

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

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OUR WORK.

Plans. We regret that we are unable to announce definitely the date of our next meetings. It was thought it would be intensely interesting to our members if a Debate For and Against the Capital Levy could be organised, but very great difficulty has been found in securing a speaker on the Labour side, and it is not possible to make any announcements in this number.

Past Meetings. Signor Pellizzi again spoke brilliantly to a crowded meeting at Lady St. Helier's house on January 27th on the subject of Fascism. Over 180 people were present, and many were regretfully refused cards of admission. Lady McGarel Hogg took the chair.

On February 9th Earl Grey gave a most interesting address on "Three Methods of Election: which shall we have?" (Proportional Representation, Alternative Vote, Block System). There was not an empty seat in Mrs. John P. Boyd-Carpenter's drawing-room. Mrs. Hubert Walter took the chair.

Debates. Two successful Debates were held on January 24th and February 7th at Lady Ware's and the Countess of Hardwicke's houses, when the subjects discussed were "whether Dry America has been a failure," and "whether there is one law for the rich and another for the poor."

These debates are so popular that the Committee are now desirous to organise them on a permanent basis, and more particulars will be announced in our next number.

Cinderella Dance. A Cinderella Dance will be held on Saturday, April 28th, and a larger ballroom secured than for our previous successful ventures at the Lyceum Club. Single tickets 12/6, four or more, 10/6, may be obtained from Miss Raikes, Room 191, Windsor House, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

Canvasser's Classes. The Editor is sorry to say that no communication has been received in answer to the paragraph asking whether our members would support an effort to get up

classes to train canvassers for Parliamentary elections. The Committee feel that the work is of great importance, and that the future of the Conservative party depends in no small measure on having efficient workers.

WOMEN'S QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT

The Government will introduce early in the Session the Universities, Oxford and Cambridge Bill, setting up Statutory Commissions for each University as recommended by the Royal Commission. It is possible that this Bill may include a clause admitting women to membership of Cambridge University; but failing this the question will be raised and debated by supporters in the House.

The Government have not felt able to undertake responsibility, or to promise to find time, for many of our bills with which they express themselves in general sympathy. This unfortunately means that the Separation and Maintenance Orders Bill, the Children of Unmarried Parents Bill, and the Guardianship of Infants Bill will again have to face the fortune of the ballot, and the other perilous vicissitudes of Private Members' Bills.

It is probable that these measures may be brought forward in the House of Lords should they be unfortunate in the ballot; and there is good reason to hope that some at least will reach the Statute Book this Session.

Further Bills down for the ballot are the Adoption Bill (to legalise the adoption of children); the British (Married Women) Nationality Bill (which permits a wife to choose whether she changes or retains her nationality on marriage with an alien); the Lunacy (Visiting Committees) Bill, which provides for the appointment of women on the Visitors' Committees of public asylums; and the Matrimonial Causes Bill, allowing a wife to divorce her husband on the same grounds as those on which a husband may divorce his wife. This was recommended unanimously by the members of the Royal Commission on Matrimonial Causes.

THE LAUSANNE CONFERENCE

The Lausanne Conference broke up on February 4th, after eleven weeks' talk which produced in all those who took part in it a profound sense of weariness and disgust. The Turks showed themselves to the end incapable of realizing the astonishingly favourable nature of the settlement offered them by the Allies. They also showed themselves, not for the first time, so unfamiliar with Western ideas and methods of procedure that, although they had seen and heard the packing of the cases containing typewriters and documents which went on all the last day and knew that the departure of Lord Curzon's train had been delayed for half-an-hour in order to give them a last chance, they still, in their Oriental minds, imagined all this to be merely bluff. Supposing that his departure for the station was merely the gesture of one who, declining to pay a preposterous price for a Turkish carpet, goes out of the shop, but presently returns to resume haggling, they actually telephoned to his hotel late at night to know if he had really gone, and were considerably surprised to learn that it was indeed so.

The Conference was not a failure. In the first place it is as certain as anything in Near Eastern politics can be that the Turks will sign the Treaty in a few weeks' time. Ismet Pasha and his friends have learnt a lot at Lausanne, and when they have educated the Angora Assembly—that quaint collection of ignorant but swollen-headed "Nationalists," whose mentality and outlook in many cases are not unlike those of a backveld Boer, it may confidently be expected that, with the familiar shrug and the whining lament "We are poor men," they will bow to the inevitable. In the second place, the Conference itself was anything but a failure, because it resulted in the putting on paper of a unanimous statement by the Allies of their solution of the Near Eastern problem as it presented itself at Lausanne. If Turkey were, in her madness, to refuse to sign, she would at least know what will be imposed upon her, and on the other hand, the world knows the Allied intentions and can judge of their fairness and moderation.

The Treaty indeed, is not perfect. The convention, already signed for the compulsory exchange of the Greek population of Turkey, excepting Constantinople, and the Moslem population of Greece, exclusive of Western Thrace, involves a detestable act of barbarism which, as Lord Curzon repeatedly declared, was viewed with abhorrence even by the representatives of the Powers principally concerned. The Allies only agreed to commit this atrocity "because all those (from Dr. Nansen downwards) who have studied the matter most closely seem to agree that the suffering entailed, great as it is, must be and will be repaid by the ad-

vantages which will accrue to both countries from the greater homogeneity of population and from the removal of deep-rooted causes of quarrel." As a matter of fact it is probable that, in practice, this Convention will prove to be unworkable. The best that can be said for it is that it is slightly less bad than its alternative, which is that the Greeks in Turkey shall be either left to be butchered as opportunity offers or ejected without compensation.

But otherwise the Treaty is satisfactory on most of the points in which Great Britain is primarily concerned. The Turks agreed to all the points in the special Straits Convention attached to the Treaty. With regard to Mosul, they agreed to Lord Curzon's final concession that, while the clause in the Treaty referring the frontier question to the Council of the League of Nations still stands, the formal invitation to the Council to prosecute its inquiry shall be postponed for a year, so as to admit of friendly discussion between the British and Turkish Government in the interval, subject, however, to the condition that the *status quo* is maintained by both parties, and, lastly, with regard to the area in Gallipoli where the Anzac graves are situated, the Turks at last yielded to Lord Curzon's threat that not one man should be withdrawn from Constantinople and Gallipoli until the question of British rights over the cemeteries was settled in a spirit of decency, equity and honour.

Whatever Lausanne may have failed to do, it has exploded for ever the idea that, in spite of his habit of massacre, the Turk has really much to be said for him. Ismet himself, misled by fanatical and ignorant colleagues and, at the end, by the frantic efforts of Paris (harassed by the Ruhr and by the fear lest France should get left out of any advantages which might accrue to Great Britain if warlike operations were resumed) to ensure the signature of the Treaty by wholesale concessions of French interests, did perhaps all that could be expected of him and certainly won the sympathy and respect at the Conference. But, in spite of his dress clothes, his cheerful smile and his rowing on the Lake, the Turkish attitude from first to last was purely Oriental, and that is why Lord Curzon, with his Eastern experience and his mixture of firmness and courtesy, was so admirably fitted to preside over the attempt to make peace. We now know the present rulers of Turkey, with its poverty-stricken population, smaller than that of London, to be a handful of suspicious peasants grotesquely unconscious of their true position in the world, and so far unaware of the first principles of Western diplomacy as to attempt to deal with the Great Powers by a process of mendacious haggling worthy only of an Anatolian camel fair. In the circumstances, I do not believe that anyone could have achieved a greater success than did Lord Curzon.

HUBERT WALTER.

HOUSING.

PART II.—THE FUTURE.

The whole question is one of extreme difficulty and perplexity; there can be no doubt that the house famine after the war had to be met in some way, and the Government were compelled to act promptly; but now that the pressure has been to some extent relieved, the time has arrived when the present position should be most carefully reconsidered.

Various suggestions have, from time to time, been made to solve the problem, some of which may shortly be described as follows:

(1) That all employers of labour should be held responsible for the proper "housing" of their employees, and, if necessary, erect houses for their accommodation. This would certainly relieve some of the pressure, but there would still remain a fairly large "floating" population, not in regular employment, to be provided for. The suggestion is worthy however of some consideration. It would bring the employer and employed more in touch with each other; it would compel the employer to take a greater interest in his employees; it would ensure his work-people living under wholesome conditions; and it would assist his fellow citizens in bearing some of the burden of the Housing problem. When we consider that Lever, Colman, Cadbury, Rowntree, and others act on this principle it seems reasonable that other employers should be compelled to follow their example, if they will not do so voluntarily.

(2) That the "speculative" builder should be allowed to borrow money from the Government, at a very low rate of interest, for a certain fixed period, in order that he may build houses of approved construction. There is also merit in this proposal as a builder can, as a rule, erect houses at a cheaper rate than a Local Authority. This would be an improvement on the existing Government plan of subsidising Building Societies or Public Utility schemes; it has not, so far, met with much support, as it is complicated and does not give the necessary relief.

(3) Mr. A. G. Westacott, the Secretary of the National Federation of Building Merchants Association has suggested a scheme which may shortly be described as follows:—

The whole of the money for building to be provided by private capital, of which two-thirds of the excess cost shall be treated as a loan to the State, against which the State shall issue Bonds payable at par at the end of 20 years and meanwhile bearing interest at the rate of 5 per cent. The occupier or tenant to pay the interest on the remaining third in the shape of a slight increase of rent, so that the State would thus have only to provide the interest and sinking fund for the redemption of two-thirds of the capital. Mr. Westacott claims for his scheme that the burden on the State for the half million houses would only be about

£10,000,000 a year instead of the colossal sum now involved under the present scheme.

(4) The Hire purchase System. There can be no doubt that the more thrifty section of the Working Classes are anxious to secure their own houses and are willing to pay more rent for a fixed period in order to do so. In fact this is often done through Building Societies and other channels which, of course, have to make a profit out of the transaction. It is suggested that if the State would advance the necessary capital at a low rate of interest for a fixed period of say 20 years, the would-be purchaser would be willing to pay a higher rent to meet this interest and repayment of the loan. No capital would be required by the tenant, and the extra rent paid would benefit only himself. The State would lose no money, and the advantages of a large proportion of the population living in their own houses cannot be overstated. For some sinister reason the leaders of the Labour Party and of the Trades Unions do not appear to favour such a proposal, and it is argued that it would interfere with the Building Societies etc.; but, surely, the same argument applies equally to the present position under the Act of 1918.

(5) The National Housing and Town Planning Council has issued some proposals modifying the existing financial terms which are to be discussed at a series of conferences to be held this year. These proposals are as follows:—

(1) That a definite sum per house per year be given by the State to those Local Authorities undertaking Assisted Housing Schemes in 1923—such definite sum to be payable (and not subject to revision) for the whole of the loan period for the houses in respect of which the annual grant is made.

The Local Authority should have freedom of action concerning both the details of their schemes and the administration of them when completed.

The State should, however, require that the accommodation in the houses should be up to a good standard and that the estates on which the houses are built should be laid out on good town planning lines.

The definite sum per house should be greater for houses provided in rural districts and for houses built for the occupation of those dispossessed in connection with schemes for clearing unhealthy areas.

(2) That the State should pay a definite sum per house built under an Assisted Housing Scheme, such sum to represent a percentage of the loss as set forth in an estimate to be submitted to the Ministry of Health before the Building tender is accepted by the Local Authority.

The percentage of the loss should be greater in the case of rural housing schemes and schemes for the re-housing of those dispossessed in connection with schemes for clearing unhealthy areas.

When the definite sum has been determined on the percentage basis it shall not vary during the period of payment of the loan charges.

Subject to the Ministry of Health being satisfied that the accommodation to be provided is up to a good standard, and that the estates on which the houses are to be built will be laid out on good town planning lines, the Local Authority should have freedom of action concerning both the details of their schemes and the administration of them when completed.

(3) That the State should lend capital to Local Authorities at the rate of interest current before the war, viz., $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the difference between the rate at which the capital is thus lent and the rates at which the State borrows the money to represent the subsidy given by the

State in aid of the housing schemes of Local Authorities.

Subject to the Minister of Health being satisfied that the houses to be provided will conform to good standards of accommodation, and that the estates on which they are to be built will be laid out on good town planning lines, the Local Authorities should have freedom of action concerning both the details of their schemes and the administration of them when completed.

Early in January of this year a meeting took place at Manchester of Mayors and other representatives of leading English and Scottish Municipalities to consider the position of the Housing question and the following resolution was passed:—

"That this conference of English and Scottish local authorities is of opinion that any revision by the Government of the financial terms of assistance should be on the basis of contribution by the Government to the local authorities during the loan period of £6 per house per annum, or 50 per cent of the nett annual loss. If the loss is in excess of £12 per annum the supervision of the Government should be limited to being satisfied that the houses to be erected did not fall below the standards to be specified."

Many of these suggestions are excellent in their way, but, as a rule, they do not deal with the principle, laid down in the Act of 1918, of the erection of subsidised, or premiated, houses. This article has been written with a view to draw attention to the present position of the housing question, and to give a warning as to the financial position likely to arise if the Taxpayers and Ratepayers are to be called upon to continue to pay a considerable portion of the rents of certain of their privileged fellow citizens. If this principle is to be continued it must lead to a huge financial burden, and is apparently against the laws of political economy.

The problem is undoubtedly perplexing, for on the one hand there is the scarcity of housing accommodation to be met, whilst, on the other hand, it seems impossible to build houses at economic rents, due to the increased cost of labour and materials.

Fortunately there are signs that labour is beginning to realise that restricted output is against their best interests, and if this more sensible view expands we may hope to see a revival of pre-war prices for building.

In the mean time the more the question of housing is ventilated and discussed the more likely it will be that a solution of the problem will be forthcoming, and it is hoped that these articles may have thrown a little light on the subject.

In conclusion I cannot do better than refer to an excellent article in the *Sunday Times* of the 21st January by Mr. Harold Cox on "The Housing Shortage" which he ends with the following remarks:—

"For if, as is now being suggested, the present Government should repeat the blunder committed by Dr. Addison and spend the taxpayers' money upon building houses for private people, the only result will be to strengthen the building trade unions and increase their power to extort unjust terms from the rest of the community."

H. PERCY BOULNOIS.

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WEEKLY LECTURES.

Wed., 28th Feb., 8.15 p.m.	"If I were Home Secretary"	Miss NINA BOYLE
	"If I were Secretary for Foreign Affairs"	Miss V. V. J. ACHESON, (By kind arrangement of the Women's Freedom League)
Sat., 3rd Mar., 5.30 p.m.	Concert	Harpist: Mrs. GEORGE MORLEY, Singer: Mrs. PETER SMALL.
Wed., 7th Mar., 8.15 p.m.	"The World's Economic Unity"	Sir GEORGE PAISH.
Wed., 14th Mar., 8.15 p.m.	"National Economy"	Mrs. OGILVIE GORDON, J.P., D.Sc., Ph.D. Chairman Mr. NORMAN MORRISON.
Wed., 21st Mar., 8.15 p.m.	Debate: "The Dominant Sex"	Miss NINA BOYLE. Chairman Dr. JOSIAH OLDFIELD.

Luncheons, Teas & Dinners.

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