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THE MOTHERS' UNION

Incorporated by Royal Charter, 1926

REPORT
OF THE
CENTRAL PRESIDENT

March 1928—March 1929

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REPORT OF THE CENTRAL PRESIDENT

MARCH 1928—MARCH 1929.

AS I review the year that has elapsed since the last Report was given, I know I shall be pardoned if I speak first of my gratitude to all those, who in the earlier months of it, when my accident completely disabled me, took all my responsibilities from my shoulders and carried on so splendidly. Nor, even in a business report, can I fail to express my thankfulness that I was allowed to return to work at the Mary Sumner House in June. In such necessarily brief words as these, I cannot even try to express, what I feel with all my heart, my deep sense of gratitude for all the help, the patience and the cheer which have surrounded me on every side since my return.

We have to record the first complete year of work of our Central Secretary, Mrs. Oliver. I know I shall be voicing the feelings of us all, when I congratulate her on the devotion, the capability, and the wholeheartedness with which she has faced the great task. Very surely she finds herself securely established in the trust of all who work here, and more than that, in their affections.

To this I must add one word of special appreciation of the work done by Miss Tugwell all through this year. Her long experience has brought upon her much responsible work, advisory and administrative, and most ably has she responded to the call. We have indeed cause to be proud of the work of our whole Staff at the Mary Sumner House, not only those who have the responsible task of heading the work in each department, an increasingly skilled task, demanding concentration, knowledge and judgment, but all those who take their appointed share in the work. The year has brought us some new workers on our Staff; we welcome them, and hope for

a steady development of the purposeful work to which we are called at the Mother House.

The Triennial Elections are over. We have lost, it is true, some valued workers, but I do not believe we have lost their interest nor the useful help which they can, and will give outside this House. New Chairmen, new Committee members are with us: we welcome them all, especially Mrs. Maude as an Elected member of Council. This is the right evidence of life and progress, without which the ever-growing and many-sided demands upon the Mothers' Union cannot be met.

I only refer to the great cause for thankfulness which we all feel, that the Mary Sumner House stands free of debt. The details are given elsewhere in our Treasurer's Report, together with financial matters in general, to which therefore I do not further refer, except to note with great pleasure the balance on the year's working of £1501. 16s. 9d.

The increase in Membership during 1928 was 17,515 at Home, 3155 Overseas, making a total increase of 20,670.

This is, of course, a matter for rejoicing, with the full realisation of responsibility, especially, I think, for the **3155 new members Overseas.**

In the office work the increase in letters, parcels, etc., sent out was 15,215—a significant fact.

I much regret that it has been found necessary for the time being to close down the Royal Air Force Department of the Mothers' Union. Steps are being taken to commend the members to Civil or Army Branches, and a Central Correspondent has been appointed.

Special consideration has been given to the loss which results from members in lapsed Branches or those who move to places where there is no Branch. It is now decided that such members shall be called Diocesan Members, and that the *Diocesan Authorities shall be responsible for them.*

Two matters in particular force themselves upon us outstandingly in the consideration of the year's work.

The first is the need for a renewed vigilance in upholding our First Object, and the corresponding need for constructive teaching on Marriage—a matter now under our careful consideration. The declension of high ideals of Christian Marriage is apparent to everyone who watches the signs of the times, in newspapers, in books, plays, and films, and, most significant and saddest of all, in the general trend of opinion and conversation.

Secondly, there came to us most urgently the great need for more and better Religious Teaching in the homes of our members.

At the time of the last Annual General Meeting (1928) replies were being sent in to the Questionnaire on Religious Education in the Home which the Mothers' Union had issued as the result of the enquiry made by the Archbishops' Commission on Religious Education.

In June the findings of 35 dioceses on this matter were forwarded to the Commission, together with some suggestions.

These findings showed evidence of an urgent need for guidance for parents as to what to teach, and how to teach, fundamental truths of the Christian Faith, as found in the Bible and the Prayer Book. In July, therefore, a special "Joint" Committee of the Religious Education and Literature Committee and the Publications Committee was formed, and they were able to secure the most valuable Chart and Syllabus, made at S. Christopher's College, which was issued to our workers in September. In addition, though working at great pressure just before the holidays, they produced a useful List of Recommended Books and Pamphlets for the guidance and study of workers.

All three papers in the "Religious Education Series" have had to be reprinted. Supplementary papers written by experts are under consideration, and their production in this Series may shortly be expected.

In the early winter, as a truly wonderful response to the first output began, it became evident that our workers needed actual demonstration as to how to begin this teaching with groups of workers, and, further, to Branches. Mrs. Trinder Green, therefore, prepared four lecture-demonstrations, and these have been given in this House several times for the benefit of workers. It is evident that these meet a need. Notes of the Lectures have been produced and printed.

The diocesan activity in regard to the religious education scheme has been most marked and encouraging. In December 1927 the annual reports showed that only one or possibly two dioceses had Religious Education Committees (Mothers' Union); now at least 22 dioceses have committees which are actively organising this special work. Conferences and instructions for speakers continue to be reported, and the orders for the three papers and all explanatory notes available continue to come in.

We record here our deep gratitude to the officials of S. Christopher's College for their courtesy and promptitude in responding to our need by allowing us to use these portions of their valuable syllabus. We are deeply thankful to be allowed to take our share, as part of Christ's Church, in helping our members to better realise and understand the vital truths of our Holy Faith, and to "teach and train" their children in the same. The work must be slow, for it goes deep, and those who teach must prepare with prayer and courage. I commend this our "duty and service" to the continual prayer of the Mothers' Union.

Throughout the year the **General Purposes Committee** has continued to handle its routine work of considering the mass of correspondence which reaches us from very diverse sources and which does not properly belong to any special departmental office in the House. The requests to co-operate in one admirable piece of work after another increase, and though we should often like to help these,

it is quite impossible for us to do so without entirely overweighting our workers, who are already putting in such splendid work on matters directly bearing on our three Objects.

The investigation and observation work on the influence of the Cinema continues. We are now in receipt of short précis of films which are about to be released within three months of our receiving these valuable notes. These are written by an expert who gives a brief statement of the content of each film. It is for workers who wish to see these to draw their own conclusion as to the suitability of these films for exhibition in their neighbourhood, since we are still in the strong position of possessing the power of local control in these matters. Workers wishing to see these précis can do so on application to the Secretary of the General Purposes Committee.

This Committee has had certain matters concerned with temperance and with dog-racing under consideration in preparation for the Executive which was called upon to deal with these questions. Other subjects which are not strictly within the province of any department have been considered also, such as the increase of Women Police. The nomination of Mothers' Union representatives to serve on other organisations and to attend special conferences has also occupied this Committee.

The Library Catalogue is now completed. It costs 2s. 6d., and orders will be welcomed at once; it will be a great help if they are addressed to the Assistant Librarian and marked *Catalogue* in the top left-hand corner.

Books. The number of books taken out each month is steadily increasing. Our figures for the last six months show that the average number of books borrowed per month is 745, as against 560 in 1927-28, an increase of 185 per month. This increase is due to the fact that we are gaining more subscribers every week, and also that the demand for Book Boxes both in the dioceses, for the

use of speakers, and in the Branches for use of members, is steadily growing. We can, however, still take more subscribers and more orders for boxes.

Inquiries reach us from time to time about the running of small lending libraries, and we should be glad to give any information to those who wish to start a library in their own diocese or deanery or parish.

Rebecca Hussey Grant. The Library benefited this year by a further grant of £30 worth of books. We were able to choose the books ourselves, and if our subscribers care to look in the *Workers' Paper* for December 28th they will find a complete list of those obtained, and will, we are sure, approve of the selection.

The Publications Committee are glad to report progress and increased sales: twenty-five new leaflets have been published, forty have been stocked and thirty-two reprints have been ordered.

The sales of Mothering Sunday leaflets, Quarterly Intercession Leaflets and Mothers' Union Badges are still very encouraging.

The picture on the Almanack for this year was "The Home at Bethany," by Wm. Hole, and the Almanack and Christmas Cards sold remarkably well.

The Illuminated Card with the Mothers' Union Prayer in gold and colours has proved very popular.

The Mothers' Union Hymn Book has been revised.

Under the **Organization Leaflet Committee**, four new leaflets have been published, seven have been revised and twelve reprints have been ordered.

I should like to draw attention to a new publication, The Rural Deanery Presiding Members' Register, for which many requests had been received. This will greatly facilitate the ordered record and continuance of work in a Deanery when there is a change of Presiding Member.

Speakers' Department. The Speakers' Central Committee has met six times in the year. The total number of Meetings supplied with Speakers direct from the Office is 239, but the number of Meetings addressed by Central Speakers as compiled from their own reports amounts to 1047. This does not include meetings taken in their own dioceses.

Thirteen Speakers have been added to the Central List, from the Dioceses of Exeter, Guildford, Liverpool, Sheffield, Southwark and Truro.

There has been a great increase throughout the year in the holding of Quiet Afternoons, and the desire for Devotional Addresses.

Steady progress is being made with the study of the Chart and Syllabus of Religious Education in the Home. Other subjects are: Classes for Probationers; Religious Education on Modern Lines; Modern Methods and Theories of Social Hygiene.

Tours of several days' duration have been carried out in the following Dioceses: Canterbury, Peterborough, Norwich, Chelmsford, Oxford, St. Asaph, Coventry, Chester, Wakefield, Swansea and Brecon, York, and Leicester.

Several Speakers have accompanied and spoken to the Mothers' Union Film.

Mrs. Boas' term of office as Chairman having come to an end, the Committee expressed their warm appreciation of all her devoted work for the Speakers during the time.

Special Classes for Speakers have been held by Mrs. Boas, Mrs. Bardsley, Mrs. Ronald Bayne, Mrs. Raymond, Mrs. Digby Read and Miss Mary Johnston. From them came the suggestion of some form of systematic training for speakers, which could be carried on in the dioceses after the Speakers' Classes have been held. The need for this is urgent, as there is an ever-growing demand for efficient Speakers. Too much stress cannot be put upon the great importance of the work of our Speakers and

of our deep appreciation of the untiring work they do for us.

Conferences have been held in Chelmsford, Derby, Durham, Exeter, Lincoln, Llandaff, Manchester, Guildford, Coventry, Portsmouth, St. Albans, St. Davids, Southwark, Salisbury, Winchester, and Oxford, besides the Central Speakers' Conference.

Fellowship of Marriage Department. This Committee has met eleven times and has held two Conferences. The Spring Conference, May 21st—24th, was combined with a School of Prayer, conducted by the Rev. H. L. Hubbard and the Rev. Gilbert Shaw, at St. Leonards-on-Sea.

The Autumn Conference was held on October 17th and 18th at the Mary Sumner House, when Mrs. Hood spoke on "Intercessions" and Mrs. A. H. Thompson on "The Syllabus for Religious Education in the Home." Mrs. Gilbert Rye, an experienced Girls' Friendly Society official, has been appointed as their representative on the Central Fellowship of Marriage Committee. All commendations of married Girls' Friendly Society members to the Fellowship of Marriage are now made through Mrs. Rye, with increasingly satisfactory results.

The Fellowship is now working in 38 dioceses and there are 75 Groups. Experience proves the value of small informal meetings where difficulties can be discussed and Mothers' Union ideals put forward.

The Fellowship of Marriage Literature Sub-Committee has revised the propaganda papers and has helped to select the contents of the pages in the Mothers' Union periodicals.

Enquiries received show that the work of the Fellowship is being better understood, and there is a steady increase in the number of Groups.

Those joining the Mothers' Union through the Fellowship of Marriage are hereby conscious that they are members of a great spiritual companionship.

Grateful thanks have been expressed to Mrs. Waterhouse, who has completed her term of office as Chairman, and to Mrs. Pridham, who has acted as Chairman in the absence, through illness, of Mrs. Waterhouse.

Nurses' Fellowship Department. The work of the Fellowship throughout 1928 shows steady growth. Thirty-one dioceses now have representatives, and the following have appointed this year: Gloucester, Ely, Portsmouth, St. Albans, and Worcester.

Active work is being carried on in Exeter, Chichester, Southwell, Derby, Canterbury, and St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich Dioceses.

Southwark Diocese has reported special interest in the Mothers' Union in two Welfare Centres.

Sisters in the General Lying-in Hospital and St. Thomas's Hospital Maternity Ward have joined the Fellowship, and have been sent special literature for the patients.

A small Lending Library, subscribed for by members of the Nurses' Fellowship Committee, has been sent to St. Thomas's Maternity Ward, and it is hoped that the books being presented through the Mothers' Union will interest patients in our work.

Mrs. Buckingham (Exeter) is in touch with six Nurses in Lagos, West Africa.

A most successful Nurses' Day was held at Canterbury on July 14th, 60 members being present. A tour of the Cathedral, Evensong, tea at the Old Palace, by kind invitation of Lady Davidson, Admission Service and Address by Canon Ottley, visits to St. Augustine's College and St. Martin's Church, made up a memorable programme. Nurses who visited St. Augustine's sent 10s. to the Ordination Fund.

On November 29th an Admission Service was held in the Mary Sumner House Chapel, where an Address was given by the Rev. A. E. Cornibee. A social hour was held in the members' parlour.

The Committee has met four times, and has produced a new propaganda paper, "The Nurses' Fellowship in the Mothers' Union."

A Diocesan Representative writes: "My members are earnest Churchwomen and as the work grows one feels that the presence of such women, members of the Nursing profession devoting their lives to the care of others and joining with us in Fellowship and Prayer, are by God's help a source of strength to the Mothers' Union."

Lectures Department. This Committee has met six times during the year, and the following lectures have been arranged:—

(a) Consecutive Courses of Theological Lectures have been given by Miss Ling, S.Th. (Old Testament); Rev. H. M. Sanders, M.A., Vicar of St. Stephen's, Twickenham (New Testament); Rev. Caryl Sampson, M.A., Holy Trinity, Sloane Street (Church Doctrine).

Students from 22 dioceses, one from Scotland, took these Courses by correspondence.

Twenty-seven students out of 40 passed the Inter-Diocesan Council for Women's Work Examination for a Certificate of Recognition in Theology, Grade C.

(b) Lectures on "Psychology and Children," and "Psychology and the Home," by the Rev. A. R. Browne-Wilkinson, M.A., Principal of S. Christopher's College, Blackheath.

(c) Four lectures on "The English Mystics," by the Rev. Canon O. Hardman, D.D.

(d) A Lantern Lecture on "The Holy Land," by the Rev. A. E. Cornibeer, Vicar of S. Matthew's, Westminster.

(e) A Lecture on the work of Toc H, by the Rev. P. B. Clayton, M.A., Warden.

(f) Mrs. Crofts, M.A., LL.B., gave an Address on "Recent Legislation Affecting Women."

(g) Mrs. Moore (Editor of *Mothers in Council*) lectured on "The Work of Josephine Butler."

(b) Speakers' Classes were given by Mrs. Digby Read.

During October, a special Course was planned for those interested in Educational Work. The Duchess of Atholl spoke on "Some Problems connected with the Education of the Adolescent Girl." Miss Wills, Principal of County School, Gravesend, on "The Secondary School Girl." Mr. J. F. Mitchell, Headmaster of S. James' Norland School, on "The Elementary School Boy—and After." An important Study Course of ten Addresses on "Why Belong to the Church of England?" was given by the Rev. Canon O. Hardman, D.D.

Film Department. During 1928 the Film was shown in the following Dioceses: Canterbury, York, London, Durham, Bangor, Bath and Wells, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Coventry, Derby, Ely, Exeter, Leicester, Lichfield, Lincoln, Liverpool, Llandaff, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich, Oxford, Peterborough, Ripon, Rochester, St. Albans, St. Asaph, St. Davids, St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Salisbury, Southwark, Southwell, Swansea and Brecon, Truro, Wakefield. Also in Scotland and Northern Ireland (Belfast). Army Branches at Chatham, Aldershot, and Wiesbaden; Winchester (Jersey). 183 performances in all.

It has been necessary to reprint the Flam Film, and also a second copy of the Non-Flam Film owing to the excessive wear and tear caused by the projectors in the various cinemas. The Canterbury Reel has been considerably shortened.

By the courtesy of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the Mothers' Union has produced a short Film of about 1000 feet, showing snapshots of Overseas Work in many lands. This is shown in place of the lantern slides previously used.

A new leaflet has been issued entitled "The Mothers' Union Film: What It Is, and What It Does." Enrolling

Members will find this very useful in explaining the Film to their Branches beforehand.

The Film Committee has met five times during this year.

CENTRAL ORGANISING WORKER (Mrs. Maurice Parkin). During 1928, Mrs. Parkin has accompanied the Film on tours to York, Carlisle, Lincoln, Llandaff, Newcastle, Oxford, Swansea and Brecon, Wakefield, and Scotland: 58 meetings in all.

She has taken three Organising Tours in Chelmsford, also one in Scotland, and has also addressed 38 single Meetings (Branch and Deanery).

Watch Committee. Reports of the work of the Watch Committee have appeared from time to time in the *Workers' Paper*. We have been much concerned at the widespread propaganda in favour of Birth Prevention, and have under consideration plans for taking steps to counteract it. In this connection we welcome the issue of *National Life*, the new bi-monthly magazine of the League of National Life.

Pernicious Literature.—The lack of any fixed standard by which to judge books of an immoral or indecent character has been the subject of consideration. Public opinion alone can fix this standard, and it is important that Mothers' Union members should help so far as they can in this matter.

A resolution has been sent to the Government urging that the recommendations of the Committee on Sexual Offences against Young Persons be put into action.

I would especially call the attention of Workers to the Watch Page in the March issue of the *Workers' Paper*.

Overseas. The annual statistics from Diocesan Reports are as follows: Dioceses, 106; Branches, 2161; Members and Associates, 43,225. The dioceses remain the same, and there is an increase of 300 Branches and 3155 Members

and Associates. These are only approximate statistics, as some dioceses have sent no new report, but on the whole there are fewer defaulters in this respect than usual. We have scattered members all over the world, so 106 dioceses only refers to organized work.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES on overseas work took place in the Provinces—Chester, Liverpool, and Manchester—on March 18th. Wakefield Diocesan Council has invited the neighbouring Dioceses of York, Ripon, and Bradford to meet at Wakefield on April 30th. Llandaff Diocesan Council is inviting dioceses in Wales and the West Country to meet on July 2nd. The Sheffield D.O.C. is hoping to arrange a Conference for the Midlands in the early autumn. It would be a splendid preparation for the World-Wide Mothers' Union Conference in July 1930 if dioceses could group themselves together to consider methods of organization, and problems connected with the rapid expansion of the Mothers' Union into all lands beyond the British Isles.

THE ROLL OF REMEMBRANCE. The migration of Mothers' Union families to distant lands has necessitated the adoption of a "Roll of Remembrance" so that individual members may be kept in touch with home. There are now 68 names on the Roll. Many grateful letters and postcards have been received from members in response to the Christmas greetings sent, with a letter from the Central President, to all enrolled members. One writes as follows from Ohio, U.S.A.: "The greetings would have been acknowledged sooner, only I have just returned home from a Maternity Home where, on December 17th, my little daughter was born. To be remembered, and to receive a message from the Mothers' Union just at that time was most delightful and gave me real happiness. To be remembered in prayers on March 25th, I would esteem a great privilege. . . . It may be interesting to you to hear that I have already spoken to our Vicar

about forming a Branch of the Mothers' Union here. He has never heard of it, but would be glad of literature explaining its origin and object."

ARGENTINA. The wife of the Seamen's Missioner at Rosario, South America, asks for leaflets and our prayers for guidance in starting the Mothers' Union at Alberdi. She writes that she hopes the Mothers' Union may be the means of rousing people to care for spiritual things. "They will subscribe to and help forward social work, but on the whole they do not attend Church. Sundays are given over to picnics, games, etc., and in some cases dancing. They will far rather give money than themselves. I had hoped to find a Mothers' Union leader in Alberdi, as I need as much time as I can spare for the Seamen. However, I am the only Mothers' Union member here. I am asking to be given a date on which to speak about the Mothers' Union in March or April when the Alberdi Branch of the Women's Diocesan Association meet. I think two or three will offer as candidates for membership and for the first few months at any rate I shall have to act as leader."

BURMA. The first Burmese Branch was started last year after many years of preparation.

WEST ARCTIC. The latest call has come from the farthest North. The Archdeacon of the North pleaded for our help with his Eskimo mothers. He has translated the Mothers' Union Members' Prayer in a simplified form and given it to his Eskimo church mothers.

CANADA. The first Mothers' Union Canadian Council met in Winnipeg last October. Mrs. Matheson, wife of the Primate, and Diocesan President for Rupertsland, was elected Council President. The Primate, in his address, spoke most warmly of the power and influence of the Mothers' Union.

Council Meetings have also been held in Adelaide, Australia, and Auckland, New Zealand. The work in the Dominions goes forward by leaps and bounds.

JUBILEE LIBRARIES' FUND. Grants of books towards the formation of Diocesan Mothers' Union libraries have been most gratefully accepted from many quarters. One grant of £7. 10s. 0d. provided books in Tamil and Telugu for a district in Dornakal.

"MOTHERS OVERSEAS." The first copy of this new venture came out last October, and was quickly sold out. No. 2 is now ready, price 3d.

OUR WORKERS. We are glad to welcome Miss Norah Short for a very short furlough of three months before her return to S. Africa. She goes to Kimberley to be Diocesan Secretary and Mothers' Union Secretary. Miss Herring is greatly improved in health, and there is hope she may be able to return to Tinnevely to continue her good work now temporarily in the hands of Miss Morris. Miss Davis (Travancore), Miss Tickell (Dornakal) are now preparing for the first S. Indian Inter-Diocesan Conference, to be held at Madras under the leadership of the Bishop of Madras March 19th—20th. We are asked to remember this in our prayers.

I close with a call to the Mothers' Union at Home to do all that is possible to promote the success of the "World-Wide Conference," which is to be held here, God willing, in 1930. The invitations to the Overseas Presidents and Delegates have gone already from myself, in the name of the Central Council. Preliminary arrangements for hospitality, for conferences, and for many other details are being considered, and I hope to be able to make much known by the time we come to the Week in Norwich, to which we all look forward so much. Already we can hope for our new Pageant, and, by the kindness of the Dean of Westminster, for a Thanksgiving

Service in Westminster Abbey. I ask for the constant use of the prayer for the coming Conference that our Chaplain has so beautifully made for us.

We of the Mothers' Union at Home, despite the cares and especial trials of these difficult days, are greatly blest! We are safeguarded, sheltered, upheld in countless ways. But these our 43,000 sisters overseas—realise their difficulties of body, soul and spirit. They fight the same fight as ourselves it is true, but in actual loneliness very often, in isolation from spiritual help, or among the prejudices and alien customs of another race. Shall we not in spirit stand as a wall around them, and welcome those who come to speak of and for them with understanding and sympathy, filled with the desire to share with them those gifts of the Spirit, wherewith God has so abundantly blessed the Mothers' Union.

