for nomination on February 22nd. It is believed that there will be about 96 Municipal Reformers and 50 Progressives; Labour was credited with the ambitious programme of running 100. But the difficulties of finance interfere with many schemes, and it is not believed there will be more than about 79 actually go to the poll.

We urgently recommend our party to study the Labour manifesto and programme adopted on January 28th. With much of its aspirations and idealism one can feel a warm sympathy. No-one who has seen the grey lives lived by the poor can fail to share the burning wish of the Labour party that better conditions and brighter prospects may be theirs. And it is this feeling of personal sympathy which induces so many educated people not to think out the solutions of the problems put forward on their actual practical merits, but to plunge for "labour" out of good will and kind feeling to "the under dog." This is a dangerous attitude of mind which would be dispelled by clear thinking.

I will mention a few of the points of the Labour Party manifesto. It demands:— (a) Large increases of national grants-in-aid for locally administered services; (b) Equalisation of rates for the benefit of the poorer boroughs; (c) Communally owned and controlled transport, including underground railways, trams, buses and steamers; (d) Communally provided lighting and water, coal, bread, milk, meat and fish, (this, of course, is socialisation pure and simple, stupendously costly, involving a bureaucracy before which that of Dora simply pales into nothingness, and probably inefficient); (e) Education free in elementary and secondary schools, and at the University, for "all London children," advantages, "at least equal to those which have always been available to the children of the rich." This includes maintenance grants, feeding, clothing, medical attention, free transit, and holiday accommodation; (f) Free public medical, dental, nursing and midwifery services for all.

Comment is unnecessary. At a moment when rigid economy, the economy of wise spending, which is the most difficult of all, is essential if the State is to be saved from bankruptcy, and all that that would mean of utter ruin for our poorer classes, it seems little short of criminal to cast a vote for such a policy. And let it be preached in season and out of season that an abstention from voting is only one degree less pernicious. The vote which you fail to give because the candidates put up by your party do not happen to reflect the shade of politics which you approve, is strengthening the Labour vote for this policy of socialism and reckless spending which every Conservative must disapprove infinitely more.

The Municipal Reform manifesto claims our confidence by appealing to the quality of the work done in the past years. Constitutional methods and rigid economy are the two planks on which the party stand. They take credit for the marked improvement in Public Health and the fall in the death rate, especially in the Infantile Mortality rate, which has accompanied their administration. They point out that the price of building has fallen substantially since the Government called a halt to their Housing programme, and they promise that it will be their aim to carry out the great schemes for the clearance of slums when finance permits. They advocate that a Royal Commission on Education be appointed to investigate the whole system, and they pledge themselves not to accept any proposals damaging to the children or unfair to the teachers.

The Progressive manifesto stands midway between the other two, and they suffer, as all centre parties tend to suffer, from that position. They claim, and probably with reason, that their existence protects the Municipal Reformers from pressure from the extreme reactionaries of their own side, while at the same time steadying the Labour Party. They promise an active housing policy, and join in the cry "hands off education"; they foreshadow great transport developments, and at the same time promise economy.

It is impossible to discuss in the limited space available the large and important questions of the reorganisation of London Government now under consideration by the Royal Commission; nor the proposals to rate empty properties, to tax ground values, and to equalise rates put forward in the Progressive and Labour programmes.

The cold fact remains that however excellent these various programmes may be in theory, they all involve spending money, and spending money is the one thing that is fatal to the restoration of normal life. All honour to the Municipal Reformers that they should come forward with a programme which recognises those plain economic laws which can only be infringed with disaster to the whole community.

We must now briefly consider the position of the women candidates. Twenty-seven in all are now adopted—eleven by the Municipal Reformers—two by the Progressives—twelve by the Labour Party, and two Independents, of whom one is the

candidate of the National Union of Women Teachers, Commandant Allen, C.B.E., in North Lambeth.

These numbers show a considerable increase on 1919, when fourteen women were nominated, and eight elected.

The following are the names and constituencies—

Independents—

Commandant Allen, C.B.E. (North Lambeth.)
Miss Hughes (Whitechapel).

Municipal Reform—

Mrs. Elliott (North St. Pancras.)
*Lady Trustram Eve (North Hackney)
Mrs. Dunn Gardner, Met. B.C., J.P.
(West Norwood)

Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan
(North Camberwell)

*Mrs. Hopkins (South-East St. Pancras)
Dr. F. Barrie Lambert, C.B.E.
(Bow and Bromley)

Mrs. Lankester (Limehouse)
*Mrs. Hudson Lyall, C.B.E., J.P.
(East Fulham)

Dr. Adeline Roberts, O.B.E., Met. B.C.
(St. Marylebone)

Miss Rachel Parsons (Finsbury)
Miss Rosamond Smith (North Islington)

Progressive—

*Miss N. Adler, J.P. (Central Hackney)
Miss I. Samuel (Finsbury)

Labour—

Mrs. Boyce (Central Hackney)
Mrs. Campbell (West Islington)
Miss Lillian Dawson (Westminster, Abbey)
*Miss Susan Lawrence (South Poplar)
Mrs. Lowe, J.P. (West Bermondsey)
*Miss Margaret McMillan, C.B.E., J.P.
(Deptford)

Mrs. Merrifield (Chelsea)
Mrs. Miall Smith (North Islington)
Mrs. Drake (N. Kensington)
Mrs. Girling (Shoreditch)
Mrs. Scurr (Limehouse)
Mrs. Ganley (South Battersea)

* Standing for re-election.

It will be noted as peculiarly interesting that Miss Rosamond Smith is being opposed by Mrs. Miall Smith (Labour); Mrs. Lankester by Mrs. Scurr (Labour); and Miss Adler (Progressive) by Mrs. Boyce (Labour).

Lady Trustram Eve was elected without a contest in 1919, and the fine record of her work on the L.C.C. will be especially interesting to members of our Association. Lady Eve has served on the Education Committee, on Elementary and Higher and Special Schools Sub-Committees; she is Vice-Chairman of the Public Control Committee; Chairman of the Small Holdings Committee; and a member of the General Purposes and Parks Committees.

Mrs. Hopkins has been a member of the St. Pancras Board of Guardians since 1913, and is now Vice-Chairman. She was elected on to the L.C.C. in 1919, and is a member of the Education and Public Health Committees.

Mrs. Hudson Lyall, C.B.E., J.P. was also elected in 1919, and serves on the Housing, Parks, Public Health and Old Age Pensions Committees.

Mrs. Elliot contested Poplar unsuccessfully in 1913, and Miss Rosamond Smith Shoreditch, in 1919.

Mrs. Dunn Gardner, J.P., was elected on to the Westminster City Council in 1919, and is one of the women magistrates appointed to sit in the Juvenile Courts. She is a co-opted member of the L.C.C. Asylums and Mental Deficiency Committee.

Dr. Adeline Roberts, O.B.E. was the first woman to be elected on the Marylebone Borough Council in 1912. She also is a member of the L.C.C. Asylums and Mental Deficiency Committee.

It is interesting to note that the two Progressive candidates have distinguished records: Miss Adler, J.P. is the senior woman member, having been elected in 1910; Miss Samuel is a Guardian in Whitechapel (since 1910); for six years, from 1913-19, she was a Borough Councillor for Stepney; in 1919 she stood unsuccessfully in Mile End for the L.C.C.; she is a co-opted member of the Education Committee.

Miss Susan Lawrence sat for two years, from 1910 till 1912, as M.R. member for West Marylebone. In 1913 she was elected Labour member for Poplar. She is a member of the executive of the National Labour Party.

THE CASE AGAINST THE DAY CONTINUATION SCHOOLS.

Until quite recently, people who criticised the Day Continuation Schools were proclaimed the "enemies of education," and there was no measure in the slinging of mud against such reactionaries. They were accused of hostility to the working class—of the wish to produce the cheapest sort of labour for capitalist production—of the dread of loss of political power to an emancipated and educated proletariat. And the worst of it is that that was true of a certain amount of the opposition.

It required a great deal of courage on the part of the opponents, not of education, but of the actual system put into practice in London and hardly anywhere else—in 1920, to declare themselves hostile, and allow themselves to be bracketted with the reactionaries.

The ground of their hostility was, however, quite distinct. It was simply their answer to this question:—"are the Day Continuation Schools, as we have them at present, the best way of spending the limited amount of money available for education?" And their answer was "No!..." If there was no question of retrenchment before the country at present, I should still say, no! And this is the view of many elementary school teachers.

Undoubtedly if we could live the last two years over again, the experiment would not have been tried now, nor until the national finances are in a far more healthy state than they are at present. But two years ago trade and industry were booming, and no one, not the Government, nor the bankers, nor the industrialists, nor the L.C.C. foresaw the stagnation and distress of to-day. Therefore it seems to me not fair to attack the L.C.C. because of the highly regrettable unemployment among elementary school-leavers, which would have been inevitable any way, but which the Day Continuation Schools have helped to aggravate. It is self-evident that to the small employer a child who is off duty for four hours in the morning and four hours in the afternoon in every week, is a much less valuable servant; and he can hardly be blamed if he gives his work to the boy or girl of 15, who is outside the present

scope of the law. But it is deplorable, in the interests of the children themselves, that they should spend five mornings and five afternoons hanging idle about the streets, for the sake of the one morning and one afternoon occupied in School.

Then the actual value of the teaching in the schools is not beyond question. The L.C.C. suddenly required to increase their staffs very largely. They inevitably had to engage large numbers of men and women with no experience of teaching in an elementary school, and therefore of controlling large classes of boys and girls at a peculiarly difficult age. The result has been very unsatisfactory from the point of view of discipline in a number of cases. I have heard not only from school-masters, but from boys themselves, that learning is often difficult on account of the noise which the teachers cannot control. And it must be remembered that for every child of 14 that wants to learn there are probably a score that don't. That is true in every class of society.

I heard the headmaster of one of these Day Continuation Schools address a Women's Fellowship, and he assured the mothers that he taught the Class War to their children, and showed them that history was one long struggle on the part of the rich to grind down the poor. I mention this instance, which came under my personal notice, just to illustrate how unsatisfactory some of the appointments have been. Many of us would prefer ignorance for our own children to such pernicious teaching. I mentioned this to an elementary schoolmaster, and he assured me it did not matter much, as the discipline in that particular school was so chaotic the boys would not take much harm.

But the large point on which I most of all join issue with the Fisher Bill, is that it treats all children alike—that, in other words, the chances of the promising children are starved in order that exactly identical opportunities may be given to those who cannot possibly benefit by them. If money were no object, much might be said for this—but money is the very essence of the problem, and in the interest of the nation and the children I believe that better results would be obtained from grading the children. A very able headmaster of a large Board School told me that he considered the children sorted themselves out into three classes—the first group who would be a credit to any school or university—the second group who would make good useful citizens, though without the higher gifts of the first—and thirdly the residue who never can make anything but unskilled labour—and on whom, incidentally, the Day Continuation Schools are completely wasted.

As an outside observer it seems to me that our needs would be far more satisfactorily met by more Central Schools into which the promising children could be drafted, for there is always bound to be a number who miss scholarships by reason of bad health and bad luck, and who are well worth whole time teaching with comrades of their own calibre. I believe if the opinion of the parents could be obtained it would be found that that represents far more nearly the wishes of the better parents for their children than the present system of Day Continuation Schools.

The temporary suspension of the system is part of the "economy" programme of the Municipal Reform candidates in the present L.C.C. election. For the reasons given above I think we may take comfort, and believe that we are not depriving our children of benefits which are vital to them.

FLORA L. C. WALTER.

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WEEKLY LECTURES.

Wed., 22nd Feb., 8.15 p.m.	"Women as Parliamentary Candidates" Professor WINIFRED CULLIS, O.B.E., D.Sc. Chairman ... Miss M. P. GRANT.
Wed., 1st March.	No Lecture.
Wed., 8th March. 8.15 p.m.	Subject announced later. Chairman ... Miss VERA S. LAUGHTON, M.B.E. Capt. ERNEST EVANS, M.P.
Wed., 15th March. 8.15 p.m.	"On Growing up" ... Mr. R. F. CHOLMELEY Chairman ... Miss MARGARET A. TUKE, M.A.
Wed., 22nd March. 8.15 p.m.	"The Basis of Sex-Equality" (Co-Education) ... Mr. EDWARD CECIL Chairman ... Mrs. T. DEXTER.
Wed., 29th March. 8.15 p.m.	Subject announced later Mrs. WINTRINGHAM, M.P.

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