

THE COMMON CAUSE OF HUMANITY.

The Organ of the National Union of
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES.

NON-PARTY.

Societies and Branches in the Union
602.

LAW-ABIDING.

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The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies is a great association of men and women banded together for the single purpose of obtaining the Parliamentary vote for women on the same terms as it is or may be granted to men. It was founded in 1867, and now numbers over 52,000 annually-subscribing members, organised into 602 Societies and Branches, under the presidency of Mrs. Henry Fawcett. The colours of the Union are SCARLET, WHITE, and GREEN. Among its members are people of all parties, and people of none. The cause that unites them is the cause of Women's Suffrage, and they work for victory by peaceful methods only. They utterly repudiate methods of violence and rely on political pressure and the education of public opinion. **WILL YOU JOIN?**

Notes and Comments.

Sinews of War.

The National Union is appealing for special donations to help it to carry out the special relief work it has undertaken. The whole of its organisation has been offered for relief, and the organisation will have to be kept up. On our back page will be found a coupon for the use of those who wish to give to national service through the National Union. At the same time we are inserting on page 396 a coupon for those desirous of contributing direct to the Prince of Wales's Fund.

The World our Home.

The enthusiasm with which our Societies have responded to the call for service has been met by enthusiastic approval on the part of the general public. The surprise expressed by some naive people only shows the depth of their ignorance. We are not in the least surprised that our members should stand to their posts and redouble their work for the common weal. Our members are drawn from that class of women (to be found in all classes) who have held that the world is their home and their charge is to make it home-like. We are rejoiced to know that the offers of help made by our Societies are being on the whole well received, and in cases where suspicion or red tape are obstacles, doubtless our well-organised and capable workers will gradually remove them. We have already heard of one official who "did not want a plethora of hysterical women," but who was very glad when he found a body of women who knew what the real need was and were ready to supply it.

The Poor Middle Classes.

We hear already of considerable distress in industrial districts. From Shropshire we hear that the miners are enlisting

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LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS should be addressed to the Editor, THE COMMON CAUSE, 2, Robert Street, Adelphi, W.C. The Editor, however, accepts no responsibility for unsolicited matter, and no manuscripts will be returned unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope. ALL BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS to be addressed to The Manager, THE COMMON CAUSE, 2, Robert Street, Adelphi, W.C., and all ADVERTISEMENTS must reach the Office not later than first post on Tuesday. Advertisement Representative, S. R. Le Mare. NOTICE.—This paper is obtainable at newsagents and bookstalls by mid-day on Friday. If any difficulty is found in obtaining it locally, please communicate with The Manager, THE COMMON CAUSE.

The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies being a body which exists solely to obtain the enfranchisement of women, holds no official view upon any other topic. Opinions expressed upon other subjects must not be regarded as necessarily those of the Union.

How the Nation Treats the Soldier's Family.

By a MEMBER OF THE SOLDIERS' AND SAILORS' FAMILIES' ASSOCIATION.

It has been widely stated that people at home will not allow the families of our sailors and soldiers to suffer financially by the absence of their relatives at the front.

The facts are these:—The Soldiers' and Sailors' Families' Association has issued a leaflet of instructions to workers, and, on the first page, it lays down the following general principles:—

- (a) The number of families to be helped will probably be greatly in excess of those needing assistance in the last war. (b) The wealthy and charitable will not, owing to the disturbance of trade, commerce, and industry, have at their disposal large resources available for charitable purposes.

It has decided, therefore, at the outset of what may be a prolonged war that payment cannot be made by the Association on the scale authorised during the Boer War. No family is to receive help from the Association whose weekly income from all sources exceeds 12s. 6d. for a wife and 2s. for each child, with a maximum of £1, except in London cases, where the rate may be exceeded owing to the heavy rents.

One must remember that this allowance is not likely to go as far as at ordinary times owing to the increase in the price of food.

A soldier's wife in time of war may have two sources of income. If her husband is an army reservist, or married on the strength of his regiment, she gets a "separation" allowance of 7s. 7d. a week for herself, with 1s. 2d. a week for each child, for boys till they are fourteen, and girls till they are sixteen. Mr. Asquith said, on Monday, August 10th, in the House of Commons, that these war separation allowances would be paid as well to families of soldiers married "off the strength."

The second source of income is "allotment" of pay. A soldier sends what he likes to his wife when he is serving in this country. When he is abroad, the Government deducts and sends to his wife 3s. 6d. of his weekly pay, with 7d. for each child, as long as the total does not exceed 5s. 3d. Beyond this the Government will not go without the husband's consent.

The maximum Government allowance made to a wife is, therefore, when she is entitled to separation allowance and compulsory allotment, which is by no means always the case, 11s. 1d. a week with extra for each child. Wives not entitled to separation allowance get 3s. 6d. only a week, with 7d. extra for each child.

Now, as a rule, a private drawing a field ration gets only 1s. a day if he is in the infantry, and 1s. 2d. if he is in the cavalry. It is clear, therefore, that he cannot supplement his wife's income to any appreciable extent by "voluntary" allotment, since after compulsory allotment is deducted, very little of his pay is left.

Sailors get from £23 to £43 a year. Their wives get neither separation allowance nor compulsory allotment. Though their husbands are able to give them more voluntary

allotment than a soldier, they can hardly be described as able to give their families enough to live on decently.

It is clear, therefore, that it is left to charity to supplement the incomes of the families of soldiers and sailors.

Many firms have come forward with help for the wives of their employees. Sometimes they give 10s. a week, sometimes half the husband's wages, sometimes more; but the fact remains that some firms are doing nothing at all. It is a general rule amongst firms, as far as I can understand, not to give money to dependents other than wives. Thus a mother dependent on her unmarried son may get nothing.

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Families' Association steps in to deal with cases where the income is especially low, and brings it up to 12s. 6d. for a wife, with 2s. for each child, with a maximum of £1, as already stated. It also relieves the mothers. It does not allow anything for children born before marriage; but the local Committee on which the writer serves has decided to allow for adopted children.

One of the rules of the Association runs thus:— "In the case of a wife or a dependent relative not in receipt of a compulsory allotment, help from the Association must cease if no regular voluntary allotment is made within two months of men serving abroad, and within one month of those serving at home, from the date when the first application has been made or is made for help."

This proviso is doubtless a precaution against cases which are not bonâ-fide; but they put a wife strangely at the mercy of a bad husband.

Taking into consideration every point connected with the pay of soldiers and sailors, one cannot help feeling that it is a scandal that men who are making so much personal sacrifice for their country should at the same time in many instances have to sacrifice the well-being of their families.

It does not require much penetration to see that the present system means that the men who go to the front are taxed to the extent of the difference between their income during the war and their income in time of peace. The difference is often very substantial. The double burden ought not to fall on the same class.

POINTS TO REMEMBER.

Since the help of our organisation has been offered to the local authorities everywhere and since many women will be on the local Emergency Committees, we have thought it of practical use to give a few of the most important points in the Local Government Board circular so that women may know exactly what to watch for and where powers may be asked for. We draw attention particularly to the following points. The Local Emergency Committee has two main duties: (a) to prevent distress through unemployment; (b) to relieve distress should it occur.

In the prevention of distress, remember:—

- (1) That where a Distress Committee (under the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905) exists, it has power to find work for women as well as for men, and money for such schemes may be provided by the Board of Trade. (2) Where there is no Distress Committee, work on the same lines may be started by the Emergency Committee, and money provided by the Local Government Board.

In the relieving of distress, remember:—

- (1) The Emergency Committee is to keep a register of assistance, therefore any person or organisation giving relief should keep in touch with the Committee. (2) Persons who have been for a continuous period in receipt of Poor Relief should be left to the Board of Guardians as before. (3) School children will be fed by the Local Education Authority. (4) Cases which cannot be dealt with under (1), (2), or (3) will have a claim to the Prince of Wales's Fund.

In the appointment of the Emergency Committees it should be remembered that the Local Government Board is anxious that women should be represented on them and that the services of women should be enlisted.

SOME SOCIETIES ORGANISING RELIEF.

Among the many Societies which are undertaking to do organised relief work during the war are the following:—

The British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union is anxious to help the children of the poor in London. The Hon. Sec., Miss Harriet Newcomb, c.o., International Women's Franchise Club, 9, Grafton Street, London, W., has issued an appeal to the women and girls in the Dominions Overseas to make children's garments, the leaders in each of the women's organisations to arrange for the collection and dispatch of the clothes.

The Church League for Women's Suffrage, 6, York Buildings,

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Adelphi, W.C., has put its organisation at the disposal of the authorities.

The Helpers' Register, Friends' Meeting House, Mercer's Road, Holloway Road, N., is ready to give any information as to where and how people can best render assistance to sufferers through the war.

GIRL GUIDES.

There has been a good deal lately in the newspapers about the Boy Scouts, and it is interesting to know that the Girl Guides have been no less quick and eager than their brothers to offer their services during the war. The work of the Girl Guides—there are from ten to fifteen thousand of them—is of a decidedly practical nature, and those who are working under Red Cross nurses and at temporary hospitals are of very great assistance, being ready to do anything in the way of fetching and carrying, running messages, scrubbing the floors, and washing up. Some, under the supervision of experienced women, are busy with laundry work, cooking and sewing, while others not only wash and mend the shirts of Territorials, but have also undertaken to darn their socks. When required, they are willing to assist families in distress, look after children while the mother is away at work, and help at soup kitchens and crèches—in fact, they will do what they can to be of use.

Anyone in charge of a branch of the Red Cross nurses and desiring the services of the Girl Guides should write to the Secretary at 116, Victoria Street, London, S.W. They can rely on obtaining really efficient help from the girls.

ACTIVE SERVICE LEAGUE.

All members of the National Union engaged in the organised relief of distress are urged, if possible, to wear the Active Service League uniform, which consists of a dark green coat and skirt and a green felt hat with a badge. This uniform can be obtained from the following firms:—

Dark green coat and skirt, 2 guineas complete, from MESSRS. SWAN & EDGAR, Piccadilly Circus, W.

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Societies are requested to send direct to these firms, enclosing remittance, as the above prices are strictly cash. Should the orders not exceed specified value, postage must also be remitted.

There may be a good many people who do not wish to buy any new clothes at the present moment, but it may be a comparatively easy matter for these to have an old coat and skirt dyed the regulation colours, and anyone desiring to do this can obtain a pattern from the National Union Headquarters. Our work will speak for itself, and the uniform should connect it with the organisation and the cause so dear to us all.

SOME USEFUL ADDRESSES.

THE NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES, 14, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, S.W., and 50, Parliament Street, Whitehall, S.W., is registering voluntary workers and sending unemployed persons to the nearest Labour Bureaux and employment agencies.

THE LONDON SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE, 58, Victoria Street, London, S.W., is also registering workers and giving information.

THE INTERNATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE ALLIANCE, 7, Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C., is organising help for foreign women stranded in England.

For other addresses see last week's "C.C.," page 389.

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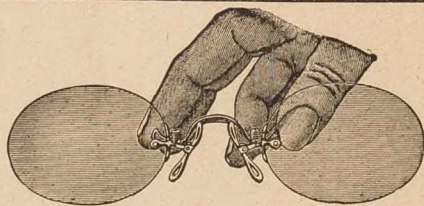
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