

THE
WOMAN'S LEADER

AND
THE COMMON CAUSE

VOL. XIV. No. 40.



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1922.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FOR POSTAL SUBSCRIBERS:—BRITISH ISLES, 6/6; ABROAD, 8/8.

FROM

THE COMMON CAUSE PUBLISHING CO., LTD., 62 OXFORD STREET, LONDON, W. 1.

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NOTES AND NEWS

Equal Citizenship for Irishwomen.

On Wednesday, 25th October, the Constitution of the Irish Free State was finally adopted by Dail Eireann. Many points in the Constitution are of interest, as, for instance, the provisions for the referendum and the initiative; but for feminists, Article III marks a real advance in constitution making. This article reads as follows: "Every person domiciled in the Irish Free State for not less than seven years is a citizen of the Irish Free State, and shall, within the limits of the Irish Free State, enjoy the privileges and be subject to the obligations of such citizenship . . . Men and women have equal rights as citizens." A Government amendment during the Committee stage altered the last sentence as follows: "Men and women have equal political rights." The unsatisfactory nature of this alteration was recognized by feminists at once. Communication with the country being impossible owing to the protracted postal strike, a temporary emergency committee was formed in Dublin. A circular signed by fifty representative women was sent to every member of Dail Eireann, urging the importance of restoring the original phrase, "equal rights as citizens." This energetic action bore fruit in the final decision of the Government. They introduced an amendment striking out the last clause, and amending the first clause as follows: "Every person, without distinction of sex, domiciled in the Irish Free State." Thus, to quote the words of Professor Maginnis, T.D., "they had women recognized as citizens, with all the reasonable and equitable consequences to be drawn therefrom." The far-reaching changes involved will require special legislation, as, for instance, in the cases of the law of libel, the law relating to guardianship of children, etc., but the principle is established. In the Irish Free State men and women will be equally free to enjoy all the privileges and fulfil all the duties of citizenship. The fabric of the State, rising steadily amidst all the difficulty and confusion, is founded on the broad basis of equality and justice between men and women. It is a good omen for the future.

Women Candidates.

In less than two weeks after this issue is in the hands of its readers the General Election will be over, and we shall know how many women have been returned to the House of Commons. At the time of writing two admirable candidates have withdrawn: Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon (Co.-Lib., Canterbury), whose wide range of experience qualified her in an unusual degree, and Mrs. More-Nisbett (Ind., South Edinburgh), whose fine work in

connection with Women Police has won much admiration. More new candidates have been adopted. These include Mrs. Rackham, who is contesting Chelmsford in the Labour interests and is well known to readers of this paper—a great suffrage worker, ex-member of the N.U.S.E.C. Executive Committee, Poor Law Guardian, temporary Factory Inspector under the Home Office during the war, and a Town Councillor. Few candidates are more qualified than she to render valuable service to the Nation if returned. In addition to her, Miss Richardson (member of the Women's Freedom League) has been adopted as Labour candidate for South Acton, Lady Terrington as Ind.-Lib. candidate for Wycombe, and Mrs. J. M. Hogge has been invited to stand as Independent Liberal candidate for Dumbarton Burghs. The University of Wales has the honour of being the first University to adopt a woman candidate, and Miss Olive Wheeler is standing in the Labour interests. The Hon. Mrs. Brodrick is the Conservative candidate for Denbigh.

Prospects of Women Candidates.

We hear excellent reports of progress in the constituencies in which women are standing, and a great deal of interest is being shown by the Press and the public in the candidature of women; it seems to be generally anticipated that, in spite of the fact that, with two or three exceptions, no woman is standing for an obviously safe seat, there will be a certain number of successful candidates. Some pity, sincere or otherwise, has been expended by the Press this week on the unfortunate women who are standing as Independents! Reports received, however, from East Toxteth, Liverpool, and from Chiswick and Brentford by Miss Eleanor Rathbone and Mrs. Oliver Strachey, who are standing as Independent candidates respectively suggest a state of affairs deserving anything but pity. Miss Rathbone is supported by the Liverpool W.C.A., a very strong body, and being the only candidate opposing Mr. Rankin, the Conservative candidate (sitting member), will in all probability poll the whole progressive vote. Steady work has been carried on for over a year, and has resulted in a well-organized election machinery, and reports from both her supporters and opponents indicate a very close contest. Mrs. Oliver Strachey has the support of the Political Reform Association, a body composed of men and women of all parties, and has a body of energetic and able workers. We hear that Mrs. Corbett Ashby's position has made surprisingly rapid advance in a difficult constituency, and that

Mrs. Coombe-Tennant (Nat.-Lib., Forest of Dean), Miss Helen Fraser (Nat.-Lib., Govan), and Miss Bondfield (Labour, Northampton) are all making themselves felt. We hear, also that Mrs. Scott Gatty (Ind.-Lib., Hunts) has during the last year visited practically every house in her constituency. Mrs. Burnett Smith (Ind.-Lib., Glasgow, Maryhill) is securing large audiences. Lady Cooper (Cons., Walsall) has of all the new candidates the unique position of not having to win a seat, as she is standing for that of her husband, and from the reports from her constituency there seems every reason to anticipate with confidence that she will be returned. A recent visit to Louth has given us the opinion that Mrs. Wintringham, who has won the goodwill and admiration of her constituency in a remarkable degree, is practically certain of a safe return, and we venture to predict that Lady Astor will triumph over the attacks of her adversaries with the same buoyancy, with the same aplomb, that characterized her first campaign.

Woman as Election Agent.

Mr. J. Jones Roberts, Labour's barrister candidate for Merioneth, has appointed his wife as election agent.

A Message to Women.

Lady Astor, M.P., Conservative Member of Parliament for Plymouth, Mrs. Wintringham, M.P., Independent Liberal for Louth, and Miss Margaret Bondfield, Member of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and prospective Labour candidate for Northampton, have signed the following joint message to women as an introduction to one of the leaflets of the International Labour Office: "The benefit of a higher standard of working conditions has often in the past been conceded to those bodies of workers who by the strength of their organizations have been able to make their claim most forcibly heard. The Labour part of the Peace Treaty, which proclaims that 'universal peace can only be established if it is based upon social justice,' created an International Labour Organization

to bring about the improvement of the conditions of the workers throughout the world by agreement, irrespective of the lever of force. The most prominent of its achievements have been on behalf of women and children. Thirteen of the thirty-four Conventions and Recommendations passed by its three annual conferences, where are gathered together representatives of Governments, employers and workers of over fifty countries, deal specially with the conditions of working women, young persons, and children. The International Labour Organization of the League of Nations has given a strong impetus to the realization of many of the aspirations of the women's movement, and should be actively supported by the women of all countries and of all classes."

Child Murder.

The first case under the Infanticide Act, better known to readers of this paper under the original name of the Child Murder Trial Act, was heard at Lincoln Assizes this week. A girl of 19 pleaded guilty to murdering her newly born child, adding that at the time she did not know what she was doing. The Crown accepted the plea, and she was sentenced to four months in the second division. Mr. Justice Lush said that the Act marked a fresh step in the improvement of the Criminal Law. He felt great pity for the prisoner, and if one consulted one's own feelings one would be glad to have said she had suffered punishment enough. He must, however, take care that the way he dealt with her should be a deterrent to others. A young woman about to become a mother should make proper provision for her child.

POLICY.—The sole policy of THE WOMAN'S LEADER is to advocate a 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.

WOMEN CANDIDATES.

Two weeks ago the distribution of women candidates for Parliament according to Party was dealt with in this paper. Though some changes have taken place, the numbers remain approximately the same. It may now be interesting to analyse the position with regard to women actually in the field, from the point of view of their qualifications and to consider their distribution in different parts of the country geographically. At the time of writing this article, out of a total of thirty-one candidates, ten have had a University education. Newnham College claims the distinction of producing four—Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Miss Susan Lawrence, Mrs. Rackham, and Mrs. Oliver Strachey; Somerville College gives Miss Eleanor Rathbone; and the University of London two, Dr. Ethel Bentham and Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, who is now Professor of Botany, Birkbeck College. Two women, both of outstanding ability and wide reputation, tell us that they have had an elementary education only. In almost every case the women who have come forward have served an apprenticeship to National politics in local affairs. Fourteen have been members of Boards of Guardians, local authorities, or have sat on the Bench, and most of the others have had good experience of social work of all kinds. Nearly half were distinguished for their work in the Suffrage movement, and several whose names are too well known for mention are admitted experts on questions relating to the political, legal, and economic status of women in the community.

The range of subjects on which one or other of the candidates have specialized is a very comprehensive one, including such diverse subjects taken at random as trade boards, unemployment, temperance, women police, women in the Civil Service, housing, child welfare, National War Savings, trade unionism for women, the Co-operative movement, women in the Church, foreign missions, the care of the blind, women's institutes, education, decasualization of dock labour, seamen's allotments, disarmament, and the League of Nations. It will be seen from this list, and still more from the actual records of the work of the candidates, that while alive to the paramount importance of what are popularly but inaccurately called "women's questions,"

they are capable of doing distinguished and even original work in the sphere of National and International politics. Several of the women who are standing have had no small degree of political experience either in connection with party politics, or non-party political activities connected with the enfranchisement of women and kindred matters. Lastly, one or two, at least, have had opportunities of life in other lands, which, in view of the need for international knowledge and sympathy, will serve them in good stead.

The geographical distribution of the candidates presents features of interest. The west counties returned the first woman member, and we are convinced Sutton, Plymouth, will send Lady Astor back again in triumph. The east counties returned the second, and the Louth division can be depended on to see that Mrs. Wintringham will carry on in the next Parliament. At the General Election the London area alone has produced eleven candidates; Scotland has three, Lancashire two, Yorkshire, Gloucestershire, Devonshire, Lincoln, Derbyshire, Wiltshire, Bedford, Essex, each one.

The above bird's-eye view has we hope emphasized first that in the little group of women now adopted as Parliamentary candidates we have those who almost without exception have good and remarkably varied, and in some cases brilliant, qualifications for a Parliamentary career; secondly, that though perhaps London has an undue proportion, they are fairly well scattered throughout the country. This is as it should be; so long as there are so few women in Parliament, it is highly desirable that they should be representative not only of widely different interests and sections of the community, but that they should be drawn from all parts of the country.

There is still time—the last ten days of the contest lie before us. If the women of the country are determined to send women to Parliament and are prepared to make personal sacrifices, it can be done. Let them show their sense of proportion, and put aside anything that can legitimately be put aside in these critical times, and throw their whole weight into the contest of these coming days.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER.

By OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT.

Visibility is still low in the political region, nevertheless shapes, more or less solid, begin to be discernible. Easily the most definite, so far, is the programme of the Labour Party. One suspects, indeed, that its outlines might have been less bold had its authors any serious intention of shouldering the burden of Government. However that may be, they can hardly suppose that increased taxation and increased public expenditure, their chief remedies for our impoverished country, will attract any large mass of voters. Nor is business likely to be consoled for its certain injury under these two heads by the sop of abolished import duties. As to nationalization of railways, mines, or anything else, the general public's experience during the war has not given it a great appetite for further adventures in this line. If Mr. Henderson has any doubt on the matter, let him change his vocabulary, substitute "State management" for that blessed word "nationalization" and mark the result upon the working man's mind. Meanwhile, his unlucky attack upon "private enterprise" has, of course, proved an invaluable slogan to the enemies of Labour.

If the Labour Party's social programme seems wanting in actuality, the same cannot be said of their attitude towards foreign affairs. It is to their lasting credit that from the first they have realized the vital importance of the League of Nations, and have consistently made it the corner-stone of their foreign policy, in this point being well ahead of the older parties.

When one looks for equal vision in domestic policy, it is disappointing to find only an inverted kind of "capitalism". The Labour Party, as if hypnotized into imitation by its hatred of the profiteer, seems to concentrate all its thoughts and aspirations upon a mere transference of money from one pocket to another. There is nothing new in this, and nothing fruitful;

it remains an ugly, barren proposition whether in the mouth of rich or poor.

Ideas do not need to be violent, or even very striking, in order to work great changes. The League of Nations, for instance, has started a revolution which may change the character of the world, simply by applying old and commonplace remedies in a new direction. Can Labour do nothing for us on the same lines at home? What about applying the principle of publicity to industrial management, and to its profits and losses; to industrial combines, contracts, and contests? The serious and peaceable application of that principle would do more to change the industrial climate, and the status of the worker than a united House of Commons breathing threats against private enterprise.

Sooner or later, if we are to live in peace, we must establish publicity and co-operation over the whole field. It will be found impossible to have a League of Nations with its appeal to open treaties and the tribunal of public opinion, functioning side by side with the great industries and trusts, more and more international in their character, conditioned by the methods of the old diplomacy—secret agreements, secret gain, secret combination, and secret and sudden attack.

Is it not time that the Labour leaders left off repeating their worn out, easy formulas, and took to the hard work of thinking out for themselves the problems of their own day? When this comes about we may see Labour leading a crusade not against private, that is individual enterprise, but against the hidden hand of industry.

[The views expressed in this column are those of our Parliamentary correspondent, and are not our editorial opinion. Like so many other things in this paper they are expressly controversial, and comment upon them will be welcomed.—Ed.]

RECORDS OF SOME WOMEN CANDIDATES.*

COUNCILLOR MRS. ALDERTON, J.P., 24 Cambridge Road, Colchester. Independent Liberal. Constituency: South Edinburgh. Education: Milton Mount College. Record of previous Political, Local Government, or Social Work: Councillor and Magistrate of Borough of Colchester; Honorary Secretary Women's National Liberal Federation. Sitting Member and Party: Right Hon. C. D. Murray, Coalition Unionist. Majority at last Election: 2,999. Opposing Candidate: Right Hon. C. D. Murray, Coalition Unionist. Voluntary workers welcomed. Agent and Committee Rooms: Apply c/o Miss Bury, 40 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh.

COMMANDANT MARY S. ALLEN, O.B.E., 7 Rochester Row, S.W. Independent Liberal. Constituency: St. George's, Westminster. Occupation: Commandant Women's Auxiliary Service. Education: Privately and at Princess Helena College. Record of previous Political, Local Government, or Social Work: Women's Suffrage Worker; Organizer of Women Police Service founded by Miss Damer Dawson, whom she succeeded as Commandant; Lectures on Women Police. Sitting Member and Party: J. M. M. Erskine, Esq., Independent. Majority at last Election: 1,808. Opposing Candidate: J. M. M. Erskine, Esq., Independent. Voluntary workers welcomed. Agent: Mrs. Madge. Committee Rooms: 26 Moreton Street, S.W. 1.

MRS. CORBETT ASHBY, 33 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, S.W. 15. Independent Liberal. Constituency: Richmond, Surrey. Education: Home and Newnham College, Cambridge; Classical Tripos Honours, B.A. Dublin. Record of previous Political, Local Government, or Social Work: Vice-Chairman N.U.S.E.C.; Executive Committee Women's Liberal Federation; Executive Committee Home Counties Liberal Federation; Recording and League of Nations; Hon. Secretary International Women's Suffrage Alliance; on Committee Wandsworth Welfare Centres; nine years Poor Law Guardian; two years Vice-Chairman of Board; political speaker since leaving College; lectures on feminist questions in France and Holland, as well as in Great Britain; Manager and Organizer Vacation School; spoke on Women's Deputation before President Wilson on League of Nations Commission at Paris in 1919, and before Mr. Gompers on Labour Commission. Sitting Member and Party: Clifford Edgar, Esq., Coalition Unionist. Majority at last Election: 4,749. Opposing Candidate: Clifford Edgar, Esq., Coalition Unionist. Voluntary workers welcomed. Committee Rooms: 3 Bridge Street, Richmond.

VISCOUNTESS ASTOR, M.P., Clivedon, Taplow, Bucks. Unionist. Constituency: Sutton, Plymouth. Occupation: Member of Parlia-

ment. Education: Private. Record of previous Political, Local Government, or Social Work: Always interested in Social Welfare work in Plymouth and elsewhere, including maternity homes, boys' and girls' clubs, housing, playing fields, etc. Sitting Member and Party: Viscountess Astor, Coalition Unionist. Majority at last Election: 5,203. Opposing Candidate: Wansley Bayly, Esq., Independent Conservative. Offers of voluntary help should be sent to the Agent, C. S. Briggs, Esq., at the Committee Rooms, 17 Lockyer Street, Plymouth.

HONOURABLE LADY BARLOW, Torkington Lodge, Hazel Grove, Cheshire. Independent Liberal. Constituency: High Peak Division, Derbyshire. Education: Private. Record of previous Political, Local Government, or Social Work: Helped husband, who was Member of Parliament for Frome for 26 years; President Lancashire and Cheshire Band of Hope Union; on Free Trade Committee. Sitting Member and Party: Sir Samuel Hill-Wood, Coalition Unionist. Majority at last Election: 3,614. Opposing Candidates: Frank Anderson, Esq., Labour; Sir Samuel Hill-Wood, Coalition Unionist. Voluntary helpers welcomed. Agent: J. Learoyd, Esq. Committee Rooms: Liberal Offices, Glossop.

MRS. BARTON, J.P., 46 Stanmington Road, Malin Bridge, Sheffield. Co-operative and Labour. Constituency: King's Norton, Birmingham. Occupation: Assistant Secretary, Women's Co-operative Guild. Education: Elementary school and many years' experience of social and administrative work. Record of previous Political, Local Government, or Social Work: Three years Sheffield City Council, Co-operative and Labour member; member of Women's Housing Committee under Ministry of Reconstruction; Member of Committee of Inquiry into living on Canal Boats; Member of Committee of Inquiry into Drinking amongst Women. Sitting Member and Party: Sir Herbert Austin, Coalition Conservative. Majority at last Election: 3,892. Opposing Candidates: Sir Herbert Austin, Coalition Conservative; — Meakin, Esq., Independent Liberal. Local voluntary help welcomed. Agent: T. Handforth, Esq., Boot Repairing Shop, Co-operative Society, Understede Road, Sturcheley, Birmingham.

DR. ETHEL BENTHAM, J.P., 61 Lansdowne Road, W. 11. Labour. Constituency: East Islington. Occupation: Medical Practitioner. Education: In Dublin; Medical Education London; post-graduate study abroad. Distinctions: M.D., J.P. Record of previous Political, Local Government, or Social Work: Labour Party for many years; first woman to stand for Town Council; member of Borough Council for ten years; past member of Insurance Committee, and Executive Committee of Fabian Society; Justice of the Peace; National Executive of the Labour Party for four years; original member of Executive Committee of Women's League all through till its

*Extracts from the pamphlet published by the N.U.S.E.C., price 2d.

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