

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

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OUR WORK.

There will be no further issue of *Monthly News* till early next autumn, so it may interest our associates to read a summary of the work accomplished in the Session which began on October 13th, 1922, and ended on the 30th of May. The record is an eminently satisfactory one, more especially so when it is remembered that it was carried through in spite of the distractions and excitements of the General Election. We hope it will encourage our members to seek for new recruits among their friends, knowing that they are not asking but really conferring a kindness in so doing.

Eight drawing-room meetings, three Council meetings, the Annual Meeting, and five debates have been held during these short eight months, and it is very satisfactory to be able to say with remarkable and unvarying success. But perhaps it would have been more remarkable had they not been successful in view of the distinction of the speakers, who so generously gave us their services. The dates, names, and subjects were as follows:—

- Oct. 13. Lord Eustace Percy: The Versailles Treaty.
- Nov. 24. Mr. Herbert Williams: Reparations (Annual Meeting.)
- Nov. 30. Signor Pellizzi: Fascismo.
- Dec. 7. Mr. Christopher Turnor: Agriculture.
- Jan. 27. Signor Pellizzi: Fascismo.
- Feb. 9. Earl Grey: Three Methods of Election.
- Mar. 16. Earl of Selborne: The Reform of the Constitution.
- Mar. 23. Mrs. Hubback: Social Reform Matters now before the House of Commons
- May 29. Mr. Demarest Lloyd: An American View of the European Situation.

The Future. We look forward to a very busy session in the autumn, and hope to inaugurate it with a very large and important public meeting on Emigration.

During September the whole Association will be circularised with regard to the formation of Study Circles, and members will be asked to send in their names to the office if they wish to join. It is proposed to charge a fee of 2/6 for the whole season, October to April. It is calculated that this will cover the cost of stationery and postage, which should not become a charge on the general funds. The scheme as far as it has gone at present, is to hold every fortnight alternate Study Circles and Debates. A book on Economics or some kindred subject, or else a short Parliamentary Bill will be selected for study, and it will then be discussed by the members of the Circle. It is hoped that, as heretofore, the meetings may be held in private houses, with a kind hostess to give tea at the end of a pleasant and improving afternoon.

These Study Circles and Debates will not interfere with the programme of drawing-room meetings, of which three or four will be held before Christmas.

The Past. On May 29th, at Lady St. Helier's house, and with Lady Edward Spencer-Churchill in the chair, Mr. Demarest Lloyd spoke on *An American View of the European Situation*. There was a very large and lively meeting in spite of the rain, and the speaker most good-naturedly replied to some lively heckling.

On May 30th, the Council met at Mrs. Hubert Walter's house, and listened to a very powerful appeal from Dr. Des Voeux on behalf of Coal Smoke Abatement.

On May 10th, the last Debate of the season was held at Lady Ware's house on the assertion "that the time had now come when women should be uniformly clothed." Miss Sandars opened admirably, and Miss Reynard made a most cogent reply. After an eager discussion, our readers will not be surprised to learn that all Miss Sandar's eloquence could not save the vote from going overwhelmingly against her. The Countess of Hardwicke took the chair.

Lost Property. Three people lost their um-

rellas as the result of the meeting at 52, Portland Place on the 29th. One of our members has written to Miss Raiker to describe an umbrella which she values very much. It is man's size, of dark bamboo, with a crooked handle, and has a gold band with the initials F.H.L. Will anyone who has taken a wrong umbrella by mistake kindly communicate with the Office? Room 191, Windsor House, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

POLITICAL NOTES.

THE NEW ADMINISTRATION.

All members of our Association are sincerely troubled by the sudden resignation of Mr. Bonar Law. During the short six months of his Premiership he endeared himself to his Party in an amazing degree, and one only has to read the speeches made on Monday afternoon in the House to appreciate that "Bonar" was really beloved by all who came in contact with him. No man could give more than he did to his country's service; his health and the lives of two of his sons. But it is gratifying to learn on good authority as I have learnt to-day that Mr. Law's health is rapidly improving and that in the words of one who has been very closely connected with him, "there is no doubt that in three months he will be back again in the House as well as ever."

The crisis of the last few days has passed so easily that we are inclined to rub our eyes and wonder whether it has all been a dream; truly the English take their pleasures sadly, must surely be the comment of many a Continental nation to-day. But certain facts stand out to shew that we are awake. We have a new Prime Minister, a man of the same type as his predecessor. Sincere, gifted with that breadth of vision which ensures a wise decision, pledged to spend himself in the service of the Country to the uttermost of his capabilities, respected and loved by all who know him for his great qualities of friendship as well as for his simplicity. The man who is to succeed him at the Treasury, Mr. McKenna, has admittedly one of the best financial brains to be found in any country at the present time, and a political record of great experience. To Lord Robert Cecil holding the great office of Lord Privy Seal, all Conservatives will extend a very hearty welcome; and by his and Mr. McKenna's return to the Treasury bench the Government will be immeasurably strengthened in debating force.

There is too, a feeling of real unity in the Party. Despite Mr. Chamberlain's letter and the fact that Sir Laming Worthington Evans alone of the ex-Ministers has joined the Government, signs are not lacking that in a little while breaches will be entirely healed.

The new session will be a very busy one for Mr. Baldwin and his colleagues. The Agricul-

ture Bills, Housing Bill and Finance Bill are all first class measures. There is the Imperial Conference to prepare for, and there is the never-ending question of Reparations, with its usual accompaniment of Notes.

However, undoubtedly the political weather, unlike the other kind, shews that the depression is lifting and that fairer conditions may prevail. Trade is reviving, exports this year having risen to 74.9 of the 1913 volume, as against 67.1 in 1922; unemployment decreases at the rate of a hundred thousand a month, deposits in the Post Office Savings Banks have exceeded withdrawals by more than £1,300,000 whereas last year withdrawals exceeded deposits; Government securities and the £ sterling have both largely appreciated since our return to Party Government.

M. LLOYD-GREAME.

SMOKE ABATEMENT.

By SIR FREDERICK WILLIS, K.B.E.

The evils of smoke in the atmosphere are recognised by everyone. It is now accepted that the public health is injured by polluted atmosphere; that a very large amount of damage is done to buildings by smoke and noxious vapours; and it is manifest that the beauty of the sky and the country side is often destroyed by them.

For generations zealous reformers have been pressing to get these evils reduced, but little has been done. The fact is that unless public opinion is behind the statute it remains a dead letter. At last public opinion seems really to have been roused.

In 1914 Sir (then Mr.) Herbert Samuel, the President of the Local Government Board, appointed a strong departmental committee to consider the whole matter and advise what steps were practicable for reducing the evils due to pollution of the atmosphere. After the war this committee was reconstituted with Lord Newton as Chairman, and they made their report in December, 1921.

To those who wish to make an intimate study of the question this report is strongly commended. The Committee were asked to consider what is "practicable," and throughout their enquiry and recommendation they have borne this word constantly in mind.

Smoke arises from two sources: (1) domestic, (2) manufacturing. At the present time the law does not touch domestic smoke, and in the opinion of the committee it is not at present practicable to legislate on this side of the evil. Much is gradually being done by the substitution of smokeless heating and cooking appliances, and the public are day by day becoming more convinced of the utility of these appliances as compared with the coal fires.

As regards manufacturing smoke, the law at present says that no smoke shall issue from a manufacturing chimney. That this law is not observed is obvious to all of us, and the question at once arises, why is this law not observed?

The answer is two-fold: (1) rigorously to enforce the law would destroy many manufacturing concerns, and (2) local authorities have for the most part been very slack in exercising their powers.

The following two quotations from Lord Newton's report are vital:

"We think it must be accepted that in the present state of knowledge it is not practicable to carry on some manufactures without the production of a certain amount of smoke. . . ."

"We recommend that the law should be altered so as to provide that every manufacturer should take all practicable steps, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, to prevent the pollution of the air by smoke or any other noxious emission from his works, and we consider that a law in this form would be preferable to an absolute prohibition which it is impossible to enforce without destroying some manufactures."

The committee fully realised that questions of cost must be considered when improvements are demanded of a manufacturer, but they were quite satisfied that great improvements could be secured without injury to trade. It is of course much simpler to have an absolute prohibition of the emission of smoke from chimneys than to call on a manufacturer to do that which is practicable, but such an absolute prohibition is useless, and notwithstanding the difficulty of interpreting practicability in any particular case, that is all we are justified in demanding. With the advance of knowledge things become practicable tomorrow which are not today, and a standard in the form suggested by the committee will, if properly applied, tend towards greater stringency.

With a view to assisting the local authorities in enforcing a law in this form, the committee advised that the government department should have power to frame what they called presumptive standards, that is to say, they would take a particular class of furnace, and by the aid of their experts they would know that for that class of furnace such and such a standard was in the great majority of cases practicable, and they would lay that down.

If a manufacturer infringed this presumptive standard, the onus of proof that it was not practicable for him to comply with that standard would rest on him; in this way the administration of the Act would be very much simplified.

Another exceedingly important recommendation of the committee was that the enforcement of any law against smoke should be in the hands of authorities acting over a wide area. They therefore suggested that the duty should be in the hands of county councils and the councils

of county boroughs rather than in the hands of the many hundreds of sanitary authorities. They advised however, that power to enforce the law—as distinguished from duty—should continue with the minor authorities. Smoke does not confine itself to the boundaries of districts; it blows about in all directions, and the committee recommended that even with these large administering authorities, power should be given to any of them to prosecute in respect of offences over their borders if the adjoining authorities failed to take action.

With public opinion so aroused as it now is and with this important report before it, there would seem to be a great opportunity of putting the abatement of smoke on a much more satisfactory footing than hitherto, and so materially diminish the evils from which we at present suffer.

MATERNITY ENDOWMENT.

The following article is reprinted from the *Sydney Morning Herald* of March 21st. It was communicated by Mrs. Scoresby Routledge, and it deals with a subject which has been already a great deal discussed in this country, Maternity Endowment. In Australia a grant of £5 is given for every birth.

THE BABY BONUS.

The result of the open conference to discuss the maternity allowance, commonly known as the "Baby Bonus," which began in Melbourne yesterday, will be awaited with interest. The subject has been an absorbing one recently, and has been discussed at meetings of the various women's organisations.

In October, 1922, a commission was appointed by the National Council of Women to inquire into pre-natal and post-natal care of mothers, in conjunction with the suggested withdrawal by the Federal Government of the maternity allowance.

The commission did a very valuable work, and the report, which they have issued, includes much interesting information, and recommends, in brief, that the present scheme should not be superseded by any other that is less universal in its application.

The report, which will be presented at the Melbourne conference, states that during the first year of operation the claims for the allowance were less than half the possible number. In the year 1921, however, the money was claimed by practically all those entitled to it. Statistics show 54,047 births, excluding still births in New South Wales in 1921, the number of claims, 54,390. It is, therefore, clear that all classes of the community have taken advantage of the allowance, irrespective of income, well-to-do people looking on it as a justifiable return of taxation. The most general criticism is levelled against this aspect. At first sight it would appear that a large proportion of the money spent must go to parents well able to support their families without State help, and a large majority of those replying to the questionnaire advocated that an income limit of either £300 or £500 should be set. In order to test this opinion it is necessary to study statistics. According to the last Federal statement of maternity claims for the year ended June, 1922, the total amount paid in the Commonwealth was £690,700, of which £277,065 went to New South Wales. As no questions regarding incomes are asked of those receiving the allowance, it is impossible to estimate with absolute accuracy how much of this goes to persons in receipt of a good income. But allowable deductions may be made from the last census returns, and the surprising fact is shown that out of 524,000 males in New South Wales, over the age

of 18, 480,000 receive less than £300 a year, that is over 91 per cent. of the male population. If the allowance were restricted to persons with incomes of £300 and less, the amount saved would be under £25,000, assuming that the proportions of births to parents with more than £300 per year is the same as to parents with less than the amount. Actually the proportion is likely to be much less to parents with higher incomes, and consequently the saving would be much less than £25,000. Subtract from this again the approximate amount spent on those having under £500, probably 7 per cent. of the remaining 9 per cent., and we find the amount saved in this State would not total £5,000 per annum, a probable total for the Commonwealth of less than £20,000. On these grounds alone, the sacrifice of the universal character of the Act would not be justified. The commission, therefore, agree—

(a) That, as the saving effected by any system of discrimination in income is not calculated to make much appreciable difference economically, it is better than no class distinction be made.

(b) Also, that the present scheme, which reaches every mother in the Commonwealth, should not be superseded by any scheme less universal in its application.

The Commission believes, that while the bonus should not be superseded, it should be supplemented by the provision of facilities for pre-natal and post-natal care throughout the Commonwealth. The maternity mortality of the State is high. The New South Wales Official Year Book shows the death rate to be 6.1 per 1,000 births, being one death for every 163 births; over a ten-year period the rate for 1,000 births was 5.5 for married women, and 9.3 for single women. The rate is higher in the metropolis than in any other part of the State, in spite of greater hospital facilities. There is no doubt that the allowance has enabled many women to obtain medical and nursing attention. Of the 55,413 mothers who received allowances in 1922, 39,955 were attended by doctors, that is, roughly, 70 per cent. In Victoria, with a more concentrated population, the proportion was about 83 per cent., in Queensland 65 per cent., in South Australia 87 per cent., in Western Australia 71 per cent., and Tasmania 70 per cent. In spite of this increased skilled attention, the maternal mortality is higher now than it has been for many years, and shows no sign of declining. Nearly 37 per cent. of the deaths are due to puerperal septicaemia, which is a preventable disease. The crying need at present is for some widespread system of pre-natal and post-natal care. To the improper care of infants, combined with the lack of pre-natal attention, must be due the loss of 70 per 1,000 births of infants in the first year of life.

In the quinquennium 1880-84 the figures were an average of 120 per 1,000 for the whole State. The improvement is attributable to organised effort in the direction of more rigid health laws and education in hygiene. Still one child in every 42 born dies within the week of birth; in the first week of life the mortality is six times as great as in the second, and generally more than ten times as great as in the third or fourth week, but during the second month the mortality falls rapidly, and thereafter gradually. The mortality of illegitimate children is 137 per 1,000, as compared with 66.4 among legitimate children. Further examination of these illuminating statistics, all of which have been taken from the Official Year Book, discloses that while the general infantile mortality rate has declined, relatively deaths under one week have actually increased. We also find while the New South Wales rate is 69.8 per 1000, and Victoria 73.8, New Zealand has the great advantage of only 50.6, being second in the countries of the world only to the Netherlands, which is 50 per 1000. Spain heads the list with 192, England and Wales 89.

When one considers the amount spent by the State every year on each immigrant that comes into the country, and then faces the fact that New South Wales lost in 1920 3,770 native Australians under one year of age, very largely through lack of care and knowledge, the necessity for further organisation becomes very apparent.

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WEEKLY LECTURES.

Wed., 20th June, "ROME CONGRESS" MEETING.
8.15 p.m.

Wed., 27th June, "American Women in Home and Politics"
8.15 p.m. Chairman ... Miss HELEN FRASER.

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