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CONTENTS.

	Page		Page
Traffic in Women and Children	81	Ireland	89
W.I.L. and Forced Labour	82	S. Africa	90
The Growth of Pre-School Education in U.S.A.	83	United States	90
Porto Rican Suffrage Bill	84	Women in Industry	91
Roumania	85	France	91
British Labour Women's Conference	85	Section Francaise :	
News in Brief	85	Société des Nations	92
Reports from Auxiliaries :		Suisse	92
Australia	86	Réglementation du Travail Féminin	92
Germany	86	France	94
Great Britain	87	Nouvelles Internationales	94
India	89		

TRAFFIC IN WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Report of the League of Nations Special Committee of Experts.

IN March, 1923, the representative of the United States (Miss Grace Abbott) submitted a recommendation to the Advisory Committee on Traffic in Women that a special investigation should be made into the traffic. The American Bureau of Social Hygiene offered to provide a large sum of money for this purpose, which offer was gratefully accepted and the Special Committee was appointed by the Council of the League in December of 1923. The Committee has now completed its Report and Part I. has been published under the number of C.52.1927 IV. (C.T.F.E./Experts/55), the Second Part being held back until its contents have been communicated to the Governments. It is in this Second Part that the detailed results of the investigation in each country are given, and it cannot be too strongly emphasised that its publication is absolutely necessary in the interests of the creation of an informed public opinion. The general statements already included in Part I. are sufficient to move all who read them to shame and pity, but only the knowledge of just how this abominable traffic affects each country individually will arouse and inform each national public as to the necessity for stringent measures for its repression.

The early efforts towards international action—so largely due to Josephine Butler and her fellow workers—and the subsequent International Convention prepared by the League of Nations in 1921 are shown as having done much to suppress the traffic, but the Report shows that it is still extensive. There does not appear to be evidence of a closely organised international machinery but the traffickers in the different

countries pass on information and play into each other's hands when it suits them to do so—i.e., when by so doing they increase, or at least do not diminish, their own prospects of gain. The large numbers of foreign women engaged in prostitution in different countries, prove their more or less systematic importation, since in a large number of cases they are registered as prostitutes almost immediately on arrival. With regard to the question of demand, the Report says: "We have definite evidence that licensed houses create a steady demand for new women and that this demand is met by traffickers and causes both national and international traffic." The pronouncement will be welcomed by abolitionists everywhere, since they have long been convinced of the importance of this aspect of systems of regulation of vice. The demand is definitely stimulated by the traffickers, who are quick to sense the possibilities of temporary markets arising from occasional or seasonal movements of population, i.e., visits of fleets, army manoeuvres, race meetings, industrial camps, etc. In some countries there is a surplus of men over women which tends to produce a more or less permanent demand. In addition to the demand for simple prostitution the traffickers create and supply—at higher prices—a demand for the worst forms of sexual perversion. In this connection the report states: "Tolerated Vice Districts become a canker of corruption in the midst of the community." It is the foreign women far from friends and even the small hope of protection they may have in their own country, who are more easily forced into these practices, and the Report mentions, "the value of brothels in breaking in

a new or inexperienced girl." Cruelty and starvation are used if necessary to force the girls to degrade themselves so that their owners may make the higher profits.

The traffic in women is definitely connected with the sale of drink and of obscene publications, possibly also of drugs, but this latter connection does not emerge so clearly. There is no doubt that profits are made from the sale of drink in practically all brothels, and many bars and dance halls employ girls to press the sale of drink, and these girls are either encouraged or even forced to prostitute themselves. Obscene photographs are often used as a means of getting hold of clients and are used by the girls themselves for profit and for "interesting" their customers.

The sources of supply for the traffic are fourfold. The larger number of girls decoyed abroad are already prostitutes in their own country and are induced to go by hopes of large earnings. They indeed know for what purpose they are going, but they are often unable to pay their own fare and are so bamboozled by the souteneur that they do not in the least realise the conditions to which they are going and their absolute defencelessness in a foreign country. Then there are the "semi-professional" or "complacent" girls—those who are ready to lead immoral lives, often for love or for casual gifts, and who are taken up by a souteneur as a lover and by him made to undertake regular prostitution. Thirdly, there are the artistes and entertainers who are lured away by promises of engagements, often on contracts so worded that they receive a salary too miserably insufficient to support their life upon, so that they are forced into prostitution to support themselves, even if the conditions in which they are employed are not, as is usually the case, such as to render it almost impossible for them to retain their self-respect. The last class is the most tragic of all—the "greenies" or inexperienced girls. These are frequently seduced by marriage, or alleged marriage, with a souteneur and are subsequently forced into prostitution by the "husband." Many of the girls in all classes are minors, their birth certificates being forged in cases where they are registered by the owners of the brothels. In the majority of cases, the unfortunate girl makes little out of her horrible life. She is nearly invariably tied in some way to a souteneur who takes a large proportion of her earnings, and if she is in a brothel, the Madame contrives that she is always in debt and so unable to get away.

The personnel of the traffic consists roughly speaking of "Principals," owners of licensed houses and capitalists who finance the souteneur. They are generally prosperous and have sometimes some ostensible business or profession as a cloak to their activities. Then come the "Madames" who manage the houses of prostitution, and who are frequently the wives of principals or souteneurs. Thirdly there are the actual souteneurs or procurers, who recruit the girls and place them in the houses of prostitution. Sometimes they simply sell the girl, but more often they keep her working for themselves and take most of the money from her. These men are always on the move recruiting fresh material, and they are experts in passport forgery and in evading transport and port regulations. Lastly there are the intermediaries who collect and pass on information as to likely sources of supply to the actual procurers, followed by a host of minor scoundrels who act as scouts, etc. All these people are in touch with one another, sometimes through definite clubs, but often through bars and other places which they frequent. In some countries there is stated to be a definite organisation.

The Report gives a summary of the main routes of the traffic and the methods taken to enter countries by fraudulent papers, or by evading the frontier control. There is a whole system for producing false papers, and as indicated above, the souteneur does not hesitate to contract a bigamous or even a real marriage with a girl in order to get her away. With his habits of

life, there is no great chance of his being found out. The increased precautions taken in many countries to deal with the traffickers have made things harder for them, and some countries are pretty generally avoided. The deportation or refusal of permission to land of women prostitutes has had a deterrent effect.

With regard to measures already adopted as the result of previous international agreements, the Report states that much more might be done in the way of exchange of information, in the precautions taken at ports and frontiers to detect the traffickers, and in the protection of girls by supervision of employment agencies and provision of safeguards for emigrants. Further it is considered that the whole matter is bound up with the age of consent, which in some countries is as low as 12, or in one instance even 10, and with the provision of laws which bring the souteneur under penal control. Finally a fine tribute is paid to the good work done by voluntary agencies.

This Report is extremely though painfully interesting, not that it is sensational—far from it. It probably contains no information which would come as a surprise to those who already know something of the exploitation of women, but it gives the seal of definite and careful investigation to matters which one may previously have doubted the truth of. The impression left is that, alas! things really are as bad as was feared. No one can read it without pity, horror and indignation, and no reader of our paper but will assuredly feel the need that those feelings should be translated into action. But for action with our Governments we need the second part—this is too general to act as a specific text. Still even this instalment can and should be used to stir up public opinion. I personally feel that it should be used to create public opinion especially among the young. Surely many a youth who with only a general moral impulse behind him lets himself be drawn into prostitution with the feeling that it is after all a personal question, would shrink from it if he realised to the full what a dirty, disgusting, hideous system he is encouraging! I believe that the social conscience might be touched where the individual conscience is deaf, and the idea of associating even ever so indirectly with the vilest of the earth in the exploitation of another human being, would cause a recoil on the part of those who regard purely sexual immorality as a thing apart, having no connection with a decent standard in other directions. K. B.

THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE AND THE PROBLEM OF FORCED LABOUR.

There is no need to hunt for problems as far as the League of Nations is concerned. The drawing up of the Slavery Convention presented to the 7th Assembly showed that the problem of forced labour was much deeper and wider than had been previously imagined.

The International Labour Office accordingly set up a special commission to deal with forced labour under the Slavery Convention, and the Director, Mr. Harold Grimshaw, who was largely responsible for it, addressed a conference on the subject last week at the offices of the W.I.L., which had arranged it. There were representatives of many Women's Organisations and of several Missionary Societies which have come face to face with this problem, particularly in Africa.

Mr. Grimshaw dealt chiefly with the safeguards which were necessary for the protection of the native. There was a strict medical examination, the necessity of paying attention to the proper diet, sanitary conditions, adequate remuneration, a limit to the distance and length of period away from home and the sanction of the Home Government before any forced labour was allowed.

The most difficult problem, however, was that of indirect forced labour where work for private profits was often disguised successfully as work of public utility—so successfully as to give the Governor

abundant scope to gratify his ambitions. For instance, where natives were forced to do the work of scavenging, the Governor by exercising a little imagination could easily convert the repairing of by-roads into the construction of by-roads thus opening up large tracts of land at a minimum expense.

In concluding, Mr. Grimshaw said that his remarks had all been based on the assumption that forced labour was permissible, but he looked forward to the time when it would be abolished—and this depended very considerably on public opinion.

After an extremely valuable discussion, led by Mr. T. H. Harris, it was decided to form a council of representatives of women's organisations and others and from this to appoint a Committee which would prepare a Memorandum dealing particularly with forced labour and women, to present to the I.L.O. Conference.

THE GROWTH OF PRE-SCHOOL AND PARENTAL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

By DR. HELEN THOMPSON WOOLLEY
(Director, Institute of Child Welfare Research,
Columbia University).



DR. HELEN THOMPSON WOOLLEY OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

The last ten years have seen a wave of interest on the pre-school period of life, which is evident in many parts of the world. It has apparently been precipitated by developments in several fields of research. Medicine has been demonstrating the fact that physical defects which prove to be a lifelong handicap to the individual may have their source in the pre-school period, and could be prevented or corrected at that time by sufficiently wise and scientific treatment. Psychiatry has advanced the theory that some of the mental disorders and many personality difficulties of later life are to be traced to habits of social reaction, or even to single, very vivid, experiences of early childhood. The seeds of difficulty may remain latent for years, and then under unusual stress develop into abnormal phenomena. Education has been taking cognizance of the fact that a great deal of education goes on before the child comes in contact with the school. Educators are asking themselves how much of the success or failure of the school period may be due to the unrecognised educational procedures of the home in the pre-school period. Finally the leaders in home economics who are preparing women for all phases of home making, are seeking better methods of training their students in the care and management of children.

Out of this varied interest has arisen a variety of attempts to throw light upon the problems of young childhood. Central to most of these efforts is the establishment of nursery schools which can serve as centres for research, for observation and for teaching. One reason that the scientific world has been so slow to attempt to deal with the problems of the very little child is that pre-school children have nowhere been available in groups for study. The nursery school furnishes such an opportunity. One cannot, within the limits of a paper like this, discuss the effect of nursery school attendance upon the child, but it would not be fair to let the topic pass without saying that the concerted opinion of those who have observed children in nursery schools and who have tested their mental and physical growth by scientific methods, is that they develop rather better than children who are kept full time in average or even superior homes. One need not feel, therefore, that the children who are being studied in nursery schools are in any sense victims who are sacrificed for knowledge! They are themselves profiting as well as making their contribution to science and to education. If this were not true, there would be a speedy end to nursery schools.

Most of us recognize, theoretically, the fact that any school education of children should be accompanied and reinforced by parental education. In dealing with the toddler this fact becomes particularly vivid. We are accustomed to regard the pre-school child as a being who is peculiarly dependent upon his parents for his life experiences. The leaders of scientific research in child development, are vividly aware of the fact that in order to make their findings really effective in modifying the lives of little children, they must be presented, in usable form, to the rank and file of parents. For this reason in all of the centres conducting research in the pre-school period, parental education is regarded as a vital aspect of the problem. The parents of the children in the nursery school are the first ones with whom contacts are established. Later, study groups and extension classes are formed among parents whose children have no access to nursery schools.

Like most "new" movements in education, pre-school and parental education have a long history. One need only remember the contributions of Comenius, Oberlin, Robert Owen, Froebel and Montessori to realise this . . . The newer movement of the last ten years is distinguished by being somewhat more official, and somewhat more scientific than previous attempts. In England nursery schools were made an official part of the system of public education by the Fisher Act of 1918. In this country the first attempts were under private auspices. The nursery of the Bureau of Educational Experiments in New York is one of the first and best known. In the last few years colleges, universities and public school systems have all undertaken nursery school experiments.

Outstanding among the pioneers, have been the Merrill-Palmer School in Detroit, the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station at Iowa City, and the Ruggles Street Nursery in Boston. In Iowa and in the Merrill-Palmer School, research and instruction at the college level were emphasised. At Ruggles Street the training of nursery school workers was stressed. Iowa furnished opportunities for its own students. The Merrill-Palmer School furnished opportunities for students from a wide variety of colleges and universities in the United States, who went to Detroit for limited periods of study. While there they devoted their time to courses dealing with the physical development, growth and nutrition of children; with their mental development; with methods of management and training; with educational technique as applied to young children; and with the study of their social backgrounds. When a few years later several of the larger universities began to establish bureaus for research with the pre-school child, the preliminary work at Merrill-Palmer and at Iowa was helpful in suggest-

ing the form of organisation. All of the university experiments are characterised by the attempt to do justice to every phase of child development. The students who are brought in contact with little children in these centres are taught to consider the whole child, as a physical being, as a mental being, and as a social being.



CHILDREN IN A NURSERY SCHOOL IN DETROIT.

In addition to Iowa there are two other large universities that now have well developed institutes of child welfare research, Columbia and Minnesota. In several other centres, notably Cornell, McGill University, Toronto and Ames, Iowa, somewhat less ambitious projects are under way in which teaching child development is stressed and some research is undertaken. Members of the staff of the university are concerned with establishing new norms of mental and physical development, with studying nutrition in young childhood, with establishing measurements of mental development and with the attempt to record behaviour and personality traits. All of them take cognizance of the social background of the problem. Most of them are attempting to make some contribution to educational procedures at the pre-school level. Emphasis, of course, differs in different centres according to the facilities and the special interest represented in the faculty.

Recently two of the large women's colleges of the United States, Vassar and Smith, have established work in this field. Vassar has a new building devoted to eugenics, and is this year building a nursery school. Last summer Vassar held its first Institute of Euthenics. Young mothers, most of them college graduates, came with the children and spent a month. The children were placed in a nursery school where they were given full-time care during the day. The school took over the problem of feeding and physical care, as well as that of the educational routine. The mothers meanwhile occupied themselves with courses of instruction dealing with various phases of child development. The reports from Vassar show an enthusiasm among the students, a vividness of interest and a vitality of discussion not often encountered in academic instruction. Young mothers really wished to know about their children, and this seems to be a particularly effective way of teaching them.

At Smith the angle of interest is somewhat different. The bureau there is concerned with a co-ordination of women's interest. It is trying to find out various ways in which the task of keeping house and bringing up a family may be simplified, by co-operative effort, with

a view to freeing the mother's time for some independent life of her own. Smith also has its nursery school conducted by experts. The aspect being studied at Smith is the effect of nursery school attendance upon the mother and the home, and the contribution it may make to the solution of the multitudinous problems which confront the educated mother of young children.

Parental education also has a past. The Child Study Association of America has been at work for some thirty years conducting study groups, collecting suitable materials, itself contributing to the literature of the field and finding out how to organise child study work in a way which is really useful to parents. Recently the extension divisions of the universities have also been conducting courses in child care for parents. The American Association of University Women has during the last three years organised study groups of mothers all over the country, and issued printed materials to guide them. All of these ventures are now co-operating with the Institutes of Child Welfare Research. They are the agencies which are in a position to take over scientific findings made at the Institutes; to see to it that they assume a form in which they can be passed on to parents; and to experiment with conducting group study of parents.

The last development in the university field is the establishment of courses of instruction for leaders in parental education. The demand on the part of intelligent parents to have an opportunity to learn what there is to know about children, is very great. They want trained and scientific leadership. It is the task of the university to furnish such leaders.

If the concerted efforts of scientists in the field of medicine, of psychology, of education and of sociology, and that of leaders of popular education can result in making parents more intelligent about the developmental years of their children, and the factors which make for the production of superior human beings, the importance of the contribution for human welfare cannot be over-estimated.

PORTO RICAN SUFFRAGE BILL INTRODUCED.

Following the successful operation of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, Senator Hiram Bingham, Connecticut Republican, has introduced a woman suffrage amendment to the organic act of Porto Rico.

The amendment, which was drafted by Margaret Lambie of the National Woman's Party, reads: "And provided further, That the right to vote shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex."

Senator Bingham is a member of the Senate Committee on Territories and Insular Possessions, and has visited Porto Rico several times. There he has found boys and girls educated in the same schools, and women as well educated as men, but denied the franchise, despite the fact that they are American citizens.

Porto Ricans were granted suffrage by Act of Congress on March 2, 1917, but the question of suffrage was left to the Porto Rican Legislature, which so far has failed to enfranchise the women. Senator Bingham believes that, had the organic act been passed after the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was adopted, the women of Porto Rico would have been enfranchised by it. As it was adopted prior to that time, when American women still lacked the suffrage, the provision for equal suffrage was not included. Senator Bingham thinks it is high time this injustice is corrected.

Senator Bingham said in an interview following his introduction of the bill that he felt that the enfranchisement of Porto Rican women would be merely an act of justice, already too long delayed. He added that he believed that the Porto Rican women could aid by their votes in bringing the "back-country" schools of Porto Rico to a higher standard.—"Equal Rights."

ROUMANIA.

A Resolution on the Civil Rights of Women.

All the feminist societies, federated as "The Union of Roumanian Women," have sent to the Prime Minister, General Averesco, a memorandum asking for the equalisation of civil rights between men and women. This memorandum is founded on the text of Article 6 of the new Constitution, which states that the new Civil Code shall be based on the principle of full equality between the sexes. It was signed by the Presidents of all the Women's Societies, and after some delay General Averesco has sent it on to the Minister of Justice with the following resolution:—"It is time that women were given a better position in regard to their civil rights."

Mr. Cudalbu, the Minister of Justice, is a good feminist, and has declared that he is rejoiced to have the opportunity of dealing with this question. He has promised to introduce a single clause Bill before the Legislative Assembly at the beginning of the session which will finally settle the question.

SMARAGDA MALTOPOLU.



RECEPTION TO MME. PLAMINKOVA AT THE LYCEUM CLUB, MADRID (See March issue).

BRITISH NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LABOUR WOMEN, HUDDERSFIELD, MAY 11th and 12th, 1927.

The First Agenda for the National Conference of Labour Women has just been issued and covers no less than 228 resolutions, many of which have the names of several organisations appended to them. Mrs. Hood, J.P., who is Chairman of the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations for this year, will preside and everything points to a large attendance of delegates.

The Conference opens with a resolution recording admiration for the magnificent heroism shown by miners' wives during the lock-out. The resolutions show that the two subjects on which most interest will be displayed are those of Birth Control and War and Peace. Questions of Family Endowment, Education, Housing and Health are well to the fore, and a host of resolutions on the Franchise for women at 21 occupies a prominent position.

The Conference is representative of the rank and file of women in the political, industrial and co-operative movements, and anybody reading the agenda will realise what subjects are taking first place in the minds of active Labour women throughout the community.

The Conference will be preceded by a private business conference for women delegates of Women's Sections and Labour Parties which will be held on May 10th, under the chairmanship of Dr. Marion Phillips,

and matters of organisation will be thoroughly discussed.

NEWS IN BRIEF.

The following paragraphs are largely taken from miscellaneous press sources and their accuracy is not vouched for by our National Auxiliaries.

CANADA.

British Columbia.

Women members are to be admitted to the Anglican Synod of British Columbia, provided that at least 50 per cent. of the elected representatives of each parish consists of male communicants.

Quebec.

The Quebec Legislature has defeated by 51 votes to 13 a motion to give the franchise to women in the Provincial elections. Both Mr. Taschereau, the Premier, and Mr. Sauve, leader of the Opposition, voted against the motion. Four members of the Government voted with the minority.

GREAT BRITAIN.

Women as Chairmen.

The London County Council Local Government Records and Museums Committee has asked the County Council to appoint Lady Eve as Chairman of the Committee.

Recently Miss Rosamund Smith was elected Chairman of the L.C.C. Theatres Committee.

A Sex War Again.

A petition has been presented to the Hebdomadal Council asking that the number of women to be admitted into Oxford in any academic year should not exceed 250. In 1920 the full privileges enjoyed by men were finally conceded to women. One of these privileges was the right of women's colleges to fix their own numbers. Why should this elementary right be filched away from them? The four women's colleges have already fixed a maximum number.

GERMANY.

Women police are to be appointed in Hamburg, and will take up their duties on April 1. In announcing the fact the Chief of Police states that every effort will be made to render the Hamburg police force "the friend of the entire population."

INDIA.

Mrs. Parvathi Anmal Chandrasekhara Iyer has been nominated by the Mysore Government as a member of the Bangalore District Board. This is the first time the claims of Mysore women have been recognised in regard to service outside the Departments of Education and Public Health.

IRELAND.

The first woman land surveyor for the Government has been appointed by the Irish Land Commission on their outdoor staff.

She is Miss Iris Cummins, a fully qualified civil engineer, and a member of the Women's Engineering Society.

Miss Cummins was the first woman to take a Bachelor's degree in Engineering, which she did in Dublin, just before the outbreak of war. During the war she worked at the Rosyth Dockyard.

UNITED STATES.

Woman Diplomat Promoted.

Lucille Atcherson, third secretary of legation at Berne, Switzerland, the first woman appointed to the United States diplomatic service, is to be transferred to Panama as secretary of the legation in that city. She has been serving at Berne since July, 1924. The transfer, which is regarded as a promotion, will be made in the next few weeks.

Woman in Cabinet.

While there has never been a woman Cabinet member in the National Government, Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York has appointed Mrs. Charles Bennett Smith, head of the New York State Department of Civil Service, as a member of his Cabinet.

Mrs. Smith is the only woman member of Governor Smith's Cabinet.

REPORTS FROM AUXILIARIES

AUSTRALIA.

Women's League of New South Wales.

Representatives from the affiliated bodies of the Australian Women's Equal Citizenship Federation met at the Women's League headquarters, Bathurst House, 27/1/27.

Mrs. Jamieson Williams presided, and the business dealt with was the proposed Australian Women's Conference to be held in Sydney in May or June of this year, under the auspices of the Australian Federation of Women's Societies for Equal Citizenship.

Suggested subjects for discussion:—

1. Australia in relation to Empire and International Affairs.
2. Migration (Commonwealth Viewpoint).
3. Australia's social and economic standing among the Nations.
4. The League of Nations and World Peace.
 - a. Conference—Reports and Resolutions covering:
 - (a) Paris Congress.
 - (b) British Commonwealth League.
 - (c) Australian Federation Work.
 - (d) Standing Committees of the International Women's Suffrage Alliance.

It was resolved that the question of Liquor Reform be given serious consideration at the Conference, and that under the Standing Committee on Social Questions, Sex Hygiene be discussed.

On the subject of voting power, it was unanimously agreed that each State should have one vote, also that the affiliated bodies in N.S.W. contribute £3 towards the preliminary expenses of Conference.

It was decided to entertain Miss Bage, the Australian Woman Delegate to the League of Nations Assembly on her arrival in Sydney at afternoon tea, date and place to be announced later.

EMILY BENNETT, *Hon. Secretary.*

CUBA.

The Partido Nacional Sufragista has been holding a very interesting and well-attended series of meetings on the demand for woman suffrage and other rights for women, one of which was presided over by the Secretary of State, Colonel Rogerio Zayas Bazan, who declared himself as a supporter of women's rights.

GERMANY.

Generaloberin Agnes Karll.

One of Germany's pioneer women has recently passed away. After a long and painful illness, Agnes Karll, the prominent founder and president of the National Council of Nurses, died, February 12th, in her 59th year, in Berlin. As honorary president of the International Council of Nurses, honorary member of the Matrons' Council and the National Council of Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the Svensk Sjukskoterskeforening av 1910, she was well-known to the nurses' organisations in other lands, and one of the most popular personalities at their international gatherings. So her death, which means an irreparable loss for her countrywomen, will, to be sure, meet also with the heartfelt sympathy of her colleagues all over the world. Agnes Karll was one of those rare, born leaders who will sacrifice their whole life and being, body and soul, to their work, who will concentrate every thought, all their will and powers, upon one sole object, and who, with unerring certainty, will find out the right ways and means to carry out their far-reaching plans.

Agnes Karll took up her work about 25 years ago, her own experience as a nurse having brought home to her the burning wants and needs in her profession. When owing to the enormous progress of medical science and methods, as well as to our social legislation with its obligatory care for the sick, the demand for an adequate nursing personnel could not be met any longer

either in quantity or quality by the religious orders in whose hands it had until then mainly lain, the first so-called "secular" groups were started. They were free from the compulsions of the religious orders, but, on the other hand, exposed to many social and economic inconveniences, to overcome these, to attain better training and working conditions, and after an obligatory and thorough theoretical and practical preparation, official state recognition for nursing sisters—these were the aims which Agnes Karll and her brave comrades had in view, when, under the auspices of the German National Council of Women, at its biennial meeting in Wiesbaden, 1902, they first brought their cause before the great public. Soon afterwards—January, 1903—they started their national organisation (Berufsorganisation der Krankenschwestern Deutschlands) which, under the excellent leadership of Agnes Karll, rapidly developed and, step by step, obtained most of the improvements she so energetically and impressively had claimed. A most effective impetus for her national work was the connection with the International Council of Nurses to which the German organisation affiliated during the I.C.W.'s Congress in Berlin, 1904.

The height of the outward success of A. K.'s life's work was marked, perhaps, by the International Congress of Nurses in Cologne, 1912. The hard war and post-war times, and the unpleasing and degrading experiences with the voluntary, untrained nurses were a fatal check for the profession and a source of deep sorrow and constant care to their leader. But with unbroken courage, though often hampered by bodily suffering, and with all her wonderful energy and devotion she endeavoured to overcome this critical period. Supported by a first-class staff of co-workers she could already claim many a new success, when death made an end to all her comprehensive plans and hopes for the future of her beloved sisters, and to a noble life that was devoted entirely to their welfare.

Women in Ecclesiastical Bodies.

Since the German women have gained political emancipation, the religious communities could not forbear to grant them the vote and eligibility to their representative bodies and boards as far, of course, as they are based on a representative system. The Union of Evangelical Women's Societies have recently issued some interesting statistics on the number of women in the parochial bodies and councils of Great Berlin, which shows a rather satisfactory result: not less than 1625 women members, all in all, 1084 in Berlin City and 541 in the suburbs. Of these 142 in Berlin and 58 in the suburbs belong to the church councils (boards of executive) and 942 in Berlin and 483 in the suburbs to the communal representatives. That means an average percentage of 25-30 for the latter, and a percentage of 20 for the councils. It is a significant feature that, of all these women members, in Berlin 66 per cent. are married, while in the rural parishes the percentage of the married women is about 90-100 per cent.

MARIE STRITT.

Dresden, March 17th.

GREAT BRITAIN.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

Equal Franchise.

The most important event of the month with regard to feminist reforms in Great Britain has been the reception by the Prime Minister of a deputation of women's organisations which had been asked for so long. As the deputation was received in his private room at the House of Commons the numbers were limited to 24. It was made clear, however, that these 24 represented 75 organisations. Lady Astor introduced the deputation and the speakers included Miss

EDITOR'S NOTE.

With reference to the final paragraph in the Report from the N.U.S.E.C. dealing with the resignation of certain members of their Executive, we think it fair to append a letter sent by these members to the Press as follows:—

Sir,—Our action in resigning from the Executive Committee of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship was not due to any division on the question of equal suffrage. We wholeheartedly support the demand for equal franchise at the age of twenty-one.

In our opinion, however, the time has come to make an effort to recall the Union to first principles. It is not our intention to leave the Union, but to work within it for its return to right lines. We could not do that as members of the Executive bound to carry out the policy laid down by the annual council. That is why we resigned. Several decisions of the council show an increasing tendency to overlook the fundamental object of the Union—equal status of women with men.

We wish to see the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, in fact as in name, remain a body to work for equality. Its function is to secure reforms in any and every sphere, political, social and economic, in so far as they conduce to such equality, but giving precedence always to equal franchise, equal moral standard, equal pay and opportunities and the removal of the disabilities of married women. The Union represents every shade of political thought and opinion, and is united only by the desire to establish equality between the sexes.

Since equality is our object, the merits on which the Union is bound to consider any proposal are whether that proposal does or does not promote this object. The new policy, by setting up additional tests, modifies and qualifies our object, and if persisted in will further weaken the driving force of the Union.

Equal citizenship, the object for which the Union exists, is in itself essential to the well-being of the community. The new policy, by implication, denies that our object does promote this well-being.

In our view, one of the chief points of the Union's programme is equal opportunity for men and women, professionally and industrially, and in particular a demand that regulations of the conditions and hours of work shall be based on the nature of the occupation, and not on the sex of the worker, a policy long established and fundamental.

To acquiesce in this change of fundamental principles would have been a betrayal of the women's movement for which we have been working, some of us, for more than thirty years.—Yours, etc.,

(Signed) DOROTHY BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH.
WINIFRED SODDY.
ELIZABETH ABBOTT.
FLORENCE M. BEAUMONT.
E. BETHUNE BAKER.
HELEN FRASER.
CHRISTAL MACMILLAN.
F. DE G. MERRIFIELD.
C. PHILLIPS.
J. ROBIE UNIACKE.
MONICA WHATELY.

March 9th, 1927.

THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

Our Hon. Treasurer, Dr. Elizabeth Knight, represented us on the recent Deputation to the Prime Minister on the question of the equal enfranchisement of women and men. We are now awaiting his announcement on this subject which is to be made in the House of Commons before Easter. In the meantime we are, together with other women's organisations affiliated to the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee, vigorously working in the constituencies where we have branches or groups of members to get up public meetings for equal franchise and to arrange a deputation of residents in the constituencies to their Members of Parliament asking these Members to do

E.M.H.

Rathbone (N.U.S.E.C.), Lady Rhondda (Six Point Group), Dr. Knight (Women's Freedom League), Mrs. Hood (Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations), Miss Froud (National Union of Women Teachers), and Miss Parnell (an under-thirty) (St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance). Mr. Baldwin told the deputation it was one of the best he had ever received, that he had carefully noted the points made, and finally that an announcement would be made in the House of Commons before Easter.

Two days after the deputation was received a statement appeared in "The Times" to the effect that the Cabinet Committee which had been considering the question of Equal Franchise, and had examined schemes such as giving the vote to women over thirty on the same terms as men, making the minimum voting age for both men and women 25, etc., had finally decided to recommend the extension of the franchise to women from the age of 21 and on the same terms as men. There seems, therefore, to be every reason to hope that legislation will be introduced on these lines before the next General Election. This probably means that the matter will be tackled next year, and if there is no unexpectedly early General Election, Equal Franchise seems to be well in sight. The only opposition to be feared is that of the more backward Conservative Members of Parliament. Women's Organisations, therefore, will be organising intensive campaigns in the constituencies of those who have not as yet signalled their support.

Annual Council Meeting.

The Annual Council Meeting was, but for the unfortunate incident which marred the last morning, an unqualified success, being both larger and showing a keener spirit among the younger women than at any previous Council since the war. The Mass Meeting on Equal Franchise was well attended, largely by professional and industrial women, and excellent speeches were delivered by Miss Bondfield, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and others. At the Public Luncheon there were over 400 guests. Lord Cecil explained that the greatest of inequalities between men and women arise out of War, and made a great plea for women's work for peace. Resolutions were passed by the Council on Equal Franchise, Protective Legislation, Abolition of the Solicitation Laws, the Need for More Women Police, Equal Pay in Civil and Municipal Services, and on Legislation before Parliament, etc., etc.

The Immediate Programme of the Union remains the same as last year. The policy of the Union with regard to Protective Legislation has been modified to this extent, that while reaffirming the principle that protective regulation should be based on the nature of the work and not on the sex of the worker, it was decided that regulations should be considered on their merits, and that both the welfare and wishes of the workers should be taken into account when deciding whether in any particular case this principle should be carried out by working for the inclusion of men or by the exclusion of women.

Unfortunately on the last morning of the Council Meeting the Honorary Secretary, Lady Balfour of Burleigh, the Honorary Treasurer, Mrs. Soddy, and nine members of the Executive Committee, including Mrs. Abbott, Miss Macmillan and Miss Merrifield, resigned on account of the new policy with regard to Protective Legislation, and on account of the Council's interpretation of "equality." The whole Council felt it unfortunate that these resignations were made in public and at a time when all should be united in order to try to bring about the great reform on which all were in agreement, Equal franchise. The Societies have, however, in nearly every case rallied to the support of the Executive Committee, which will shortly be filling some of the vacancies by co-option.

all they can to ensure that the Government's announcement includes the promise of a simple equal franchise measure which will give votes to women at 21 and on the same terms as men, and which will be passed into law with the least possible delay.

We are strongly supporting Sir Robert Newman's *Married Women (Employment) Bill*, the object of which is to prevent Government Departments and local governing authorities from dismissing, or refusing to employ, women solely because they are married; and we are asking our Branches to assure their local Members of Parliament of their support of this Bill and to urge those Members to be in the House of Commons and give every possible support to its Second Reading on April 29th.

On Saturday, April 30th, we are holding our Twentieth Annual Conference, when resolutions dealing with the policy and work of our League will be discussed and voted upon by Branch delegates, and the President, Hon. Treasurer, and members of our National Executive Committee will be elected.

F. A. UNDERWOOD.

HUNGARY. Elections.

My last report, written just before our recent elections, anticipated our forebodings concerning the coming event. The returns were even worse than our misgivings had expected them to be. They were disastrous for the whole opposition, but especially for the progressive parties. Some of the parties were entirely wiped out, we have but a single, rather insignificant Member of the Kossuth Party, which was Károlyi's pacifist and republican party, and also the legitimists lost all their mandates but one, which Count Apponyi holds. Such was the result of our latest and yet mediæval Suffrage Laws, which revived our superannuated open voting. The 196 open voting districts elected Bethlen's adherents as the local authorities bid them to do. Even in the very few (forty-six) districts which voted by secret ballot, the parties were handicapped by the large number of signatures the candidates' lists had to have. In this way the voters were controlled and coerced. This resulted in the withdrawal of many candidates of the opposition—a good many lists although quite correct were still rejected—and therefore a surprising number of "unanimous" elections. Without the secret ballot districts Hungary would have served as an illustration of "one fold and one shepherd." But although our Prime Minister in his canvassing speeches changed colour like a chameleon, promising everything to every man, the returns of the ballot-boxes of Budapest secured 65 per cent. votes for the left.

In spite of the sweeping number of government-mandates, not a single one was granted to a woman, and our Parliament had to put up again with a sole woman M.P. We Feminists have ample cause to rejoice, that this one should be our wonderful friend, Anna Kéthly, who was re-elected on the Social Democratic list. The Upper-House, a Phoenix reborn of its ashes, is only representative of the masculine sex. The National Hungarian Council of Women, of which our Feministák Egyesülete is a member, claimed the nomination of a woman member, but did not succeed in its attempt. We have no illusions as to the activities of this Parliament, and we are afraid that the splendour which was displayed at its opening was the last blaze of light, which shone from this quarter.

Lectures and Discussions.

The list of our lecturers of this season was augmented by some famous names. *Mr. Runham Brown*, the leader of the War Resisters' International, passing through our city between two trains, gave an account of the history and work of his organisation to a limited number of invited members. We admired his firm conviction, his courageous and persevering work.

Reverend Cjeh, the former secretary of our lamented friend, Msgr. Giesswein, and who is now the secretary

of the Esperanto headquarters in Geneva, on a visit home, gave us a delightful and inspiring lecture on the necessity and importance of Esperanto. It was a relief and comfort to find again a priest of pure Christian spirit paying not merely lip-service, but also preaching love and peace.

Doctor Pándy, a well-known physician, gave us a vivid account of the Dorpat International Antialcoholic Congress, and informed us of the results of this movement.

Last, not least *Mrs. Bródy*, our member and very zealous and active also in the Democratic Party, made a powerful speech in our Society. It was very gratifying to hear, that in her political activities she came to the same conclusions as the International Suffrage movement has proclaimed for many years: women must take part in political life in greater numbers, and more intensely than before in order to purify it, to serve, with their faculties of self sacrifice and devotion, public welfare in preference to party politics. Their idealism and optimism are particularly necessary in Hungary at present, where men have lost their faith and courage, and are apt to give up the fight. She thinks that a non-party neutral place, like the Feministák Egyesülete is particularly fit to bring women together who are interested in public questions, and not attracted by party work. Her inspiring and enthusiastic lecture was received with great applause, and our president suggested discussing the very valuable ideas in future meetings. This was accepted with unanimous approval, and we are looking forward to some interesting discussions and good results.

Our board is watching every opportunity in public life to safeguard feminist principles. The Minister of the Interior called a conference, at which he made known his proposed reforms concerning public morals. To our great relief he declared, that by May, 1928, all brothels in Hungary are to be closed, and no new concessions are to be issued meanwhile. As other places for sexual intercourse are still to be permitted and regulated, we consider the contemplated closings of the brothels but a first step towards complete abolition, which must be the final aim, for which we shall never weary in working. The proposed new regulation contains also a great danger for women of a certain occupation. The Minister suggests that waitresses and the women serving in hotels should be obliged to submit to special medical examinations, and on entering an employment should give proof of their state of health. In a board-meeting, our Society passed a resolution to protest against this attempt to degrade thus an honourable occupation to the level of prostitution, and declared its apprehension, that no respectable woman will henceforth undertake this work, and therefore another occupation will be closed to women. Our communication respecting this resolution of protest was published on conspicuous places with large headings in the best papers. We mean to keep alive this question so as to prevent the publication of this part of the ministerial order.

The Minister of Justice is said to contemplate the re-establishment and reform of the Court of Juries. In our next report we shall give an account of the result of our activities in order to secure this right to women in Hungary, which up to now has been denied to them.

We shall also try to persuade our local authorities to endorse in their vast house-building plan, the creation of co-operative housekeeping, i.e., the building of mansions suited for this purpose.

Our next lecture will be on the means to encourage and facilitate travelling and circulation of foreigners. We consider this as a good way towards development of international brotherhood, and for the promotion of a lasting peace. We hope also to welcome here in future a great number of our dear fellow workers from all over the world. Do respond to this hearty invitation, please!

EUGENIE MISKOLCZY MELLER.

INDIA.

Madras Goes Ahead.

The first province in India to enfranchise women to its Legislature, the first in which a woman was nominated (the first also, along with the Punjab, for a woman to have contested a seat in open election) to it, Madras has the honour also of being first in having unanimously elected a woman as the Deputy President of the Legislative Council. While congratulating Srimati Muthulakshmi Ammal, M.L.C., on the great honour that has been done to her, we congratulate the other members of the Legislative Council on their chivalry in having bestowed it upon her. The functions of the Deputy President of the Council, like those of the President in whose absence she will conduct the business, are very onerous and responsible. We have no doubt Srimati Muthulakshmi Ammal will acquit herself admirably in that office, as she has been doing in all the activities with which she is connected, and prove the capacity of Indian womanhood for any work that it may undertake or be entrusted with. In his opening address to the Madras Council, the Governor gave out certain interesting facts about the polling by women at the recent elections. Of the 116,536 women voters in the Presidency, there were about 106,274 registered voters in contested constituencies, and 19.3 per cent. went to the polls. In the previous elections, in 1923, out of 82,367 registered voters, 9,361 or 11.36 per cent. went to the polls. With proper facilities at the polling booths for lady volunteers to guide their sisters how to exercise their franchise, and perhaps also a lady polling officer, we are sure the percentage will show a still more considerable increase. We are also happy to note that the Madras University has five lady members on its Senate—Miss Serena E. J. Zacharias, B.A., L.T., elected by the registered graduates, Miss K. C. Kousalya, B.A., L.T., by the Academic Council and Miss Lowe, M.A., Mc.Sc., Mrs. Paul Appaswami, B.A., and Mrs. R. Lakshmiapati, B.A., nominated by the Chancellor.

But Others Left Behind.

The rejoicing of Madras at this honour to its womanhood is, however, very much tempered by the disappointment at the unjust treatment which the sister provinces have received at the hands of their respective Governments, sadly lacking in imagination. No other Legislature in India except Madras has women members. Enlightened and forward Bombay, it was believed in the beginning, would have two members, Miss Engineer, M.A., LL.B., and Srimati Anusaya Sarabhai, the able President of the Ahmedabad Textile Union. But to the shame of the Bombay Government the nomination list contains no woman's name whatever. The Punjab Governor has missed the lesson of the unique feature of the elections in his province, of a lady contesting at the polls. So have the Governors of other provinces also failed to appreciate the time-spirit. The saddest omission is in the Legislative Assembly, where important measures affecting the welfare of women and children are to be considered. We wonder whether the Governor-General can yet rectify the mistake and nominate at least one woman. In the meanwhile, women all over India should actively organise themselves and work, so that every Legislature in the country contains women representatives at least in its next term, and that their interests are properly recognised and served during the interval.

And Burma Too!

That, of all places, Burma should have needed a proposal to enfranchise women is the most anomalous position of the present political arrangements, divorced from the social life and tradition of the people. Yet a resolution was brought forward on the subject on 3rd instant, by Mr. A. Maung Gye, M.L.C., and lost. The arguments advanced against it by the Home Member of the Government were most curious. Women were not "versed" in the political institutions of the present kind (but so, may we remind him, were men

too not versed in them till they came in as members?) He admitted the existence of many women's associations in Burma. But they had not made representations on the subject! The Government, however, was aware of the general feeling in the matter and issued a cowardly order prohibiting a peaceful demonstration of women, marching up to the Council Chamber when the subject was to be discussed. The procession, therefore, could go only as far as the gates of the Secretariat, which were closed against them and guarded by the police. It is interesting to know that the leader of the procession, Mrs. Paw Tun, is the wife of the Deputy President of the Council, and she returned the passes for admission to the visitors' gallery, at this insult of the Government to Burman womanhood. The Home Member's solicitude for the priesthood's probable feelings against women legislators is amusing after the outrage which the Burman religious sentiment suffered some years ago, by the Europeans carrying their shoes into the inner precincts of the Pagoda, when the Government for a long time remained blissfully neutral.—*Stri Dharmā.*

NOTES FROM IRELAND.

Family Allowances in Northern Ireland.

Under the auspices of the Belfast Women Citizens' Union, a tour was arranged for Miss Courtney, Vice-Chairman Family Endowment Council. Meetings were addressed in Londonderry and in Belfast, where great interest was taken in the question. The union is greatly indebted to Miss Courtney for the unsparing labour she devoted to the cause. The clear and exhaustive exposition of the case for Family Allowances made a great impression, and it will be possible to carry on the work of propaganda in this direction.

The outstanding difficulties are two-fold. In the first place, the working women are incredulous. They simply do not believe this vision of even a small payment per week, direct to themselves, will ever be achieved. They prefer the theory that a general rise in wages should be made, to meet the admitted difficulties arising from heavy rents, high cost of fuel, etc. It is difficult to present the impossibility of such a rise with sufficient clearness to convince them, owing to the complicated economic considerations involved, but the value of even a quite small sum of money, paid direct to the mother, was recognised by all. They only thought it "too good to be true."

Annual Meeting of the Belfast Women Citizens' Union.

The annual meeting of this Union was this year mainly occupied with the question of equal franchise. This cannot be obtained in Northern Ireland until passed in the Imperial Parliament, hence the deep concern with which proceedings there are watched. A short history of the society, which before enfranchisement was known as the Belfast Suffrage Society, was given by Miss Dora Mellone, and it was pointed out that continuous work had been carried on for fifteen years.

Recent legislation in the Imperial Parliament was reviewed, and the fact that five measures of importance to women and children have been carried without any corresponding action on the part of the Government of Northern Ireland, was noted as an additional reason for demanding equal suffrage, since in this manner the voting strength of women would be increased. With regard to this legislation, a special effort is being made to secure some action during the coming Session of the Northern Parliament. Members of the Lower House have been circularised, and deputations asked for. It is greatly to be regretted that time should have to be spent in pressing for perfectly obvious and simple reforms against which there is practically no objection. However, Governments all over the world seem to prefer to keep women waiting till the latest possible moment before giving way on points where concession is clearly inevitable. It is a way Governments have. Meanwhile there is steady increase of

interest. The meeting arranged for Miss Courtney was practically an overflow, though the subject was entirely new. Public men, such as the Vice-Chancellor of the University in Belfast, have found time to speak at one of the fortnightly meetings on Adult Education. It only remains to convert the Government to the realisation that women's organisations are worth consideration.

"Protection" for Women in the Irish Free State.

One touch of nature makes all Governments kin. The touch in this case is the desire to protect women. The Government of the Irish Free State is possessed by this desire. Two years ago they carried a measure under which women could be excluded from departments of the Civil Service at will. The special department under consideration was said to be that concerned with night duty at the Custom House, etc. Oddly enough, they forgot to take any steps to "protect" nurses in, say, the most lonely parts of Connemara or the worst slums in Dublin from this duty. Now it is jury service again. An Act had previously been carried, allowing voluntary exemption. Now the Minister of Justice proposes to exclude women from jury service altogether. With the traditional perversity of their sex, women, represented by their organisations, are not grateful. A lively correspondence has been carried on through the Press. A joint conference of all women's societies has been formed to take charge of the work. Lobbying has been reduced to a fine art. The aggrieved Minister talks much of the "self-appointed spokeswomen" who do not represent their sex, since only a small percentage of women, when tempted by the prospect of voluntary exemption, remained true to the call of citizenship. Even the Press found this rather difficult to accept, and comments were made on the possible numbers of men who would go forth to do their duty, were they invited to save themselves by filling up a form. Further, it was pointed out in the Dail and outside that women who had kept their names on the register, for example, where a working dressmaker attended the Court, had been kept for three days doing nothing, and were then discharged with the information that their services were not required. The Minister has accepted an amendment providing for the establishment of a voluntary panel. Women, of course, refuse this, as it will simply mean that all women willing to do their civic duty will be regarded as especially interested in disagreeable cases. Also all these special provisions for women belong to that period when the woman was regarded as the "female of the species," not as a human being with equal duties and equal rights to the man.

The Minister is not content with protecting women from the dangers of the jury box. Women stenographers are also excluded from the Courts. Presumably young men may with safety be exposed to these risks. It only remains, as was pointed out in the Press, to protect women completely, and shut them out from the dock and the witness box. Those who remember how often a child has to act as witness in "unsavoury cases," will have scant patience with all this sort of talk.

DORA MELLONE.

SOUTH AFRICA.

As briefly reported in the March issue, the South African Parliament refused leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the extension of the franchise to include European women in the election of members of the House of Assembly and Provincial Councils, moved by Mr. Mullineux. The history of this Bill is one of those tragicomic histories with which old suffrage workers are so familiar. The Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union of South Africa has always made its demand for the franchise "on the same terms as it is or may be given to men." The native men have the franchise in one Province only, the Cape, and the women were continually told that they would never get the franchise on the above terms as there is so much prejudice against the coloured voter, and the vote would

never be given to coloured women. At the Select Committee appointed to enquire into this question the men did their best to make the various women questioned say: "We ask for the vote for European women," but all they would say was: "We will accept the wording but because we cannot get it in any other manner, and this will at least help us to win equal privileges for coloured women too, and to carry out other reforms." This was made quite clear. However, when the Bill was moved there was a howl from the members of the South African Party that this was making a "colour-bar," and was most unjust to the black and coloured women! The injustice to white women does not appear to have troubled them! The notice of the motion to ask leave to introduce the Bill was met with "derisive laughter" according to some Press reports—English suffragists have heard plenty of derisive laughter, but it is sad to learn that the immense change in the status of women all over the world has not yet taught the South African Parliament to treat their just demands with decency. The South African Party members, many of them voted against the introduction of the Bill, along with the Nationalists and Labour members, although the Party nominally supports woman suffrage. As our Correspondent, Miss Dorman, of Port Elizabeth, says: "In future, at election times I shall do nothing, and I hope other suffragists will refuse to help the men." She refers, of course, to individual support, as the Enfranchisement Association is non-party. Truly the way of South African suffragists is hard; they are up against difficulties of race, of distance and of prejudice which would induce a feeling of despair in fighters less persistent and courageous than suffragists have proved to be in every country.

UNITED STATES.

The federal Congress adjourned on March 4 having passed four measures supported by the National League of Women voters.

(1) Adherence of the United States to the Permanent Court of International Justice. Reservations were, however, attached to our acceptance of the protocol and other countries have not accepted them.

(2) A two-year extension of the Sheppard-Towner Act—an Act passed in 1921 with an appropriation for five years for education in the hygiene of maternity and infancy. In its final form the bill carried an amendment providing that the present Act should come to an end at the close of this additional two-year period.

(3) A Bill placing the agents who enforce the National Prohibition Act under civil service. Part of the difficulty of enforcement has been due to the appointment of enforcement officers for political reasons. The League believes that the application of the merit system in this department will improve its efficiency.

(4) A Bill consolidating administration of welfare activities in the District of Columbia and creating a Board of Public Welfare. Since residents in the District of Columbia (the small area free from State control where the Federal Capital is located) have no vote, the federal Congress is the body that passes all their laws. The passing of this Bill brought about a much needed change.

A Bill providing for suffrage in the District of Columbia received a favourable report from the District of Columbia Committee of the Senate, was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee, and was not reported out. Another District Bill was, however, passed by both Houses and signed by the President—a Bill permitting women to serve on juries.

Immigration and Cable Act.

A measure touching both immigration and the Cable Act (the Act granting independent citizenship to married women) was the Reed Bill providing that an American-born woman who, through marriage to an alien prior to September 22, 1922, lost her American citizenship might come into this country "over the quota." The Wadsworth Amendment made the same

provision for the wives and unmarried children under 18 of alien residents who came to the United States before July 1, 1924, and who have declared their intention of becoming American citizens. Since both these measures involve the immigration law which is not a part of the League's programme, no action was taken upon them by the League, but they were referred as a matter of study to the Special Committee on Immigration Problems.

Kept in Committee.

The Bill providing for a Federal Department of Education, supported by the League, was not reported out of committee in either House.

Two Constitutional Amendments, both opposed by the League, were also killed in committee. One was the Wadsworth-Garrett Amendment designed to make amending of the Federal Constitution more difficult. The other was the so-called Equal Rights Amendment opposed by the League because it would not really secure equality, would throw the laws concerning women in 48 states into hopeless confusion and would do away with much legislation secured in the interest of women over a long period of years. The League believes that the way to remove legal discriminations against women is by specific bills in state legislatures and not by blanket amendments either federally or in the states.

In the States.

Accordingly state Leagues are actively working to do away with undesirable inequalities in their own states. In the present legislative sessions in twelve states women jury service bills are taking prominent places in League activities. Rhode Island records the first 1927 triumph in the passage of an optional jury service bill.

Legislative interests of state Leagues fall into two general groups, those aiming to improve election laws, and those for the promotion of the public welfare. "Hold Fast to the Direct Primary" is the clarion call of the majority. The direct primary is a method of nominating candidates for office established early in the century. While it has not yet been perfected it affords the voter a better opportunity to express his views than does the old, "boss-ridden" convention system to which opponents of the direct primary wish to return. The short ballot and an extension of absent voters' laws to include persons who are physically ill, are other measures supported in the interest of more efficient government.

Since the individual states do not require their share of the federal appropriation mentioned above for maternity and infancy work unless their State legislatures appropriate approximately equal sums, bills calling for such State appropriations are the most popular of public welfare measures. Education bills, designed to equalise educational opportunity, and child welfare measures, particularly in regard to employment of children, are next in favour in the public welfare group.

The National League's study of state programmes indicates that state Leagues are on the watch to oppose any step backward in existing laws. This is particularly true in cases where attempts have been made to lower the age of compulsory school attendance laws or weaken those laws which protect women in industrial occupations.

An eight-hour working day for women, merit system in the civil service, improvements in marriage laws, and repression of commercialised crime represent the varied scope of items on many legislative programmes.

WOMEN IN INDUSTRY.

Physicians Testify Before Survey Commission.

BY MRS. LIEBER E. WHITTIC.

AT a recent hearing held by the Industrial Survey Commission of New York State to examine the effects of existing legislation on industrial workers some significant testimony was offered by physicians familiar with health conditions of factory workers.

Dr. Horrigan, medical director of the Larkin Company, Buffalo, member of the State Society of Industrial Medicine, and its first president, stated that in this large mail-order house employing 2,000 women these workers had not been harmed by a schedule of fifty-four working hours during the three months of each year in which such a work period had been required of them.

He observed less application for relief under the sick benefit provision of the company during the overtime months, the sick benefit fund being habitually filled up at that time.

Industrial women, he found in his extensive experience, to be more concerned about income than about hours, being especially anxious to work as much as possible if becoming mothers.

Questioned as to the factor of industrial strain as an important cause of sickness and absence from the plant, he replied that it is rare that women are required to work under such taxing conditions in modern plants that strain of their work affects their health more than any kind of occupation in or out of the home. He emphasised the opinion that the very best types of women are found in industrial plants, that they are improved by work and that girls are in much better physical condition after six months of factory work than after the same period of high school experience, the regular hours of work and sleep of the industrialist more than offsetting the social liberty of the student.

Dr. George R. Critchlow, also of Buffalo, a gynecologist, for ten years surgeon of the Erie County Hospital, and chief surgeon of Millard Fillmore Hospital, corroborated the opinion of Dr. Horrigan as to the superior physical condition of factory girls. He insisted that women of the leisure classes suffer a greater measure of ill health as the result of other causes than physical strain, giving venereal disease as the basic cause of 50 per cent. of their ill and child-bearing as the cause of a large part of the balance.

In his hospital experience the working girl was a rare patient. High school girls and society women were more numerous, nerve strain accounting for much more of their illnesses than in the case of working girls. In fact he was convinced that thousands of girls suffer from lack of the opportunity of regular work. Work, however, he insisted must be always hygienically conducted.

He found also in his practice that the generative diseases of middle life appear in working women in no such proportion or severity as in the mental and emotional types of the upper class.

Equal Rights.

FRANCE.

Le Ministre de l'Interieur et le Suffrage des Femmes.

M. Albert Sarraut, ministre de l'Interieur, a accueilli avec cordialité et sympathie une délégation de l'U.F.S.F. qui désirait lui demander quelle serait son attitude quand la question du suffrage des femmes se posera devant les Chambres.

Le Ministre a avoué qu'il avait été, en 1924, un des adversaires les plus décidés de la réforme, mais qu'actuellement il estimait la situation différente; qu'il comprenait fort bien qu'au point de vue de la justice, comme au point de vue de la défense de leurs intérêts et des réformes sociales, les femmes demandent à voter. Il approuva pleinement la décision de la plupart des Associations féministes, de dissocier la question du vote des femmes de la réforme électorale. "Cela prouve que vous avez le sens politique," déclara-t-il. Quant à son attitude au Parlement, il est évident que le Ministre devra s'inspirer des décisions du Cabinet tout entier mais nous avons eu le sentiment qu'en ce qui le concerne, M. Albert Sarraut n'était plus hostile et qu'à défaut d'un appui très net nous pouvions tout au moins compter sur une bienveillante neutralité.

La Française.

SECTION FRANCAISE

SOCIÉTÉ DES NATIONS.

Traité des Femmes et des Enfants.

On se souvient que, sur la recommandation de la Commission consultative de la traite des femmes et des enfants, le Conseil de la S.d.N. avait en 1923 chargé un Comité spécial d'experts d'étudier cette question, les frais considérables de cette enquête détaillée étant couverts par une offre généreuse de l'American Bureau of Social Hygiene et de l'American Social Hygiene Association.

Le rapport des travaux de ce Comité d'experts est maintenant terminé, et la première partie de ce rapport vient d'être publiée par les soins de la S.d.N. Cette grande brochure présente un intérêt considérable pour toutes les Associations comme pour toutes les personnes qui se préoccupent de la lutte contre la traite des femmes, et qui tiendront certainement à se la procurer. Nous l'avons reçue trop tard pour pouvoir l'analyser aujourd'hui, mais nous espérons bien pouvoir prochainement lui consacrer un article détaillé dans *Jus*. *En tout cas nous tenions à signaler cette publication à l'attention de nos lecteurs.

E.Gd.

* La traduction anglaise a été reçue au Headquarters à temps pour en donner notice en anglais.—La Rédaction.

SUISSE.

MME. PIECZYNSKA REICHENBACH.

Notre féminisme suisse vient de faire une grande perte en la personne de Mme Emma Pieczynska, décédée le 10 février, près de Lausanne, dans sa 73e année: Car il y a en effet peu de domaines touchant au féminisme dans lesquels Mme. Pieczynska n'ait pas exercé une activité admirable. Activité d'autant plus admirable que, depuis près de quarante ans, elle avait été atteinte d'une terrible infirmité; elle était complètement sourde. Aucun appareil, aucun traitement n'avait pu apporter une amélioration quelconque à son état; et en outre, depuis quelques années, elle était menacée également de cécité, ne voyant plus d'un oeil et souffrant constamment de l'autre oeil de troubles inquiétants. Y a-t-il pour un être humain de situation plus tragique que celle-là?

Et justement, ce qu'il y eut d'admirable et d'héroïque en elle, c'est qu'elle ne se laissa pas abattre par le malheur, et refusa d'abdiquer devant lui. Là où d'autres auraient pleuré et gémi, elle continua vaillamment son oeuvre. Atteinte par la maladie au moment où elle terminait des études de médecine, tardivement entreprises sur le conseil d'une amie américaine, Dr. Harriet Clisby, elle orienta alors du côté des questions féministes et sociales ses rares capacités et ses facultés d'enthousiasme. Préoccupée tout d'abord de questions morales, elle osa, l'une des premières en Suisse, parler de questions d'éducation sexuelle, et prit parti avec énergie en faveur de l'abolitionnisme lors de la campagne menée contre la réglementation à Genève en 1896, suivant là les traces de Joséphine Butler, qu'elle connaissait personnellement. Féministe dans l'âme, tant par esprit de justice que par compréhension de tout ce que peut apporter à la collectivité la collaboration féminine, elle contribua à fonder, d'abord l'Union des Femmes de Genève (1891), puis le Conseil national des femmes de suisses (1899), préluant à cette fondation par l'organisation à Berne de cours et de conférences éducatives pour les femmes. Au Conseil national, elle s'intéressa passionnément à la question de l'assurance-maladie d'abord; et c'est à elle, à son travail persévérant et intelligent que les femmes suisses doivent l'introduction dans la loi fédérale de 1917 de deux dispositions de première importance: l'égalité des femmes et des hommes dans les caisses mutuelles contre la maladie, et l'obligation pour ces caisses d'assimiler un accouchement à une maladie, ce qui créa une sorte d'assurance-maternité (la seule forme que nous en ayons encore actuellement en Suisse). D'autre part, elle fit beaucoup pour l'éducation nationale, morale et sociale de la

jeunesse féminine, se rendant compte combien souvent les jeunes filles sont mal préparées à leur tâche maternelle, et organisant à Lausanne et à Neuchâtel des "journées éducatives" qui remportèrent le plus grand succès. Enfin, ce fut elle qui créa en Suisse les Ligues sociales d'acheteurs, et qui inspira leur travail: c'est à elle que l'on doit en particulier toute une campagne pour l'amélioration des conditions de travail des ouvrières à domicile, et pour la suppression des pourboires dans l'hôtellerie, cette coutume antisociale et immorale qui subsiste encore dans trop de pays. Elle a laissé aussi toute une série de publications se rapportant aux idées qui lui étaient chères, et une étude sur "Tagore Educateur," éprouvant pour le philosophe hindou, dont elle traduisit plusieurs ouvrages, une grande admiration.

Esprit large, compréhensif, vibrant pour tout ce qui était bien, elle aurait été incapable de s'enfermer uniquement dans des préoccupations nationales, et tous les mouvements féminins d'ordre international avaient son active sympathie. D'ailleurs, son mariage en 1874 avec un Polonais, par enthousiasme pour la Pologne opprimée, et les dix années passées dans ce pays où elle fut adorée de tous, ses nombreux voyages à l'étranger en sont la preuve. Coeur chaud, dévoué, elle eut le privilège, elle qui n'avait pas de famille rapprochée, de jouir de précieuses amitiés, dont la plus belle fut celle qui l'a unie trente ans durant à une autre femme d'élite de notre mouvement féministe suisse, décédée il y a trois ans, Helène de Mulinen. Et rien n'était plus touchant que de la voir, dans une conférence ou une assemblée, aidée, entourée par des secrétaires bénévoles, qui à force de travailler avec elle, réussissaient si bien à lui faire comprendre les opinions émises qu'elle pouvait parfois, non seulement diriger la discussion, mais encore y participer elle-même.

C'était une âme forte et belle, une noble intelligence, une haute valeur morale. Sa mort nous laisse un grand vide, et nous sentons toutes que c'est une lumière qui s'est éteinte.

E.Gd.

REGLEMENTATION SPECIALE OU NON DU TRAVAIL FEMININ.

Tel fut un des problèmes les plus graves discutés au Congrès de l'A. I. S. F. à Paris en juin dernier. Si grave même, qu'il suscita de véritables polémiques, dont la répercussion se fit sentir dans la presse, et il ne fut pas, jusqu'à certaines feuilles politiques, qui ne s'en saisirent, pour battre opportunément une petite réclame électorale sur un air féministe en clef humanitaire.

La discussion fut si ardente, et si générale, qu'au sein des délégations d'un même pays, il se trouva des vues divergentes.

Les arguments invoqués à l'appui de la thèse réglementariste, et ceux en faveur de la liberté absolue, il faut le reconnaître de la meilleure foi du monde, étaient des plus sérieux. Dirais-je qu'ils m'ont paru présenter le même poids? Evidemment non! Ce serait avouer en la matière, une indécision que j'eus le bonheur de ne pas professer puisque je me ralliai spontanément sous le drapeau de toutes les libertés.

La question me paraît d'un intérêt vital si grand au point de vue féministe, que je m'en voudrais cependant, de n'exposer dans ces colonnes que mes vues personnelles, sans donner aux lectrices, par un aperçu de la situation, le moyen de juger mon opinion.

Voici donc tout d'abord comment le problème se posait:

Certaines législations ont pris des mesures obligatoires pour réglementer spécialement le travail féminin, mesures, qui n'existent pas à l'égard du travailleur masculin. Pour ne citer que quelquesunes de ces dispositions, il s'agit, par exemple, de l'interdiction faite d'employer des femmes dans les industries dangereuses (plomb, céruse, etc.); de l'interdiction du travail de

nuît, de la limitation des heures du travail, du congé obligatoire pendant un certain temps avant et après l'accouchement.

Faut-il en tant que féministes, préconiser cette législation dite de protection, ou faut-il admettre pour la femme, qu'elle puisse disposer en vue du travail, de sa personne et de son temps, avec la même liberté que le travailleur masculin?

Pour justifier de leur thèse, les pro-réglementaristes font valoir, que dans toute femme (qui comme être humain aurait droit à toutes les libertés), il y a une mère éventuelle, qui comme telle, remplissant un rôle social, doit être protégée même contre son gré, en vue de l'accomplissement de ce rôle dans les meilleures conditions possibles.

Ceci, étant le plus beau brevet d'incapacité accordé par la femme aux autres femmes, en les supposant incapables à discerner leur devoir et leurs intérêts, elles corrigent immédiatement la brutalité de leur formule, en ajoutant toutefois... Que... dans certaines classes laborieuses, les femmes "peuvent" ne pas suffisamment être éclairées sur leurs devoirs sociaux, voire même les conséquences physiologiques de leurs actes, et se laisser guider soit par esprit de lucre, soit par une si pressante nécessité, que leur choix ne soit plus libre. En ce qui concerne leur ignorance, l'argument me paraît bien pauvre, car, ne se sentiraient-elles pas, Elles, les femmes plus instruites capables de guider et d'éclairer les autres? Et si la tâche leur paraissait trop difficile, ne pourraient-elles obtenir des autorités compétentes que toute femme s'engageant dans une industrie insalubre, soit mise au courant, avant passation du contrat de travail, des déchéances physiques dont elle pourra être victime, au même titre qu'il est donné connaissance du règlement d'atelier.

Une fois instruite, pourquoi la femme doit-elle être jugée a priori privée de tout discernement?

Poussée par esprit de lucre? Je doute que, quand vous aurez dit à la femme, qu'en s'employant dans telle industrie, elle perdra la beauté et flétrira sa jeunesse, que les joies de la maternité lui seront probablement refusées; qu'en se fatiguant à travailler de trop nombreuses heures le jour et la nuit ses enfants seront chétifs, il en soit une qui accepte d'encourir pareille déchéance ou souffrance pour quelque supplément d'argent!

Et si même par hasard, il s'en trouvait quelqu'une qui choisit la stérilité et le gros salaire, que l'on se dise, qu'il ne s'agirait pas là d'une femme avec de véritables instincts de mère, et que la société qui n'a besoin que de bonnes mères, n'y perdra pas grand' chose. D'ailleurs, hélas! celles, que les charges de la maternité effraient ont bien souvent recours à d'autres moyens, que la loi malgré sa vigilance est dans l'impossibilité de réprimer!

Si au contraire, la travailleuse accepte toutes les déchéances physiques, par une pressante nécessité; parce qu'elle a des charges considérables, a besoin de salaires élevés; parce qu'elle ne trouve pas d'autre emploi, n'est-ce pas là condamnation même de la thèse prohibitive. Vous interdirez un travail rémunérateur, et vous pousserez la femme et ses enfants à la misère, d'où découleront des tares non moins grandes!

D'ailleurs, toutes les femmes se créeront-elles un foyer? Et n'en est-il pas, qui n'ayant plus l'espoir de la maternité se voient par la prohibition, privées d'un emploi rémunérateur.

Enfin, l'injustice de cette réglementation unilatérale n'est-elle pas flagrante et ne devrait-elle pas suffire à mettre les féministes en garde. Dans tout homme, n'y a-t-il pas aussi un père éventuel, qui transmettra à sa descendance, à peu près aussi sûrement les tares recueillies dans les industries insalubres? S'en préoccupe-t-on?

Eh oui! quand il s'agit de la protection de la race, en réglementant la liberté de l'homme, combien de fois la loi n'est-elle pas silencieuse. (Difficultés pour obtenir le paiement de la pension alimentaire pour femme divorcée et ses enfants, pour enfants naturels, etc.).

La réglementation est injuste, surtout parce qu'elle ne frappe que certaines femmes dans certaines industries, et généralement les plus pauvres, celles, pour lesquelles, la société devrait avoir toutes les pitiés.

Encore, si l'on avait l'espoir d'éviter l'épuisement à un très grand nombre d'entre elles, mais se soucie-t-on de la ménagère qui s'étendue jour et nuit à son foyer, se soucie-t-on de l'ouvrière à domicile et de ses vieilles anémiantes, se soucie-t-on des misères engendrées par les salaires inférieurs touchés par les femmes?

Croit-on que des mères en congé pour accouchement, peuvent réellement chômer et ne doivent pas continuer à vaquer aux soins du ménage, avec tous les fardeaux que cette charge comporte (notamment dans les logis pauvres où l'eau n'existe pas à chaque étage, ni les débarras non plus, la montée de seaux lourdement chargés d'eau ou de combustible).

Injuste est cette réglementation qui, sous prétexte de protection de la race, entrave le travail de la femme, mais n'atteint pas la femme oisive qui s'étendue en des plaisirs nocturnes quotidiens (théâtres, soirées, danses, etc.).

Et n'est-il pas pour le moins curieux, qu'aucune prohibition n'intervienne précisément, lorsqu'un plaisir quelconque peut résulter pour l'homme, de l'exercice par la femme de la profession la plus dangereuse entre toutes pour sa santé et celle de la race. Je songe ici, à la prostitution, que les règlements au lieu d'interdire, régissent au contraire, en vue d'assurer à l'homme le maximum de sécurité et à la femme le maximum de déchéances.

Se soucie-t-on encore de ce que, malgré toutes les visites médicales auxquelles elles sont soumises, l'on ne peut les empêcher d'être les propagatrices de bien des maladies transmissibles alors qu'encore indécélables pendant la période d'incubation, et qui peuvent atteindre non seulement l'homme, mais par répercussion, de pauvres épouses innocentes et de petits enfants.

Parmi les professions essentiellement dangereuses pour la santé de la femme et de la race, je pense aussi tout naturellement au dévouement de jeunes infirmières, qu'il ne viendrait à l'idée de personne, d'interdire, et qui leur vaut cependant en dehors de l'épuisement le plus complet, les risques de toutes les contagions... mais l'homme malade sait aussi qu'il est doux pour l'être souffrante d'être enveloppé de grâce et de tendresse, et d'être manié par des mains délicates et patientes.

Il y aura toujours, hélas! de ces métiers dangereux et épuisants pour l'homme comme pour la femme. Pourquoi les interdire aux uns et les tolérer aux autres? Laissons à celui qui éprouve le besoin de se dévouer d'être juge de son devoir, quelque risque qu'il puisse courir.

La réglementation imposée constitue d'autre part un véritable danger, dont certes, les pro-réglementaristes n'aperçoivent pas assez l'étendue.

Approuvant l'exclusion de la femme dans certaines industries, elles limitent son champ d'activité et les possibilités de gagner sa vie. Ne sont-elles déjà pas assez nombreuses les professions qui leur sont fermées sans un motif avouable (comment justifier, par exemple, que la femme avocat ne puisse prétendre à la magistrature?)

Elles souscrivent à la suppression de certaines professions, mais y a-t-il une réglementation pour compenser ce déficit d'activité par la substitution en d'autres spécialement réservés à la femme?

Approuvant la réglementation réduisant les heures du travail féminin, etc., elles encouragent l'employeur à donner la préférence à la main-d'œuvre masculine. Elles diminuent ainsi les chances d'emploi de la femme et lui retirent son gagne pain, si elles ne lui font offrir des salaires dont la minimité se justifie par les faveurs légales dont l'employeur doit tenir compte.

Et ceci n'est pas une simple spéculation de l'esprit! Il y a en effet quelques années, en France, lorsque fut discuté le point de savoir si les jeunes femmes professeurs de Lycées, payées à des taux insuffisants, devai-

ent gagner les mêmes appointements que les professeurs hommes (à grade universitaire, prestations et états de service égaux), l'objection qu'on leur adressa immédiatement fut...

"Et vous voudriez gagner les mêmes salaires que vos collègues hommes Oubliez-vous donc que vous pouvez avoir des enfants tous les ans... et... le chômage forcé que cela représente...?"

Les pro-réglementaristes croient-elles que le paupérisme existant chez les femmes chômant ou gagnant insuffisamment, n'engendre pas tout autant sinon plus de maux pour la race que la fatigue du travail?

Femmes, méfions-nous en général de tous les règlements qu'on nous impose généreusement sous prétexte de protection. La Protection, veut toujours un protecteur et un protégé. Dégageons-nous de cette mentalité de protégée, si nous voulons revendiquer la pleine et entière capacité civile et sociale, mentalité ennemie de tout effort et de tout progrès.

Ayons présent à la mémoire, l'exemple que les nations nous donnent car, c'est au nom de la Divine charité protectrice, que les peuples colonisateurs peuvent imposer leurs lois à autrui!

Souvenons-nous toujours, que c'est au nom de la Protection que notre bon Code civil livre la femme sans défense à la volonté de son mari, bonne ou mauvaise et qu'elle tolère le vol légal de ses biens si le mari est indigne ou rapace.

Souvenons-nous encore que c'est, prenant en pitié notre faiblesse, que notre infidélité est punie bien plus sévèrement que celle de notre époux (encore l'adultère du mari échappe-t-il toujours à toute sanction pénale s'il n'est pas commis au domicile conjugal même).

Enfin si vous êtes de bonnes et loyales féministes, qui n'envisagez pas la lutte des sexes, mais leur collaboration dans ce qu'elle peut présenter de plus élevé et de plus heureux pour le foyer et la Société, n'appuyez donc pas la thèse de la réglementation forcée, qui veut, à côté de l'égalité absolue pour la femme, quelques faveurs spéciales pour elle. Ce serait là mettre une trop belle arme aux mains des adversaires de l'émancipation féminine.

Note: A remarquer pour bien interpréter ma pensée, que je ne m'insurge que contre toute réglementation sous forme prohibitive et spéciale à la femme en tant que femme, ne laissant à celle-ci aucune liberté de manifester sa volonté. Ainsi par exemple, une disposition assimilant la fatigue ou les malaises de la maternité à une incapacité de travail au même titre que celle du travailleur masculin malade ou accidenté, et lui permettant en conséquence de prendre un repos rémunéré avant et après l'accouchement, ne devrait pas être considéré comme une mesure spéciale à la femme et comme telle nuisible à ses intérêts.

De même, si une loi à titre de mesure sociale prise en vue de la santé de l'enfant, offrait à la mère acceptant de chômer x jours avant et après l'accouchement, soit ses salaires, ou une indemnité pendant son repos, cette disposition ne serait pas une mesure prohibitive annihilant sa volonté, car elle lui permettrait d'envisager elle-même son intérêt ou son devoir le plus impératif, travail ou repos.

Marcelle RENSON,

Avocat à la Cour d'Appel.

—L'International féminin.

FRANCE.

Mme Odette Simon-Bidault a soutenue à la Faculté de Droit, sa thèse de doctorat en droit.

Elle a présenté une thèse sur *L'orientation professionnelle, ses buts, sa méthode, son organisation*, qui lui a valu la mention: Très bien.

Nous l'en félicitons sincèrement.

La Française.

NOUVELLES INTERNATIONALES. GRANDE-BRETAGNE.

Franchise.—Le premier Ministre a reçu une délégation des sociétés féministes dans son bureau privé de la Chambre des Communes. Les 24 déléguées, conduites par Lady Astor, représentaient 75 sociétés. Elles comprenaient: Miss Rathbone (Union Nationale), Lady Rhondda (Groupe des Six Points), Dr. Knight (Ligue de la Liberté des femmes), Mrs. Hood (Comité des sociétés industrielles féminines), Miss Froud (Union Nationale des femmes institutrices), Miss

Parnell (Alliance Sainte-Jeanne). Mr. Baldwin déclara que leur députation était la meilleure qu'il eût jamais reçue, qu'il avait noté soigneusement les points importants de leurs revendications et qu'une communication serait faite à la Chambre avant Pâques. Deux jours après cette visite, un article dans le Times annonça que le cabinet avait considéré la question de l'égalité de franchise et avait examiné divers projets; qu'après avoir pensé à ramener l'âge général à 25 ans, il avait finalement décidé de recommander l'extension de la franchise aux femmes, dès l'âge de 21 ans et dans les mêmes conditions qu'aux hommes. On espère donc qu'un projet de loi sera présenté sur ces lignes avant la prochaine élection générale.

Réunion annuelle du Comité de l'Union Nationale.—Sauf l'incident de la fin, la réunion a été un grand succès. Un nombreux public, composé en grande partie de femmes dans l'industrie ou dans les professions libérales, entendit d'excellents discours de Lord Balfour, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Miss Bonfield, et d'autres. Au lunch public, il y eut 400 convives. Des résolutions furent votées au sujet de l'égalité de franchise, la législation protectrice, l'abolition des lois sur le racolage, la nécessité de nommer plus de femmes dans la police, l'obtention de salaires égaux dans les services de l'Etat et des municipalités, la législation devant le Parlement, etc. Le programme de l'Union nationale reste le même, mais le point de vue sur les lois protectrices a été modifié ainsi: "que tout en réaffirmant le principe que les règlements protecteurs doivent être basés sur la nature du travail et non sur le sexe du travailleur, il a été décidé que les règlements seraient considérés selon leur application et que le bien-être et les besoins du travailleur seraient pris en considération. Suivant les cas, ce principe serait appliqué en demandant l'inclusion d'hommes ou l'exclusion de femmes." Malheureusement, le dernier jour, la secrétaire Lady Balfour of Burleigh, la trésorière Mrs. Soddy et 9 membres du comité exécutif, y compris Mrs. Abbott, Miss MacMillan et Miss Merrifield donnèrent leur démission sur cette question et sur la manière dont le Comité avait interprété le mot "égalité."

Conférence féminine britannique du Travail féminin.—Le programme de la Conférence qui doit avoir lieu à Huddersfield les 11 et 12 mai, contient 228 résolutions: les deux sujets principalement traités seront: la guerre et la paix et le malthusianisme. Puis viendront les questions d'allocation, d'enseignement, de logement et d'hygiène; enfin, l'égalité de franchise et le droit de vote porté à 21 ans.

IRLANDE.

Irlande du Nord.—Assemblée annuelle de l'Union des citoyennes de Belfast.—La question à l'ordre du jour est celle de l'égalité de franchise qui ne peut pas être obtenue en Irlande tant qu'elle n'est pas votée par le Parlement de l'Empire. D'autre part, 5 lois importantes pour les femmes ont été votées par ce Parlement et, ne le sont pas encore dans l'Irlande du Nord. En conséquence, des circulaires ont été envoyées aux membres de la Chambre basse. Miss Courtney a organisé une tournée de conférences et de meetings à Belfast et Londonderry, qui ont eu le plus grand succès. Le Vice-Chancelier de l'Université de Belfast y a fait une conférence sur l'éducation des adultes.

Etat Libre du Sud.—Le gouvernement de l'Etat Libre a voté, il y a deux ans, une mesure lui donnant le droit de renvoyer les femmes fonctionnaires à cause du travail de nuit. On se demande pourquoi le travail de nuit est plus fatigant pour les fonctionnaires bien payées que pour les infirmières; aujourd'hui, le ministre de la Justice, qui avait déjà rendu facultative l'acceptation des femmes jurés, propose de les exclure complètement, de même que les femmes dactylographes. Une ardente polémique s'est engagée dans la presse et les femmes demandent que, non seulement, cette loi ne passe pas, mais que la présence des femmes dans les jurys soit rendue obligatoire. (D'après Dora Mellone.)

HONGRIE.

Les élections ont été désastreuses pour les partis de gauche. Quelques-uns ont été balayés; le parti pacifiste et républicain est à peine représenté. Quant au parti légitimiste, il n'a gardé que le siège du comte Apponyi. Les 196 districts à vote ouvert ont été les partisans de Bethlen; dans les 46 districts à vote secret, les partis ont été handicapés par le grand nombre des signatures nécessaires dans la liste des candidats. Cependant les élections de Budapest ont donné 65 % de votes de gauche. Une seule femme a été élue, Anna Kethly, réélue sur liste sociale démocrate.

Le ministre de l'Intérieur a réuni une conférence où il a exposé ses projets de réforme au profit de la morale publique. Il a déclaré qu'en mai 1928, toutes les maisons de tolérance seront fermées, mais il a suggéré que les servantes d'hôtel et de café fussent soumises à l'examen médical et ne fussent employées qu'avec un certificat de santé. Les sociétés féministes se sont réunies pour protester contre cette atteinte à la dignité professionnelle et n'ont pas caché leurs appréhensions que les honnêtes femmes ne voudront plus entrer dans ces services. Leur protestation a été publiée dans les journaux et placardée. Le ministre de la Justice compte réformer les jurys; les sociétés féministes demandent que les femmes en fassent partie. Elles essaient aussi d'obtenir des autorités locales, qui ont de vastes projets de construction, que des coopératives soient créées. Une prochaine conférence aura pour objet de faciliter les voyages et la circulation des étrangers et d'encourager la fraternité internationale (D'après E. Miskolczy Meller.)

ETATS-UNIS.

Le développement des écoles maternelles.—Des "Nursery-Schools," sorte d'écoles normales pour écoles maternelles, ont été établies. Ce sont des centres de recherches sur l'enfant, les expériences de l'observation des enfants. On a constaté que les enfants en observation dans ces écoles sont plus développés physiquement et mentalement que les enfants élevés dans leur famille. Ces écoles restent d'ailleurs en contact permanent avec les parents, et des groupes d'études sont même créés parmi les parents dont les enfants ne fréquentent pas ces écoles. Tandis qu'en Angleterre, les nursery-schools font partie officielle du système d'enseignement public créé par l'Acte de Fisher en 1918, aux Etats-Unis ces écoles sont toutes privées. La nursery-school du bureau d'expériences pédagogiques à New-York est une des premières et des mieux connues. Dans ces dernières années, les écoles et les universités ont toutes tenté l'expérience. Les plus importantes nursery-schools sont celles de Merrill-Palmer dans le Détroit, de Iowa City, de Boston. Quand les universités ont établi des centres de recherches pour l'enseignement et pour Merrill-Palmer et de Iowa leur ont servi de base d'études. Dans tous ces centres de recherches, l'enfant est considéré au triple point de vue de l'être physique, de l'être pensant et de l'être social. Deux grandes universités viennent d'établir un institut de recherches: Columbia et Minnesota. D'autres centres sont en formation, y compris deux grands collèges féminins, Vassar et Smith. Le dernier développement est l'organisation de conférences pour les parents dont beaucoup désirent s'instruire sur les moyens les plus scientifiques d'élever leurs enfants, au point de vue de l'hygiène, de la psychologie, de la pédagogie et au point de vue social. (D'après Dr. Helen Thompson Wooley.)

Législation.—Le Congrès fédéral s'est ajourné jusqu'au 4 mars, après avoir voté quatre lois appuyées par la Ligue nationale des électorales. 1° Adhésion des Etats-Unis à la Cour permanente de justice internationale (malheureusement, des réserves ont été faites et n'ont pas été acceptées par les autres pays). 2° Extension de l'Acte Sheppard-Towner pendant 2 ans; cet Acte passé en 1921 pour 5 ans organisait l'enseignement de l'hygiène de l'enfance et de la maternité. 3°

Nomination des agents de surveillance de la prohibition dans le service d'Etat. Beaucoup étaient nommés pour raisons politiques et n'avaient pas de situation fixe, d'où les fraudes nombreuses. 4° Création d'un comité de bien-être public dans le district de Columbia; un bill organisant le suffrage dans le district de Columbia n'a pas passé; un autre bill permettant aux femmes de faire partie des jurys a passé dans les deux chambres et a été signé par le président.

Le bill Reed qui permet à une Américaine mariée à un étranger de revenir dans le pays "au dessus du quota," et l'amendement Wadsworth qui étend cette permission aux femmes et enfants de résidents étrangers qui sont venus dans le pays avant 1924 avec l'intention de se faire naturaliser; ces deux mesures ont été mises à l'étude par le comité spécial des questions d'immigration.

Dans les Etats.—La Ligue des électorales travaille contre les inégalités dans les différents Etats. Ainsi 12 bills sur le service des femmes dans les jurys sont examinés par la Ligue. Le premier triomphe de 1927 a eu lieu à Rhode-Island où le service facultatif dans les jurys est accordé aux femmes. L'activité des groupes de la Ligue dans les Etats prend deux formes: celle qui tend à améliorer les lois électorales et celle qui s'occupe du bien-être public.

Porto-Rico.—Le Sénateur Hiram Bingham, du Connecticut, après avoir visité P.R., et constaté que les jeunes gens des deux sexes, quoique élevés aux mêmes écoles et possédant la même instruction, n'avaient pas les mêmes droits politiques (les femmes n'ont pas le droit de vote) a présenté un amendement en faveur du suffrage des femmes dans ce pays. Par acte du congrès des Etats-Unis en 1917, le gouvernement de Porto-Rico avait le droit de prendre cette mesure; mais aucun projet de loi n'avait été présenté jusqu'ici.

INDES.

Madras.—La première province des Indes, Madras, qui ait affranchi les femmes, vient d'être la première élire une femme comme présidente suppléante du Conseil législatif: Srimati Muthulakshmi ammal.

Dans son adresse présidentielle au Conseil de Madras, le gouverneur a donné quelques précisions sur les dernières élections: sur les 116.536 femmes électorales à la présidence, il y avait 106.274 électorales enregistrées et 19.3 p. 100 ont voté. En 1923, sur 82.367 électorales enregistrées, 11.36 p. 100 avaient voté. Notons aussi que l'université de Madras a 5 femmes membres du Sénat.

Autres provinces.—Aucun autre gouvernement des Indes n'a de femmes élues. A Burma, un cortège de femmes s'étant rendu à la Chambre du Conseil quand l'éligibilité y était discuté, les grilles leur furent fermées. Mrs. Paw Tun, femme du président suppléant du Conseil, qui conduisait le cortège, fut si offensée qu'elle renvoya les cartes d'admission.

La Ligue Internationale des Femmes et le Probleme du Travail Forcé.

L'étude de la convention sur l'esclavage, présentée à la 7^e assemblée, a montré que le problème du travail forcé était plus grave qu'on ne l'avait imaginé. Aussi, l'Office international du travail a créé une commission spéciale pour l'étude de cette question, et Mr. H. Grimshaw a fait un discours sur ce sujet aux bureaux de la Ligue, devant plusieurs sociétés féminines et plusieurs sociétés de missionnaires qui ont vu bien des abus en Afrique. L'orateur a indiqué les mesures à prendre pour protéger les indigènes: examens médicaux, conditions sanitaires, salaires suffisants, régime alimentaire, limitation des distances et du temps hors de la maison, sanctions du gouvernement pour tout travail forcé. Le problème le plus difficile est celui du travail forcé indirect: travail privé sous un prétexte d'utilité publique, routes neuves construites à bas prix sous prétexte de réparations, etc. Il a été décidé de former un conseil de déléguées des sociétés féminines dont le Comité préparera un mémorandum pour la conférence de la Ligue internationale.

Madeleine Rudler.

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