

MONTHLY NEWS

of the

Conservative Women's Reform

ASSOCIATION.

NEW ISSUE.

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OUR WORK.

The Proposed Afternoon Reception. The response that the members of the Association made to the Executive Committee's circular letter was so good and encouraging that the committee was enabled to proceed with arrangements for the proposed afternoon reception, to which guests from overseas are to be invited. Many members of the Association, in answering the circular, expressed the great pleasure that it gave them to be able to cooperate in welcoming some of the Nation's visitors from overseas.

The Reception will take place on Monday, June 30th, from 4 to 6, and the Rt. Honble. Stanley Baldwin, M.P. has honoured the Committee by accepting their invitation to be present and to say a few words. It is hoped that other members of the Conservative Government will also speak. The house is not yet settled but full particulars will be printed on the cards of invitation.

Drawing Room Meetings. The meeting on 27th May, at which Mr. T. Broad gave a very enlightening exposition of his Scheme for Co-ordinated Insurance was the last of the series of Drawing Room Meetings that the Association has held during the Winter and Spring. Ten meetings have been held since October and have been very well attended.

Study Circles. Members are specially asked to bear in mind that it is hoped to arrange a series of Study Circles beginning in the autumn or winter. The subject will be "Housing." Formal notice, with full particulars, will be sent to all members at the beginning of the autumn session.

Subscribers to Monthly News. Although the membership of the Association itself is increasing most satisfactorily more subscribers are urgently wanted for *Monthly News*. The annual subscription is 2/- including postage and our little paper has notices, etc. upon its front

page that are useful to members who wish to make full use of C.W.R.A. activities, and which enable them to keep in touch.

The articles are generally—(I would have said always, had I not have been obliged to supply an emergency article myself in the present issue, —Ed.)—written by experts, and are largely complementary to the addresses which form the most important activity of our Association.

THE CONSERVATIVE IDEAL.

The word "Conservatism" like so many words in the English language, in the course of time, has lost its true meaning, and has come to be interpreted as standing for re-action and stolidity. The real meaning of the word expresses all the ideals which we hold most sacred in the Conservative faith—the maintenance of the rights of the individual; the preservation of the sense of property; and a knowledge of the obligation we owe to our Dominions and Crown Colonies, and our common interest in their growth and development.

The Conservative Party stands for peace and security. And that peace implies not only world peace, but peace among different sections of the community, and the promotion of the spirit of the brotherhood of men. I have said the Conservative Party stands for security; and by security I mean the safety of the interests of the citizen as a worker; the conservation of his possessions from unjust confiscation; and the safety of his interests in that he is not only a citizen of Great Britain; but a citizen of the Empire.

Conservatism seeks the reform of industrial evils by evolution rather than by revolution.

The chaotic condition of Russia to-day is in itself sufficient lesson to demonstrate the suffering and hardship borne by the people of Russia, which revolution brings in its train. Unlike Socialism, Conservatism is constructive and not destructive. Socialism seeks to sweep away the old traditions of solidarity and continuity, and build

a phantasmal world up on the insecure foundations of bad finance and class-hatred. They would destroy the rights of the individual by the abolition of private enterprise, with the Nationalisation of Industry. Conservatism encourages private enterprise, for on such capital undertakings the wealth of the nation depends, and that wealth is responsible for the employment and prosperity of millions of workers. In the same way, it is opposed to that most unfair seizure of property—the Capital Levy, not because it would deny to the people the equal right to wealth, but because the realisation of capital, for the most part sunk in buildings, stock, plant, would throw hundreds of thousands of men and women out of work.

The ideals of the Conservative Party are practical ideals born of long experience and the knowledge of real government. It is no good lowering the moral of the people of this country, and above all of their children, by an interminable succession of doles, we know the people want work, not doles, for in work lies our one hope of salvation from national bankruptcy. And to find work for our people is the one thing, the Conservative Party, and the Conservative Party alone, can achieve. Not until we can bring home to the electorate the realisation of the greatness of the Empire; the vastness of its resources, and the common duty of every man, woman and child in these islands to acknowledge their participation in their heritage, can we hope to regain our former prosperity. By these means alone can work be found for the workers, in the expansion of our markets with the Empire.

"The Tory Party, unless it is a national party, is nothing" said Disraeli, and it is this national party alone to which the nation can turn in its hour of crying need, and know that the rights of its citizens will be preserved, and their hope of future prosperity assured.

THE PROBLEM OF THE RURAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER.

(The patriotic education of the nation's children probably lies more in the hands of our elementary school teachers than in those of any other one section of the community. Our appreciation of the value of the services that so many teachers render, make it seem all the more deplorable that an appreciable number of them do not make use of their opportunities, or that any even profess the international ideals of the Socialist Party. There are facts which tend to make the masters and mistresses in our elementary schools dissatisfied or indifferent, and it

was hoped to obtain articles by experts explaining these special problems in Country and Town.)

* * * *

In considering the case of the rural teacher we may safely leave out the question of salary. The Burnham Scale forms a valuable basis, and negotiations will follow on economic lines.

The problem of the extension of the school age has an important bearing. The raising of the leaving-age to sixteen might be of national benefit in cities, but it would affect agriculture adversely.

From the rural aspect it is essential to get the boys on to the land at fourteen. From a national point of view it is of equal importance that educational discipline should be maintained up to sixteen or eighteen. The present-day tendency, which *must* be avoided, is to shirk responsibility for the vast waste involved in the spending of money on educating children up to fourteen and then turning them loose on the world to forget most of what they have been taught at so great an expense.

It is essential to raise the standard of education in our rural districts.

The way to achieve this is by means of Continuation Schools. We have only to study "Continuation" in those countries where it is carried out to see the valuable results.

The Fisher Act provides the machinery; financial stringency is the barrier—a system of Continuation Schools, with (necessarily) more highly trained teachers, would do much to vitalize rural education and help to bring about new centres of interest which would affect all rural teachers.

Meantime, the great problem of the rural teacher is that of isolation, both educational and social.

One of the methods for overcoming this is for the owners of great country houses to give garden parties. In the course of the year every rural teacher should be invited to such a gathering. This gives social recognition to a section that has often been cold-shouldered. It recognizes the fact that the teacher is moulding and guiding the rising generation and is of the utmost importance to the nation and its future.

Such a garden party for four hundred teachers can be held at a cost of not more than twenty pounds; and even in these days when everyone is straitened, the expenditure is amply returned.

A still more important step is that of holding a Summer School for the rural teachers in a great country house. Anyone who has tried this will know how the guests delight in their experience. County Councils hold summer schools, generally, at some convenient centre; but lodg-

ings have mostly to be taken and the conditions and atmosphere are of course entirely different.

If the unofficial school numbers 50 or over, it can pay for itself at a somewhat lower fee than at the official centre.

Such a gathering at a country seat, without any anti-socialist preaching, has undoubtedly a very great effect. The chief essential is a first-class educationalist to take charge of the school.

From even the lower angle, it is good tactics in these days of house-shortage to use great houses for this purpose. The reward of seeing the village teachers revel in their unaccustomed surroundings is the reward of the host.

There are large houses in each county which could be used in this manner if the effort were made. A certain expenditure is necessary at the outset for cheap beds and bedding, because it is mostly necessary to sleep two or three teachers together, so that the numbers can be accommodated. It is found that the members of these schools willingly organise to assist in the running of the holiday and there is therefore little addition necessary to the domestic staff of the house.

Such schools pay for all current expenditure. Another method of combating isolation is the invention of wireless. There should be one centre in every village to enable the teachers—in common with others—to share in the music and other features of broadcasting at present beyond their hope.

The development of the Rural Communities Movement coupled with educational classes and the Carnegie library, together with village clubs and the Womens Institutes give practical help in solving the problem; and these should be supported by all who desire to grapple with the evil of isolation which is the great trouble of the rural teacher.

THE PROBLEM OF THE SCHOOL TEACHER IN THE TOWN.

The importance of education upon the future life of the child is a common-place, but perhaps it is necessary to think a little before we realise how inconceivably greater must this influence be in the poorer parts of our great cities, where the elementary school teacher is probably the only educated, self-controlled person with whom the child comes into contact. In many cases the school teacher is the only person likely to have the opportunity of teaching our slum children love of their country and realisation of all that the Empire means.

The attitude of the school teacher is therefore all-important to the future of the race.

We are fortunate in possessing many public spirited masters and mistresses who exert a wonderful influence upon their pupils, but there are also a fairly large number of school teachers who definitely inculcate Socialistic doctrines, and there is also a considerable section who are indifferent on such matters. The problem of the school teacher lies in the fact that very many circumstances that affect them naturally tend to encourage the holding of socialist views—this I think is especially the case with the town teacher. To realise that tendencies do exist that may encourage the holding of less patriotic views can only heighten our appreciation of the work of those teachers who, whatever their party, teach their pupils those great essentials of patriotism to country and Empire, which we as Conservatives pride ourselves upon believing are the foundation stone of all that our Party stands for.

Through the various local authorities the teacher is an employee of the State, and it is almost inevitable that his interests—and what weighs more with many teachers—the educational prospects of the children, should seem to be best served by the Labour Party which has definitely pledged itself to less economy in educational services, than by the Unionist Party, which, in the interests of the whole nation, has striven to reduce national expenditure. The teachers had legitimate grievances—too low pay—lack of provision for old age—the unsatisfactory methods of training pupil teachers—unduly large classes, etc., all but the last of which were set right by the legislation following the Burnham Report in 1918. But, altogether apart from incidental grievances, on matters of wide policy the Labour Government makes a strong appeal to all interested in education. It is only those who can take a very wide and patriotic view who can set a true value on their immediate interests in relation to the welfare of the nation as a whole. The National Union of Teachers showed that they had this wider vision to some extent when they abandoned some of the pledges they had received as a result of the Burnham Report. But everyone knows that the wider and more impersonal outlook is not the easiest one to achieve or to maintain.

Another inducement to Socialism to which the town teacher is liable is due to the segregation of the very poor into certain districts in our larger cities. In schools situated in slum districts the teachers have an almost undiluted experience of the worst failures of Capitalism. Who can expect from them an unbiassed view of the economic structure of society?

There are also certain theories, specially likely to appeal to the teachers, which are in

close affinity with the doctrines of the Labour Party. Thus everyone whose vocational training receives the sanction of a certificate awarded by the State is rather inclined to accept the Labour doctrine that the State owes every individual work or maintenance. Unfortunately in the case of teachers any feeling of resentment is increased by the lack of co-ordination between the supply of trainees and of openings for them, and the fluctuations in the demand for teachers, due almost entirely to political reasons. Again in the case of a good many teachers—especially those in towns—their profession gives them an improved social status and the connection between function and social position is strongly recognised in many of the milder forms of socialist theory, i.e., in State socialism, etc. A good deal can be done by those of us who come into contact with school teachers in avoiding hurting susceptibilities that are sometimes hypersensitive.

I think also that many teachers feel that their profession has been misjudged by people in circumstances that have given them wider opportunities for culture. Elementary teachers ought to be judged not as pundits but as pedagogues. Anyone who has seen an ordinary teacher handling a class of perhaps 80 children of the uneducated classes may well be amazed at the high standard of technical efficiency.

Unfortunately in two respects school teachers are especially exposed to the influence of socialist propaganda. Socialistic theories do seem to appeal to a certain type of our intelligentsia, and during their two years' training the embryo teachers come under a fair amount of Socialist influence.

The other method of Socialist propaganda is much more marked. One of the features of the modern labour movement is the deliberate organisation of the "black-coated proletariat." Trade Unions or quasi Trade Unions have been formed for clerks, supervisors of all kinds, agents, and civil servants of almost all grades. The teachers are strongly organised, their principal association being of course the N.U.T. and although these societies are not technically classified as Trade Unions and are not in full affiliation with the Trade Union Congress, yet, in all essentials of structure and function they are closely modelled on the proletarian organisations, and it seems more than probable that they will eventually become entirely merged in the labour organisation.

Remedies are difficult to suggest, but merely to face the problem may help wiser heads to find a way out.

Those of us who come into contact with the teachers may do a good deal by our individual attitude, and any woman who is doing public

work may actively discourage socialistic tendencies.

Probably very few of us can teach these professional teachers to be patriotic, but where they are already disposed to influence their pupils for good we can, many of us, enormously stimulate and help them by appreciation and by practical assistance.

There is an even greater way, for here and there, like a vocation or a call to the mission field, individuals feel the impulse to dedicate themselves and all the advantages birth and material circumstances have given them to the education of the nation's less fortunate children. To become an elementary school teacher from such motives is perhaps the greatest service any woman can render to her country.

A Useful Book on Empire Teaching.—Anyone interested in the more serious teaching of the British Empire Exhibition, may care to hear of a very attractive little book published by Messrs. King and Son at 3/6. Its title is "What every Briton ought to know, a short introduction to the Study of Empire Economic Problems," and it is by Mr. Ben W. Turner, chairman of the British Empire Producers' Organisation.

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