

THE
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AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

A Message to Unionist Women.

Viscountess Elveden, who has now stepped into Dame Caroline Bridgeman's place as Chairman of the Women's Unionist Association, has inaugurated her succession by the issue of a stirring message to Unionist women. She repudiates the Socialist contention that the Unionist Party is an association of the strong for the exploitation of the weak, and calls upon her followers to disprove the assertion by active endeavour for the common good. It is not enough, she points out, to rest on the assurance that the Unionist Party is secure in a Parliamentary majority which places it beyond fear of challenge. We venture to add to Viscountess Elveden's vigorous message a special appeal to Unionist women on our own behalf. We are rich in experience of many parties. We know that all parties are inclined to give preference to the traditional interests of men rather than to the upstart interests of women. We suspect that the larger a party's majority the less energetically will it seek to tap the support of "marginal" women voters; and, since no party pressure is so immediately effective as pressure exercised from within by persons who understand their own party's mentality, appreciate its difficulties, share its ultimate ideals, and have a solid claim on its attention, we would appeal very urgently to organized Unionist women for active agitation on behalf of the feminist reforms for which we stand. It is there most especial business to see that the vague promises of the party programme are not merely translated into solid performance, but translated in a generous measure and in an acceptable form. In this effort they will have behind them the cordial support and active co-operation of Liberal and Labour women throughout the country. We cannot imagine a more suitable response to Lady Elveden's call to them to "take a share in showing that their party is one which exists for the benefit of no particular class, but desires only the common good."

Employment of Juveniles.

Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, the Minister of Labour, Lord Eustace Percy, the President of the Board of Education, and the Duchess of Atholl, its Parliamentary Secretary, were all present at a conference of the London Advisory Council for Juvenile Employment. The Duchess did not speak, but the speeches of the other two members of the Ministry showed a deep realization of the importance of the questions involved. Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland spoke of children as the undeveloped estate of the nation. The question before the nation, he said, was whether that development should be continued after school or

whether the boys and girls should be allowed to slide back and become demoralized. Lord Eustace Percy said he considered it his prime duty as President of the Board of Education to see that children over the age of 14, as well as the younger children, had educational facilities offered to them. We hope these speeches will really bear fruit. We must wait and see.

Honour to the New "Dames".

A reception to the three New Year Dames—Dame Ellen Terry, Dame Millicent Fawcett, and Dame Louisa Aldrich-Blake—will be held at Claridge's Hotel on 10th February. Mrs. Kendal is chairman of the Reception Committee, and Lady Barrett, Lady Simpson (Miss Lena Ashwell) and Dr. Jane Walker are also on the Committee, so it will be a case of distinguished women receiving distinguished women. The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship will be receiving Dame Millicent Fawcett and Dame Louisa Aldrich-Blake on the occasion of its annual Council meeting. Later in the spring the N.U.S.E.C. will be arranging a special function for Dame Millicent Fawcett in view of her honour having been received on account of her great work for women's suffrage.

The Fight for Women Police.

In view of the independent and uncompromising attitude adopted by the Manchester Watch Committee in opposition to the employment of women police, the local branch of the National Council of Women, speaking in the name of twenty-eight social organizations, has appealed for a free and full discussion of the Chief Constable's report in the City Council on 4th February. We sincerely hope that this request may be granted, for, like the Manchester women's organizations, we are convinced that the Chief Constable's reasons for resisting this very necessary piece of social reform will not bear the light of public argument. If the Watch Committee persists in "sheltering behind a legal barrier" and denying the Council's competence to criticize their action, we cannot but assume that they too are convinced of this truth. Meanwhile, a correspondent reminds us that the Plymouth Watch Committee has recently taken a similar line of resistance to women police, the Chairman believing that "in Plymouth the employment of women police is not at all necessary." If this is, indeed, the case, then Plymouth is wholly dissimilar in its moral and social problems from any other seaport and garrison town in the world. But it is not the case. We know Plymouth well enough to know that.

"A Duty to Protect Women."

And curiously enough, almost simultaneously comes a reminder that all is not well even in Plymouth. At a recent Plymouth Quarter Sessions a youth of 18 was committed for trial by the magistrates, who apparently found themselves unable to impose a sentence which they regarded as sufficiently severe. The young man in question pleaded guilty to a peculiarly violent indecent assault upon a young married woman. Testimonies in Court regarding the youth's "good character" included reference to a conviction for a similar offence in 1922, on which occasion he had been fined £2. This fact, combined with a clergyman's statement that the defendant "in some respects did not seem responsible for his actions," does not appear to have prejudiced the Recorder in his disfavour. Though that gentleman admitted in his address that the defendant's "character with regard to his feelings as to women had not been good," though he confessed that he himself, as Recorder, had "a duty to protect women," he nevertheless saw fit to bind over the accused and put him on probation for a year. Our readers will themselves supply the necessary comment upon this disastrously misplaced leniency.

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Scotland and the Protection of Children.

In Scotland the problem of public protection against incidents of the type described above is about to receive attention. Last week it was announced that the Secretary for Scotland had appointed a committee whose terms of reference were given as follows: "To inquire into the subject of sexual offences against children and young persons in Scotland and the procedure followed in dealing with such cases (including methods for prevention and the after-care of the victims of such offences), and to report what changes, if any, are desirable in the law or its administration in the matters of prevention and after-care." The committee consists of five women and two men: Dr. Madeline Archibald, Mrs. A. C. Duncan, Mrs. William Fyfe, Mrs. W. W. McKechnie, Mrs. R. T. Paterson, Mr. A. M. MacRobert, and Mr. James A. Fleming, Sheriff of Fife and Kinross. Two of the three women, Dr. Archibald and Mrs. Fyfe, are members of the Executive Committee of the Glasgow Women Citizens' Association, and Society for Equal Citizenship.

Industry and its "Living Wage."

On Wednesday afternoon of last week Miss Eleanor Rathbone was summoned to give evidence before the Government Committee which is now investigating the conditions of Industry and Trade. She laid before them an outline of the case for Family Endowment, laying special stress upon the impossibility of achieving immediately and by any other means a living wage for the great mass of men, women, and children dependent upon British industry. This contention she supported by submitting statistics whose main import is probably familiar to most readers of THE WOMAN'S LEADER. In elaborating her case for the redistribution of a proportion of the industrial wage bill on a basis of family need, she faced up to some of the most interesting implications of such a change. For example: its reaction upon the type of commodity demanded; in which connexion she foreshadowed a new concentration of demand upon the stable trades of the country at the expense of luxury spending. Or, again, in the event of the cost of child maintenance being distributed fairly over all industries, she invited her hearers to consider the anomalies of the present system which throws nearly the whole cost of rearing the future generation of workers upon those industries which employ chiefly adult males.

Women of the Empire.

The International Woman Suffrage Alliance has organized a Conference, to be held on Monday, 9th February, 2.30-5 p.m., at the Hotel Victoria, Northumberland Avenue, to discuss the extension of the work of its British Overseas Committee. It is felt that there is an undoubted need for organizing closer co-operation between and better understanding of inter-Empire questions by women of the various countries within the Empire. Women still have special needs and a special contribution to make apart from the existing bodies which are striving to promote Imperial goodwill, but there is no organization at present which can claim to represent the women citizens (or would-be citizens) of the Empire. The Conference will consider the formation and work of such an organization.

Welfare Work.

The Committee on Industry and Trade received evidence last week on the question of welfare work. The witnesses represented the Industrial Welfare Society, the Workers' Union, and two firms, Messrs Waterlow and Sons and Messrs. F. Braby and Co. They submitted that welfare work is regarded by progressive employers as an integral part of management and that it has a beneficial effect on productive capacity, health, and efficiency as well as on the relations of the employers and workers. Welfare work has increased considerably of recent years. The Institute of Industrial Welfare Workers sprang from a small association which started in 1913 with 67 members; it now has 288. This is not as large as believers in welfare work would like to see, but a period of industrial depression is not a good time for the extension of schemes of this kind, which involve an immediate and tangible increase in expenditure for the sake of a return which is difficult to measure in terms of cash, and which is, therefore, too often ignored. There is little doubt that an improvement in trade would mean a considerable increase in welfare work.

Marriage Figures.

The latest volume of the Registrar-General's report has some interesting figures about marriage. The highest rate ever

recorded was in 1920, when it reached 20.2 per thousand of the population, since which it has dropped by 25 per cent. to one of the lowest figures on record. The number of marriages during the last three years are 226,000 less than they would have been if the 1920 level had been maintained. In some of the Press articles commenting on this it has been suggested that it is due to the increase in the number of business of professional girls who are not willing to give up their independence. Though there are doubtless individual girls who refuse to marry because they prefer a bachelor existence, we do not believe for a minute that they are numerous enough to have any appreciable effect on the marriage rate. It is much more an economic question; men are marrying later because of the difficulties of earning enough at the beginning of their careers to support a wife and family. Nowadays the majority of men do not marry till after they are 25; last year nearly 36,000 did not marry till between the ages of 30 and 35. On the other hand, more than half the women who marry, marry before the age of 25, though about 8,000 spinsters last year married after the age of 40.

Divorce Causes.

We published figures last session showing the effect the Matrimonial Causes Act, 1923, has had on the relative number of divorce suits brought by the husband and wife respectively. Last year, for the first time, there were more cases brought by women than by men. This is again the case, and may, we imagine, become the normal state of affairs. Petitions by wives for hearing during the Hilary sittings number 442, and by husbands 215.

A Woman Minister in France?

The *Morning Post* recently had a photo of Mme. Vogel, whom they spoke of as Under-Secretary for Labour and the first woman to hold Ministerial office in France. We would be interested to know the explanation of this, as there are no women deputies in the French Parliament. Are the Under-Secretaryships in France extra-parliamentary appointments? We confess our ignorance. Perhaps some of our readers are better informed and could enlighten us.

The Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital.

We have before now drawn attention to the appeal that is being made on behalf of the Extension Appeal of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital. The Extension Committee is now running a scheme for subscription tea parties; they have decided to have a week of Ten Thousand Tea Parties from the 18th to the 24th May, the week in which the 35th anniversary of the hospital falls. They are asking for the names of people who are willing to give such tea parties or who would form a local Committee to undertake a large tea party or a great number of small ones. We hope that many of our readers will make a point of becoming guests at some of these functions.

A Club for Business Women.

Good progress is being made with the Y.W.C.A. scheme for the provision of a Social Centre in London for women and girls employed in business and professional work. Last week an important Mansion House meeting was held in its support, under the chairmanship of the Lady Mayoress. Miss Snelson, the Director of the proposed centre, announced that the total estimated cost of the building was £200,000. Of this, out of £20,000 allotted to girls £6,500 had been subscribed, and £23,000 out of the £50,000 allotted to women. It was expected that men would contribute £130,000, £22,000 of which had actually been raised. We understand that vigorous local organization is being mapped out in the London area in support of the scheme's speedy completion.

Political Education.

The article which we publish to-day by Miss Deakin on The Political Education of Conservative Women is the first of a series of three which will deal with the three political parties in turn. Each will be presented from the party point of view by a prominent member of the party concerned.

POLICY.—The sole policy of THE WOMAN'S LEADER is to advocate real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women. So far as space permits, however, it will offer an impartial platform for topics not directly included in the objects of the women's movement, but of special interest to women. Articles on these subjects will always be signed, at least by initials or a pseudonym, and for the opinions expressed in them the Editor accepts no responsibility.

THE ETERNAL RIVALRY.

A fortnight ago we published in our correspondence columns a letter from Miss Enfield, Secretary of the International Co-operative Women's Guild, appealing for financial support on behalf of her organization. We sincerely hope that the necessary support has been forthcoming. The Women's Co-operative Guild in Great Britain is perhaps the most significant social factor in the lives of the great mass of married working women. It unites them as consumers, and that done, serves in a huge number of cases as the sole medium between the narrow, isolated, uncomfortable, restless, detail-infected life of the average badly constructed home, and the world of social and political interest and endeavour. It is an incomparable organization. If any body is qualified by tradition and function to reflect in national life "the woman's point of view," that body is the Co-operative Guild. And what more welcome development than the enlargement of its sphere over the international field? Space limitation forbids us to say more in support of our general benediction of Miss Enfield's recent appeal.

But one of our subscribers has raised an uncomfortable query: "It is," she writes, "some years now since the Women's Co-operative Guild has adopted a policy of withdrawing from affiliation with any organizations except those of working-class women in sympathy with the Labour Party, and the Guild branches no longer allow their members to remain on committees of the N.U.S.E.C., the Woman Citizens' Associations, the Women's Local Government Society, and the N.C.W." She adds that, so far as she knows, this policy remains in full force, and that "Miss Enfield's letter in THE WOMAN'S LEADER of 16th January obscuring this policy is likely to mislead without some editorial comment." Our correspondent appears to share our own admiration for the work of the Guild; she grants that there are many who would be glad to subscribe to its international development in spite of this embargo, and does not wish that it should be denied the opportunity to appeal for funds. Only she would "like the position made clear." Well, there it is.

Even as our correspondent shares our admiration for the Women's Co-operative Guild, so do we share her regret concerning its attitude to the non-party organizations which she names. Whether she would subscribe to our general conclusion that in spite of this embargo the Guild's work is of such outstanding national and feminist importance as to deserve whole-

THE CASE AGAINST FAMILY ENDOWMENT.

By DAME MILLICENT FAWCETT, G.B.E.

I hope none of my readers will imagine that in opposing schemes of what is called "Family Endowment" I am animated by any want of appreciation of the magnificent work done for our cause and for the country at large by Miss Rathbone and those who share her views on this subject. But just before our late hon. sec., Miss Macadam, went to Canada in the autumn, she urged me to write for publication in THE WOMAN'S LEADER a statement of the reasons which cause me to differ fundamentally from Miss Rathbone in regard to the tremendous step she is advocating in the direction of practical Socialism. I promised Miss Macadam to do this, and am now endeavouring to fulfil my promise.

Miss Rathbone has written an able and scholarly book on the subject, but she has not shaken my objections or made me feel that it would be a good thing for the State, or for the individual men and women who compose it, to relieve parents of the legal obligation of maintaining their children. I look upon the family as the unit of the State, and regard the proportional number of families leading industrious, self-sustaining, and self-respecting lives, not in one class only, but in all classes, as a not unsatisfactory test of the general well-being of the State. To remove from parents the necessity of maintaining their children would, in my judgment, withdraw the financial keystone of the family arch, would moreover in innumerable instances weaken or perhaps destroy some of the best influences in the lives of men and women, undermine their sense of responsibility, and relax the inducements to daily self-denying toil and industry.

The phrase "Family Endowment" is moreover, to my mind, in itself misleading. Where is the endowment? We do not usually speak of an endowment when we mean an income compulsorily raised by rates and taxes. Hospitals and schools are "endowed" when they derive their income, or a substantial part of it, from private benefactions voluntarily bestowed, but the so-called "endowed family" would derive its income in

hearted and active support from women of all parties, we do not know. Such, however, is our considered view. Meanwhile, we are inclined to think that the importance of such an embargo can easily be over-rated. It is, after all, like a precisely similar embargo imposed on its women by the Labour Party, merely a piece of advice issued from headquarters. It is not, so far as we know, backed up by any penalty or threat of excommunication. Its members may take it or leave it. And to our certain knowledge many of them do, in fact, leave it—with considerable benefit to their own more abundant life and to the non-party organizations whom they elect, in defiance of party orthodoxy, to serve. Moreover, it is very understandable advice. Expendable human energy has its quantitative limits, and in practice time and interest given to one organization is apt to deflect time and interest from another. The deflection may, of course, have its compensations. A Labour woman, or a Co-operative Guild member with other irons in the fire, other human contacts, and other experiences, may be a more effective and invulnerable Labour woman or Guild member, as the case may be. On the other hand, she may be a more critical and less dogmatic member. No—it must be admitted on balance that concentration of activity and interest is on the whole a good thing for the group or party which is the subject of concentration, whatever effect for good or evil it may have upon the individual. Thus we understand, if we do not sympathize with, the attitude of the two bodies referred to. Similarly, did we understand the attitude of Christabel Pankhurst when she peremptorily required Miss Annie Kenney to eschew the activities of the Theosophical Society during the early phases of the Militant Suffrage campaign—and that of a husband and father who recently remarked to us that he thought it undesirable for young married women to have strong interests outside home life. We really do understand.

But, since there is, in fact, a long stride between "tout comprendre" and "tout pardonner", we repudiate all such advice as imposes barriers or sows distrust between the women of classes, creeds, or countries. Once more, in defiance of such advice, we call upon women to unite for the furtherance of their common cause; to unite against the oldest, stubbornest oppression in the bloodstained and tearstained history of mankind: sex oppression in its multitudinous forms.

quite another manner, and from a totally different source. If the word "Endowment" is used in this inverted sense, we should, I suppose, soon be speaking of our richly endowed army and navy, meaning merely that the tax-payers have to provide for purposes of defence something like £100,000,000 annually. "Family Endowment" is quite a case of living on taking in each other's washing.

The care and perpetual solicitude which quite average parents show for their children are in themselves an education, and could not, in my opinion, but be weakened if they (and the children also) knew that the latter were being maintained at the public expense. In some instances it is difficult not to perceive that under "family endowment" even the parents may be living on the allowances granted by the State for the maintenance of the children. Suppose the allowance to be 10s. per head, per week (it could hardly be less) and that there were a family of five to be provided for, or six if the wife is also to be "endowed"; in this case the family would be receiving £3 a week, without the father bringing in a single shilling. Is it not obvious that this would materially weaken the motive for continuous exertion on his part. Miss Rathbone herself speaks in her book of this possibility, and suggests also that the Australian unmarried working man might be tempted to back his favourite in the races with the price of his supposititious wife's "one gossamer 5s. 6d. or two winter bloomers 8s."

It may be that Plato, three thousand years ago, or Mr. H. G. Wells and the Bolsheviks to-day, advocate the removal from parents of the financial responsibility for their children's maintenance, but I cannot see that the average British parent of to-day has anything to learn from them. The Athenians, with all their wonderful achievements in art and literature, practised infanticide in a wholesale fashion, leaving unwanted children exposed in pots to perish of cold and hunger. Of course, there was no freedom for women (other than Courtesans) in the ancient

civilization of Athens. Mr. H. G. Wells has a brilliant imagination, but I do not think he has much to teach his contemporaries in the matter of the maintenance of a high standard of domestic life. The Bolshevik experiment has not had time to work itself out; but what we hear of it has not encouraged a general desire to imitate it. The noble freedom of women in family life, as improved and strengthened by Christianity and the women's movement, probably reaches a higher level here and now than has ever before been reached in the social history of the world; the reverse of all this, the fundamental degradation of women in the ancient classical societies, was probably the festering sore which finally rotted to the very heart the wonderful but short-lived civilization of Athens.

The late Dr. Arthur Verrall, whose opinion as an eminent scholar and a good feminist I venture to quote, stated in one of his essays that "the radical disease of which more than of anything else the ancient civilizations perished was their fundamentally imperfect ideal of womanhood." The predominance of the wife and mother in the home has been a source of strength and vitality which counts enormously for good in our type of civilization. How far the dependence of children on their parents forms an essential part of the structure of our society I think can perhaps hardly be measured. I have already referred to its influence for good on parents, forming sometimes the very strongest influence in their lives. The children, too, in their turn, while in their infancy they accept all the sacrifices of their parents as a matter of course, remember them later with gratitude and reverence, sometimes, perhaps, almost with remorse, knowing how little they appreciated these services while they were being rendered. When this is the case, the impression made very often only deepens with the years, and causes parents to resolve that as they cannot in many cases repay the debt they owe their own forebears, they will at least carry on the tradition by doing for their own children what their parents had done for them. There is a beautiful French proverb which says: "When le bon Dieu found He could not be everywhere, He invented mothers."

I now pass to another aspect of the subject. This so-called "Endowment" would add to the already tremendously heavy taxation of the country, a sum variously estimated at between £200,000,000 and £400,000,000 annually. Let us consider how far we have gone already in adding to continually increasing financial burdens. We turned with alarm from a proposal advocated by members of the late Labour Government, before they were in office, to make a levy on capital. But those who are now pressing for what is called "Family Endowment" are in fact advocating such a levy without calling it by that name. There is a very useful body called the *Denison House Committee on Public Assistance*, which from time to time communicates a letter to the Press on the enormously rapid growth in recent years of the sums expended in this country on Public Assistance. Such a letter appeared in *The Times* on 1st November, 1924. It pointed out that this sum had increased from £22,600,000 in 1890 (including 11½ millions for education) to £63,000,000 in 1911, and to £371,000,000 in 1922 (including £92,000,000 for education, and £8,900,000 for War Pensions, which are recognized as being on a different footing because they are rewards for services received, or compensation for injuries endured, in the performance of an essential national service). The writers of the letter point out that this huge sum is constantly being augmented, and urge that with the commitments and promises already made will amount in the near future to £526,000,000 annually. It is also pointed out that this immense expenditure has not diminished the cost of the Poor Law. On the contrary, for England, Scotland, and Wales, this increased from £13,372,663 in 1911, to £46,845,586 in 1922. "Moreover, if it is argued that part of this expenditure is drawn from contributions of employers and employed, we reply that this is no reason for waste, and such expenditure is none the less a charge on the National income which exhausts the capital indispensable to industry, cripples trade, multiplies unemployment, and discourages the productive energies of the workers, adding at the same time to the cost of production and the burden of the poor consumer. In fact . . . the burden eventually falls directly or indirectly with principal weight upon the poorer wage-earners."

Another element in the cost of Public Assistance and its rapid rise in recent years is to be found in unemployment benefit, usually described as "the dole." It cannot be denied that such expenditure may have been, under the special circumstances in which our country was left after the end of the war, a temporary necessity, none the less can it be denied that it has in many cases counteracted the economic incentive to industry. We are

already the most heavily taxed people in the world. The annual sum now paid per head of the population is variously estimated at four or five times as much as it was before the war. One authoritative writer (see *The Times*, 3rd December, 1924) puts it at £16 12s. 9d., while Sir John Simon, in the House of Commons, gave the figure a few days later (12th December) as £17 9s., as compared with £3 11s. before the war. Such huge sums cannot be extracted from the population without materially diminishing the capital to be invested in developing trade and industry. Moreover, it must be remembered that local rates have doubled during the period referred to. The rates raised in England and Wales increased from £71,000,000 in 1914, to £144,000,000 during 1924. (See *The Times*, 15th December, 1924.)

To this enormous load of taxation under which our country is staggering, Miss Rathbone's proposal would add another yearly charge, varying as I have said, from £240 to £400,000,000.

With regard to the criticism that "Family Endowment" would diminish or even destroy the incentive to industry, Miss Rathbone's reply is that this type of objection is usually applied by well-to-do people to the working classes, but never by well-to-do people to themselves. I cannot accept this criticism as justified by the facts. I certainly have heard it applied without the least trace of class distinction where the circumstances seemed to warrant it. I could myself cite within my own small experience cases in which well-educated young professional men, after an expensive training, absolutely declined the daily drudgery which the opening years of professional life often call for. They preferred being kept by their wife's family or to live in comfortable idleness on the slender earnings of sisters who were high-school mistresses. I can also give an instance of a more general character: a near relative of my own, a man of good education and of wide business experience, was left sole guardian to a family of eight young children. Their father had left behind him money enough to endow (really endow this time) each child, as he came of age, with a capital sum which was estimated to bring in an income of £300 a year. Their guardian after a few years' experience of this scheme was most vehement in his denunciation of it. He used to say that no better plan could have been devised for sending these eight children to a highly undesirable place. When they are boys and girls at school, he would say, they regard £300 a year as an inexhaustible fortune; they don't find out until too late that it is nothing of the kind; but by the time they begin to understand this they have acquired habits of loafing and idleness from which they never succeed in freeing themselves. I confess that until recently I had looked upon the proposals for "Family Endowment" throwing upon the Exchequer an additional annual charge of some three or four hundred millions a year as fantastic, simply from its own inherent disadvantages, but it seems to me now that I was mistaken and that it may become a real danger. I recognize, of course, that Miss Rathbone, Mr. H. G. Wells, and other distinguished advocates of throwing the financial burden of the bringing up of children on the national exchequer, argue that this would not be a new burden, but rather a new way of meeting existing charges. I believe, however, that this source of consolation is highly illusory. No allowance is made for the cost of administration and distribution. Each General Election as it came round would offer great opportunities for pressing for the increase of the weekly or monthly family allowance. All economies would be represented as contemptible cheese-paring, and constant pressure would be exerted to get larger and larger allowances guaranteed by the State.

I have lately been looking over a paper I wrote about two years ago on the changes in the law favourable to women which have been effected since we got the vote. One of the most significant of these was the raising of the maximum sum which could be charged under an affiliation order on the father of an illegitimate child. For as many years as I can remember the maximum that such a father (whatever his wealth) could be ordered to pay was 5s. a week. Immediately that women became voters this was raised without any agitation whatever to 10s. a week, and in 1922 the maximum was again raised to 20s. a week. Imagine what use could be made of these facts by a clever agitator who was pressing for the raising of the sum allowed by the State under the plan of "family endowment." How outrageous that respectable children, members of an honourable family, should only have 8s. or 10s. a week, while the base-born might have as much as 20s. There would be a constant, and a constantly successful, pressure brought to bear on the Guardians of the Public Purse to give larger and larger allowances.

But I end as I began: my deepest and most irremovable objection to the whole scheme is based on the irreparable injury done to parents and children alike by withdrawing from parents the financial responsibility for the upbringing of their children.

The strongest and most universal element in the education of all of us is responsibility. What should be aimed at in our public institutions, as well as in our private life, is the combination of responsibility with liberty. Of course, there can be no responsibility without liberty. It rests with us in this, as in other great issues, to make the right choice and to see that extended liberty is not used to undermine responsibility.

THE POLITICAL EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY.

The Representation of the People Act, 1918, including in its provisions the right of over 8,000,000 women to vote at Parliamentary elections, made their political education a matter of urgent necessity to the Conservative as well as other parties.

The formation of an efficient organization able to cope with so large a task was considered immediately by the National Unionist Association, and the Executive Committee resolved to approach the officials of the Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform Association, whose headquarters were established in the same building as their own, with a view to obtaining their co-operation with the National Unionist Association, so that their organization might be placed at the disposal of the Central office and that there might be complete unity at Headquarters. This Association was formed in 1904, at the height of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's Tariff Reform campaign, and had achieved notable success throughout the country, largely owing to the splendid pioneer work of its first secretary, Miss Violet Brooke-Hunt, who received the active support of Lady Boscawen, Lady Maxse, Miss Beatrice Chamberlain, and many others. The call to come to the aid of the N.U. Association was at once responded to; the Association was renamed the Women's Unionist Association, and thus became the official body responsible for the political education of the women electors.

It was urged at the outset that the Women's Association should have separate officers, members, and funds, as apart from the Men's Association, at the same time providing that women should be adequately represented on the Executive Committee in every division which is responsible for the election of candidates and the approval of the Party Programme, and that they should also be represented on the Management Committees, Provincial Divisions, the N.U. Association Council, and finally the Executive Committee of the whole Party. The system has enabled women to realize their responsibilities in a practical way, and the educational value of the administrative work and management involved cannot be overestimated.

The political education of women, if it is to be done efficiently, requires a staff of highly skilled organizers, and the successful results already achieved are very largely owing to the genius for organization, untiring energy, and selfless devotion of the district agents and secretaries of Divisions, who are largely responsible for the amount of educative work done throughout the country. Meetings are held in every ward of every constituency once a month, and sometimes fortnightly. The education of those women whose domestic duties prevent them from attending meetings is not overlooked. House-to-house visits are made and small cottage meetings held, at which politics are discussed and perhaps an informal address given. One of the chief aims of the Association is to promote friendliness and co-operation among all classes, and the achievement of that object cannot fail to be productive of good to the whole community.

There are many indications of the great progress that is being made in the political education of women in the Conservative Party. In the early days of the Association speakers would be asked to lecture on such elementary subjects as "How to Vote," "Why Women should Vote," etc., etc. To-day there is a demand for lectures on "German Reparations," "International Debts," "Imports and Exports," "Taxation," "Social Reforms affecting Women," and lectures dealing with the Empire and kindred subjects. These lectures are chosen by the women themselves, and branch secretaries frequently tell me that they are developing a very critical spirit. Vague speeches on political questions are not enough; facts are wanted and reasoned argument expected to meet some of the thorny problems of the present time. There is an increasing demand for speakers, and one of

the most welcome signs of educational progress is the growing number of working women speakers for the Association.

Another indication of the progress made is in the demand for speakers' classes. The number of these classes is growing apace. Those who wish to qualify to speak in public must necessarily know something of political history, and gain accurate knowledge about present-day political questions, and are encouraged to study for themselves. The Phillip Stott College affords ample opportunity for those who wish to equip themselves with wider political knowledge. Established in 1923, through the generosity of Sir Phillip Stott, who gave Overstone Park, near Northampton, to the Unionist Party, the College has already proved an astonishing success. Its original object was to give working men and women of the Party the advantages of education in Constitutional History, Economics, and special lectures on such subjects as Trade Union Law, etc. Since the College was opened all classes of men and women have been enrolled as students. It may be of interest to give the figures showing how the number of women who attend the College is increasing in proportion to the number of men who attend. In 1923 the total numbers were 441, of which 143 were women. Last year the students numbered 910, of which 407 were women. Among these latter were a number of women in various trade unions, teachers, dressmakers cotton-operatives, etc. The appeal that the College makes to the student is no doubt owing to the fact that it is not *propagandist* in its teaching. Its aim is to be free of bias and party prejudice. A glance at the list of the professors who give the various lectures will show how faithfully those who are responsible for arranging them keep to that aim.

EVELYN DEAKIN.

THE LAW AT WORK.¹ THE PRISONS REPORT.

The Annual Report of the Prison Commissioners which has just been published is as interesting as ever, and its adequate consideration would require many columns of our paper. We are struck as usual by the amazing decrease in the number of prisoners since the days before the war—from 158,000 who were then annually received into prison on conviction to 46,000 last year. This is also a decrease of 1,244 on the previous year, or of 2,616 if we include those received as debtors, etc., as well as the convicted. It must be remembered that last year was one of widespread unemployment, likely to lead to an increase in crime. This reduction does not raise any extravagant hopes in the minds of the Prison Commissioners. They content themselves with the statement that "present circumstances and the history of the past few years give us reason to hope that the prison population will not only not increase in the near future, but will show a steady, if slow, decline."

Educational work in prisons advances very slowly, and what advance there is due to the zeal of volunteers and not to any additional provision by the State. In fact State provision has declined. The prison officer teachers have declined in number from 33 to 26 and the certificated teachers from 16 to 12. The three local prisons in which no elementary education is given at all remain as last year. It is deplorable that this all-important part of prison training should remain so starved for want of money as it is to-day. It is disappointing too that the very valuable experiment of forming a Club or League of Honour for certain selected prisoners has made no progress whatever since last year. The two Clubs at Nottingham and Dorchester which were reported upon in 1923 continue to be successful, but not another one has been added.

The Report gives a detailed statement concerning the lads and girls under 21 sentenced to imprisonment. The Commissioners show thereby the great importance they attach to this question and their sense of the disastrous effect of imprisonment on these young people. Happily the number has decreased, including that of first offenders of this age sent to prison, but it is still deplorably large. It is specially depressing to read of the number sent to prison for trivial offences in default of paying a fine. It shows a great want of imagination in magistrates that, with the experience they must all have of "hardened" offenders who started their prison career in their teens and have been in and out of prison ever since, they should for a trifling offence start a lad or girl on such a career by thus familiarizing them with the inside of prison walls. Perhaps

¹ Under the direction of Mrs. C. D. Rackham, J.P., Miss S. Margery Fry, J.P., with Mrs. Crofts, M.A., LL.B., as Hon. Solicitor.

COMING EVENTS.

GUILDHOUSE W.C.S.

FEB. 3. 6 p.m. The Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W.1. Special lecture by invitation of the Guildhouse Play Centre and Junior League of Nations Union. Mr. Wilkinson Platt on "Wild Animals of England."

LONDON SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE.

FEB. 3. 5 p.m. 35 Marsham Street, S.W. "L.C.C. Elections, 1925: (i) The Council's Work." Speaker: Mr. K. Smellie (London School of Economics).

FEB. 10. 5 p.m. "L.C.C. Elections, 1925: (ii) The Council's Workers." Speaker: Miss Rosamond Smith, L.C.C.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

Croydon W.C.A. (South). FEB. 2. 3.15 p.m. St. Peter's Hall, Selsdon Road, S. Croydon. Miss Elkin on "All-in Insurance."

Farnham N.C.W. FEB. 3. 3 p.m. Miss Elkin on "The Passage of Bills through Parliament."

Kensington and Paddington S.E.C. FEB. 9. 3.30 p.m. Annual meeting at the New House, Campden Hill Road, W.8. Miss K. D. Courtney on "Family Endowment as a Solution of the Equal Pay Problem."

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