

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

The Attorney General and Equal Franchise.

At a meeting of Conservative women at the Kingsway Hall on 1st December, the Attorney General is reported as saying that of all the experiments which this country had tried since the war, he thought perhaps the greatest experiment and certainly the greatest success had been the giving of the Parliamentary franchise to women. In referring to the Government's pledge, he went on to say that "this is a pledge which the Government will have to fulfil unless this Parliament comes to a premature and unexpected end." He announced that a strong committee of Ministers has been set up to examine the problem, but has made no progress. We should indeed like to know more of this committee. Of whom is it composed? Of those who, like Sir Douglas Hogg, feel that to extend the franchise to women on the same terms as men now have it "will throw the whole electoral system into disorder, will put the Government of this country into the hands of the women, and will make all constituencies so large as to destroy the personal contact between members and electors on which our representative system is based"? Or does it have among its members "tried friends" of the suffrage movement like Lord Cecil of Chelwood? Sir Douglas added that the question would have to be referred "either to a Speaker's Conference, or to a Royal Commission (probably the latter)." Here, alas, is the signal for the delay we have long feared. It will not necessarily require Parliament's coming "to a premature and unexpected end" to cause any franchise measure which may be recommended to be put forward too late. One hopeful feature in Sir Douglas' remarks, however, is to be found in his references to the age at which the franchise should be given. In speaking of the proposal that the minimum voting age for men should be 25, he stated that "most Members of Parliament think that such a change would be impracticable and would not ensure stability in the electorate even if carried through."

Reduction of Housing Subsidies.

The Government has made an announcement as to the reduction in subsidies under the Housing Acts which comes into force in the case of all houses not completed by the 30th September, 1927. The details of these reductions are contained in a draft order dated 25th November, 1926. The subject was debated

in the House of Commons on the 2nd December, and has been adopted. Under the Housing Acts of 1923 and 1924 respectively, subsidies which have been payable by the State up to the present have been £6 a year for 20 years under the 1923 Act and £9 a year for 40 years under the 1924 Act, but, in the latter case, subject to special conditions requiring houses to be let and not sold, and the rents to be restricted. This restriction, generally speaking, involves a contribution of £4 10s. per annum by the Local Authority. The grounds upon which the Government have decided on a reduction in the future are the State's financial position and the suggestion by Mr. Neville Chamberlain that the increased subsidies have involved increased building costs. These suggestions were, of course, opposed by the Opposition in the House, and we do not propose to discuss the arguments here. The general effects of the alteration of the rate of subsidy are that the 1923 Act subsidy from the State will be reduced to £4 a year for 20 years, and that the 1924 Act subsidy will be reduced to £7 10s. a year for 40 years (in the case of agricultural districts, where the subsidy before was £12 10s. it is now reduced to £11). For the purpose of determining the rent charged under the 1924 Act, the contribution by the Local Authority is reduced from £4 10s. to £3 15s., i.e. proportionately with the reduction in the State subsidy. Clearly, if the cost of building falls proportionately with the reduction in subsidy, then the reduction in subsidy will not affect the output of houses or the rents to be charged, whilst at the same time the State and Local Authorities will save financially. On the other hand, if the cost of building does not fall, then either there will be a reduction in the number of houses built, or the rents for the new houses will have to be higher than those built recently. As to the ultimate effect of the reduction in the subsidy, time alone will show.

Shifty Justice.

On 3rd December a schoolmaster was convicted at the Surrey Assizes, and sentenced to three years' penal servitude for waylaying in a lonely place and subsequently assaulting a domestic servant. As the jury was being sworn in, Sir Edward Marshall Hall, K.C., for the defence challenged the one woman juror who happened to be present, and she was duly replaced by a man. We do not blame Sir Edward Marshall Hall for the incident. He was engaged to do his best for the accused man, and clearly the presence on the jury of someone who might be supposed to reflect more directly the point of view of the plaintiff and realize in all its implications the seriousness of the offence committed upon her, was unlikely to facilitate his task. We do, however, most emphatically blame the existing conditions of jury service which make such invidious exclusion possible; and we note with satisfaction the intention of the National Union of Societies for Equal-Citizenship to promote such legislation as will secure the replacement by another woman of any woman juror whose presence is thus challenged.

The Smoke Nuisance.

The report stage of the Public Health (Smoke Abatement) Bill brought about no improvement. Amendments were moved by Rear-Admiral Beamish and Sir Arthur Holbrook to include private dwelling-houses within its scope, and were rejected. The only amendment passed was one postponing the operation of the Bill from January until July! There will be no further opportunity to widen the provisions of this very little Bill.

The Legitimacy Bill.

The Legitimacy Bill has passed through its committee stage, and should therefore without doubt pass through its remaining stages before the end of the Session. An unsuccessful attempt

was made by Mr. Rhys Davies to delete the proviso that children, one or both of whose parents were married to someone else at the time of their birth, should not come within the scope of the Bill. We sincerely hope that we are within sight of the end at last.

Mental Welfare.

Over 600 delegates attended the two-day Conference organized by the Central Association for Mental Welfare, and evinced very lively interest in the consideration of the problems of Borderland cases, the proper care of mental defectives outside Institutions and the after effects of encephalitis lethargica. Miss Ruth Darwin, in pleading the urgent need for more institutional accommodation, emphasized the fact that there were still about 88 per cent. of the total population of mental defectives outside institutions with no adequate provision for their home-training and occupation. Mrs. Hume Pinsent and others dealt with the question of sterilization. While admitting the efficacy of it as an additional safeguard in a comparatively few cases, any idea of it as an alternative to segregation was strongly deprecated. Mrs. H. P. Macmillan, chairman of the Royal Commission on Lunacy, and subsequent speakers urged the adoption of the recommendations of the Commission with regard to the early treatment of cases of mental disorder, thus avoiding very frequently the necessity of certification. England at present is far behind America, Germany and Italy in this respect. Dr. Tredgold of the Bethlem Royal Hospital, dealt with the mental and social aspects of the now prevalent disease of encephalitis lethargica, and the pressing need for special institutional accommodation for the treatment and care of sufferers from it. The number of children in whom a very marked moral degeneration has taken place as a result of the disease is beginning to constitute a very real problem in delinquency. By arrangement with the Metropolitan Asylums Board provision has been made for the care of 100 children under 15 years who have developed mental and moral sequelæ consequent on an attack of the disease. The experiment is being watched with great interest, but it is too early to make any deductions yet.

Our Greedy Butchers.

In its latest report the Food Council soundly condemns the London butchers, particularly those in the Argentine beef section, for profiteering. They consider that if the facts stated by the meat traders before the Royal Commission on Food Prices are correct, "a very substantial reduction should have been made in the retail prices given in these lists (the Smithfield retail lists) for the different cuts of foreign beef and English mutton." The margin of profit on these qualities was in fact between two and three times as great as that which the official witnesses of the butchers asserted to be the margin on which they were normally working in the early part of 1925. These margins are all the more oppressive because they occur upon a class of goods, principally Argentine beef, largely consumed by poor people. From the mass of very detailed analysis of profits and costs presented by the Council, it transpires too that much of the evidence submitted by the witnesses on behalf of the meat trade is both nebulous and contradictory. The practical conclusion of their report, the substance of which is disturbing—to say the least of it—to the ordinary unlearned consumer, favours the conspicuous display by individual retail butchers of retail price lists from day to day, rather than the concoction of a central Smithfield list which is bound to be unrepresentative and inconsistent.

Trade Unionism and Nursing.

The Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organizations and the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on Public Health have between them issued a report on the conditions of nursing, which will be submitted to a conference of nursing and health organizations at the Caxton Hall on 28th January. The report points out that nurses, who have of course to undergo a long and arduous course of technical training, are relatively worse off as regards hours and pay than any other corresponding group of workers. In some cases nurses have been required to work a 66 hour week on day, and an 84 hour week on night duty. The twelve-hour night duty is still of frequent occurrence. Meanwhile the probationer is often looked upon as a source of cheap manual labour rather than as a student. As an alternative to such conditions (which, of course, lack uniformity) the report advocates a 48 hour week, a month's annual holiday on full pay, and pensions at 55. With regard

to the training period, it advocates an eight-hour day inclusive of lectures, greater concentration upon studies, and the devolution of much manual work on to paid maids and orderlies, one off-day per week, and one week-end per month, a three-weeks' annual holiday, and a minimum salary of £40. But above all, and for the attainment of these specified ends, the report advocates the organization of the profession on trade union lines for the achievement of equal bargaining power on a National Joint Council representing the State, municipal bodies, hospitals, and other bodies concerned in the employment of nurses.

A New World Record.

We offer hearty congratulations to Miss H. B. Carstairs on her achievement of a new world record for motor boat speed over a measured mile. Miss Carstairs already holds two international trophies, the Duke of York's Trophy, and the John Ward international trophy open to the world for the best speed for a 1½ litre boat over a distance of not less than 30 miles. Her present record shows a mean speed of 39.27 knots, as compared with a previous record (Mr. Hugh Trevis') of 38.175.

Custody of Children.

A correspondent last week wrote to criticize a paragraph which appeared among the Notes and News on 22nd October, under the title of "Is the Guardianship of Infants Act unjust to Fathers?" In that paragraph we pointed out that owing to an oversight in the Government's drafting, fathers are debarred from applying either under the Guardianship of Infants Act of 1886 or of 1925. Miss Leadley-Brown again points this out in her letter, but disputes our statement that fathers can apply for the custody of the child in the High Court or County Court. In putting it in this way we had apparently sacrificed clarity to exigencies of space. We did not say, and we did not mean that applications could be made under the Guardianship of Infants Act in these Courts. In fact, we definitely stated that the 1886 Act "only dealt with the rights of application of the mother." What we were referring to were the common law rights of a father. Although we should have liked to have seen the rights of application equal for both parents in the Guardianship of Infants Act, we recognize that, in that the father still retains his common law rights, he can possess himself of the custody of the child. Should the mother dispute it, both parents are heard before the Courts. The father can also apply for a writ of Habeas Corpus from the High Court if the mother has without the permission of the Courts, taken the child to her custody. We recognize that it was not made clear in our paragraph that a writ of Habeas Corpus can only be taken out in the High Court, and not in the County Court.

The New Year's Number and Our Christmas Request.

We remind our readers of our New Year's issue on Friday, 31st December, which takes the form of a survey of women's work during the year. Fuller particulars will be given next week; we can safely say that no woman who wishes to have in compact form this record of the events of the woman's year can afford to be without this number. New subscribers for 1927 will receive this number without extra payment. There could be no more gracious act on the part of those of our readers who have found the paper useful during the year than a Christmas present of a new subscriber. 6s. 6d. is a very small sum to pay for a weekly summary of events, specially affecting the interests of women, sent post free to your address with an annual summing up of the year's total gains and losses. Is it too much to hope that several hundred of our friends will remember us on Christmas Day and each give us one new subscriber? Even a hundred new subscribers would give us a happier Christmas.

A Pleasant Interlude.

We have once again to thank our kind friends and faithful advertisers, Messrs. Cadbury Bros., not only for their constant support but for an edible gift in the shape of a delicious box of chocolates which was greatly appreciated in our office.

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.

FIGHTING ON THE PAROCHIAL FRONT.

For some weeks past we have been reiterating the importance of Local Government Elections as an event in the feminist advance. We make no apology for our reiteration. Some of the best feminists are only too prone to assume that the real fighting front of advanced feminism is the parliamentary front or even the industrial front, and only to a very much lesser degree the local government front.

There are, perhaps, certain historical reasons for this under-emphasis of the importance of local government to the cause of feminism. For many years our world appeared to comprise two main categories: suffragists and anti-suffragists. But in the last category there was a perceptible sub-division between those who regretted and abhorred the intrusion of women into any sphere of public life, and those whose uneasy conscience prompted them to believe that the maternal and "housekeeping" qualities of leisured women might be usefully expended in the more circumscribed and less responsible public spheres of philanthropy and local government. The constructive activities of such people were of course stimulated by the reproaches of their suffrage opponents; they were anxious to prove that their anti-suffrage case had its public-spirited and constructive aspect—with the result that many of them became active and devoted members of the Women's Local Government Association, and even fought local elections with vigour and ultimate success. Thus, in the local government sphere, suffragists and anti-suffragists achieved a certain amount of co-operation on behalf of a very partial but undeniably useful measure of feminism. It was sometimes a little painful for the suffrage local government canvasser to be told patronizingly that here indeed was a legitimate and fruitful field for the cultivation of feminine qualities; and in consequence she came to feel—half-consciously perhaps—that only in the parliamentary suffrage movement was she expressing the whole of her feminist faith. Elsewhere she was compromising it for useful ends. And undoubtedly, since theories outlive facts, and since feelings outlive theories, the feeling that local government activities are not the best vehicle for the expression of true potent feminism, clings round us to-day.

From time to time, however, events conspire to dissipate these

misty feelings. The readiness of an acquiescent bureaucracy to promote the appointment of women police, breaks against an obstinate phalanx of hide-bound masculist Watch Committees, firmly entrenched in our impeccable traditions of local autonomy. The strategic key to the situation lies not at Westminster, but in the hearts of a hundred and one local electorates. Or again—the intentions of the Sex Disabilities Removal Act and the election pledges of three national parties in favour of sex-equality, are blunt weapons against the determination of a multitude of obscure and obscurantist local education committees to shackle the economic and social independence of women by subjecting their domestic arrangements to inquisitorial examination and treating their salaries as a mere stop-gap alternative to economic dependence upon a man.

Nevertheless, the campaign which is being waged by Local Authorities up and down the country against the liberties of married women—the constant dismissals of married women teachers on the ground of marriage alone, or, as in the case of Dr. Turnadge, of Twickenham, on the ground of motherhood—the equally degrading and irrelevant investigations into "special home circumstances" where the nemesis of dismissal is precariously withheld—this whole phenomenon constitutes one of the gravest injustices that have ever menaced the economic and social position of women. And here again, the strategic key to the situation lies not at Westminster, but in the hearts of a hundred and one local electorates. It is not on the parliamentary front that the battle must be fought out if it is to be fought effectively; it is on the parochial front. Nor will the fight involve any element of the old anti-suffrage co-operation of our pre-war local government campaigns. *Shall the professional woman preserve inviolate the right to order her own domestic life in her own way, with the same freedom of choice which society accords to the professional man?* Here is an issue which divides the advanced feminist from the half-hearted feminist as surely as ever the old parliamentary suffrage issue divided them in the past. It is none the less a feminist issue because it is essentially a local government issue. But it is undoubtedly a more difficult issue to fight, for it has to be fought in so many places at once. No mere "stage army" can fight it!

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER.

BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.

It has been a week of small things, with one important debate on housing. On Monday, 29th November, the Emergency Regulations were finally disposed of, and, strange to relate, passed with little discussion. The fact that the coal stoppage had petered out was in everyone's mind, and the Home Secretary was conciliatory. The Regulations will disappear completely before long.

On Tuesday, 30th November, two agricultural bills passed third reading, the Small Holdings and Allotments Bill, and the Horticultural Products Bill. The first is of some importance to the country districts, for it enables small holdings up to fifty acres and allotments up to three acres to be started, even if they will not pay their way, the state bearing three-quarters of the loss and the ratepayers one-quarter. The Bill was opposed, and Mr. Lloyd George made a speech in favour of his own land scheme, and perhaps the most noticeable feature of this and the other debates during the week is the drawing together of Mr. Lloyd George and his followers towards the Labour party. Something will be said about this later. The Bill passed by a substantial majority, and will no doubt become law. At night the Measure presented by the Church Assembly, setting up a pension scheme for bishops, passed without discussion, and on the next day, 1st December, several other small bills got through or were advanced a stage. The only important matter under discussion was the proposal to guarantee a loan of ten million pounds for East Africa, and four million pounds for Palestine. This was defended by Mr. Ormsby-Gore in an able speech, and was not strongly opposed; but the House is getting distinctly anxious at these numerous extensions of government guarantees. When a stock is guaranteed by the Government, the security becomes as good as War Loan. The increase in the numbers of such loans has the same effect as increased Government borrowing, namely, to put up the rate of interest at which the Government can obtain money. This has a serious consequence.

In the next two years we have to re-borrow an immense amount of war debt which is due for repayment, and it was hoped that a saving would be made in the rate of interest at which the new money could be obtained. Now, however, for causes too numerous to mention here, but of which guaranteed loans certainly are one, the rate has risen so high that it is difficult to see that Government can save anything upon the borrowing.

Leaving out the debate on housing for the moment, on the evening of Thursday, 2nd December, near midnight, the House discussed the Benefices (Ecclesiastical Duties) Measure sent up by the Church Assembly. This Measure sets up a procedure whereby incumbents who are inadequate or negligent in the performance of their spiritual duties can either be compelled to appoint a curate or, in cases of negligence, find themselves inhibited. The Measure was opposed by Sir H. Foster, Sir G. Hohler and others, who waxed indignant over the burden thrown upon the clergy. As a matter of fact, they had not taken the trouble to get up the case, for the Measure did little more than confirm what has been the law since 1898, and indeed in a good part since 1838. Their opposition, therefore, collapsed, though it kept the House up until half-part one in the morning, when the Measure passed by a large majority.

On Friday, 3rd December, Mr. Dennis Herbert piloted skilfully the Roman Catholic Relief Bill through its final stages. It was opposed, but not bitterly, and indeed it does little more than remove legal disabilities.

Now for the chief event of the week—the reduction in the housing subsidy. Mr. Neville Chamberlain, on Thursday, 2nd December, proposed that after 1st October, 1927, the subsidy under what is known as the Wheatley scheme, should be reduced from £9 for forty years to £7 10s.; and that under the Chamberlain scheme from £6 for twenty years to £4. These figures are somewhat confusing, and the best way to look at it is that the subsidy will be decreased by £25 a house. His speech was a

remarkable one. He proved, and his figures were not disputed, that the more the Government spent in subsidies, the dearer houses became. Therefore, when Mr. Wheatley, in the Labour Government in 1924, increased the subsidy with the intention of making houses cheaper, the result was the opposite. Houses became dearer, and the rents at which they were let were either the same, or, in some cases, slightly more than where the Government spent less money in assisting house building. Which shows that we live in a paradoxical world. Where the increased money has gone to remains a mystery, but it certainly has not gone to benefit the tenant.

The debate that followed was a good one. Mr. Wheatley spoke, and Mr. Greenwood wound up well for the Opposition. Sir Kingsley Wood replied for the Government, and, as usual, he not only knew his case, but could put it. The division showed that the Government majority was smaller than usual, and it is known that some Conservative members abstained.

ARISING OUT OF THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE.

By HILDA CLARK.

The report of the Imperial Conference has given rise to varied opinions as to whether the paragraphs on the status of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Irish Free State, the Dominions beyond the seas, and India go any further than the practice of the last few years and as to how much importance should be attached to the definition now given in writing.

There has been less discussion so far of two matters that were settled during the Conference in which women have shown keen interest and sense of responsibility.

(1) The Governments represented at the Conference decided that it would be premature to accept the obligations involved in accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the Permanent Court of International Justice and agreed that none of them would do so "without bringing up the matter for further discussion." This decision flouts the wishes of enormous numbers of the population of Great Britain, as shown in the Pilgrimage last summer, to which nearly all the organized bodies of women gave their support.

Now that Great Britain has agreed to such independence of action as the Report of the Conference describes, why should she allow the Dominions to hinder her from renouncing the right to private war as a means of dealing with (one cannot call it "settling") disputes, and from taking her rightful place in the forefront of those who appeal to methods of impartial justice?

This question will come up at the Council meeting of the League of Nations next week, because the 7th Assembly asked the Council to recommend to League members to put into practice the principles of the Locarno Treaties and to offer if necessary its good offices for the conclusion of suitable agreements. Now the essential feature of the Locarno Treaties is that Germany and France (and Belgium) have accepted the obligation of "all in" arbitration, and have given up the right of private war with each other, and it is just this that Great Britain refuses to do herself.

At the 7th Assembly the British Delegate had to ask the Belgian Delegate to withdraw a resolution recommending the application of this principle, saying that his country was shortly going to discuss the whole matter.

The discussion has ended in refusal to take action. What is Sir Austin Chamberlain going to do at the Council?

An expression of opinion in resolutions from all over the country might still influence him to give some hope to the Council that by "premature" a very short time was meant, and that "further discussion" with the Dominions might soon take place by post. It certainly would encourage those members of the Council who are working for this principle to continue their efforts until we can make our pressure on the Government effective.

(2) Another important matter was evidently settled at the Conference, although not referred to in the Report. On 8th November the British Government wrote the Secretary General of the League of Nations its views as to two points in the work of the Mandates Commission referred by the Council for consideration by the Mandatory Powers. This letter was not published in Geneva till the 18th and the text was published in the *Manchester Guardian* on the 23rd November. It states that H.M. Government consulted with the Governments of the Dominions that are Mandatory Powers (Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa) before replying.

The letter shows a determination on the part of these four Governments to restrict the power of the Mandates Commission

to obtain information on the administration in mandated territory, and if the arguments used are accepted by the Council of the League, not only will the influence of the Mandates Commission in helping these Governments to keep their administration to our highest standards of trusteeship be lessened, but also the influence of the best British administration on that of countries which have not so far achieved this standard will be greatly impaired.

This matter also will come up at the Council of the League next week, and since the spirit in which the British Delegate treats the Mandates Commission will be even more important than the objection already made to the list of questions and to the right to interview petitioners, it is of the greatest importance that there should be an expression of public opinion in the Press to urge Sir Austin Chamberlain to modify his attitude and to encourage other members of the Council who support the right of the Mandates Commission to obtain the information they need.

Women's organizations have a special responsibility because they secured the appointment of Mme Bugge Wickel on the Commission as expert in education, one of the questions on which the Commission has been told it requires to know too much.

ARTICLE VII OF THE COVENANT AND WOMEN IN THE LEAGUE.

As a result of the unanimous decision of the Council for the Representation of Women in the League of Nations Council that a delegate should be sent to Geneva to investigate whether the provisions of Article 7 of the Covenant are being adhered to wherever possible, Mrs. Hoster was asked to undertake this investigation.

During the six days which Mrs. Hoster spent in Geneva she interviewed, by appointment, nine officials of the Secretariat itself, and three of the International Labour Office. Through their kind help she met twenty-seven others, and was able to discuss the question with officials belonging to varied nationalities.

Mrs. Hoster reports that:—

(a) Women do not hold any of the higher administrative posts with the exception of Dame Rachel Crowley, Chief of the Social Section. Miss Florence Wilson, an American, who has served as Head of the Library for seven years, yields her position on the expiry of her contract in January, 1927.

(b) Owing to the great difficulty of the nationality question and the very strong feeling among the Latin nations, and certain of the more backward of the States Members of the League, women are not enjoying equal opportunities with men where appointments to the higher categories are concerned.

(c) In her opinion it would be of great advantage if Women's Societies in the more advanced countries would look seriously into this matter, and would bring pressure to bear upon their Governments and upon the authorities of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, with a view to securing fuller opportunities of promotion for women and opening to them equally with men the higher appointments.

(d) The Secretariat authorities responsible for selecting appointees to the higher grades believe they are conscientiously endeavouring to carry out the provisions of Article 7, but the slow emancipation of women in many countries reacts upon them and is proving a serious deterrent to their full freedom of choice in making appointments.

As a result of Mrs. Hoster's investigation, a letter has been addressed by this Council to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations, expressing this Council's great concern at the disquieting report made by its representative, and pointing out that the difficulty in the way of women's advancement in the League lies not in the Secretariat itself, but rather with the Governments and the men of those more backward nations who are unaccustomed to seeing women in prominent public positions, and whose limitations of custom and tradition are being standardized within the Secretariat.

The Council submits that the administrative methods of the League might justly be expected to lead, rather than to keep pace with, those of the less progressive nations, and urges that, were the Secretariat now to give full effect to Article 7 of the Covenant, such a step could only be held as authorized under the Covenant, and that no objection would be made by any of the States Members of the League.

At its general meeting, held on Monday, 29th November, 1926, the following resolution was unanimously carried:—

As a result of careful inquiry into the positions held by women on the staff of the Secretariat, this Council calls the attention of the Secretary-

(Continued at foot of next page.)

NEWS FROM NORTH WALES.

By M. G. THODAY.

DOMINION PRIME MINISTERS AND ARBITRATION.

A meeting of the Caernarvonshire and Anglesey Women's Peace Committee to discuss the progress of work in support of international arbitration, was held in the Y.W.C.A., Bangor, on 22nd November, Councillor Mrs. Price White in the Chair.

Many of those who organized the Peacemakers' Pilgrimage were present, and most of the women's organizations in Bangor were represented; there were also delegates from Llandudno Junction, Llanfairfechan, and Menai Bridge.

Sir Austen Chamberlain's reply to a deputation of Women Peacemakers from England, Scotland, and Wales (representing over 1,000 meetings from which resolutions asked that Great Britain should pledge herself to try arbitration first in all disputes) had stated that arbitration would be discussed at the Imperial Conference. Letters on behalf of the North Wales and other Peace Pilgrimage Committees had therefore been sent to the Prime Ministers of the Dominions asking them to urge Great Britain to join the nineteen nations who have pledged themselves to arbitration by signing the optional clause. Favourable replies have been received from the Prime Ministers of Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and a most interesting letter from General Hertzog in which he says that:—

"If he can do anything for the advancement of peace and the abolition of war he will most certainly do so. General Hertzog feels that the moral consciousness of the whole world should be so awakened that international justice will no longer be regarded by all nations as a beautiful thing, but as something essential for the well-being of every State."

The Caernarvonshire and Anglesey Committee are proud to learn that the success of the North Wales unit of the Peace Pilgrimage was specially mentioned at Geneva in September. They have decided to offer this winter lectures on "Arbitration" or talks on "How International Disputes can be settled peacefully," to organizations in the district which wish for them; and to attempt other educational work on the subject.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION.

A large meeting of the League of Nations Union was addressed at University College, Bangor, by Sir William Vincent, of the Indian Delegation, who described the work of the 1926 Assembly at Geneva. He spoke with enthusiasm of the advance of arbitration and mentioned that seventy All-in Arbitration treaties were registered with the League. But when asked by a member of the audience how many of these arbitration treaties were treaties in which Great Britain was a partner, he referred to the reports of the Commission on Arbitration and said he was sure "there were one or two," and, of course "there was Locarno." A second question dealt with the optional clauses, and Sir William clearly took the view that Great Britain could not be expected to risk her great influence and predominance as a naval power by committing herself to try arbitration first in all disputes. This expression of opinion by one who is connected with the present Government caused great disappointment to many present, and prepared us for the announcement, which was in the Press next day, that the Imperial Conference had disbanded without any expression of opinion about arbitration and that the Governments of Great Britain and the Dominions had decided it would be premature to sign the optional clause and commit themselves to allow disputes of a justiciable nature to be taken to the Permanent Court of International Justice. Letters expressing regret that the Imperial Conference has ignored the strong public opinion expressed by the women's Peacemakers' Pilgrimage have been sent to the Foreign Office and to our member of Parliament from the Caernarvonshire and Anglesey Peace Committee.

ARTICLE VII OF THE COVENANT AND WOMEN IN THE LEAGUE.

(Continued from previous page.)

General of the League of Nations to the fact that women are not enjoying equal chances with men where appointments to higher posts are concerned. Moreover, the reasons frequently put forward, namely, that few women are able to offer the high technical qualifications and experience required for such posts is an argument that is bound to continue unless antiquated traditions are broken down which injuriously affect the selection of women in the various stages of their career. Women's Associations throughout the world had believed that Clause VII of the Covenant was intended to break down such prejudices. They are, therefore, the more disappointed in observing that this purpose is being frustrated by the reactionary attitude obtaining in the Secretariat.

MORE TO-DAYS AND TO-MORROWS.¹

A good many able and some amusing pamphlets have been published in this series, since we last reviewed it.

The gloomy future prophesied for the British Empire by Dr. Schiller is likely to sadden those who take it more seriously than Cassandra's prophecies are usually taken. It is hardly a consolation to be told that although our present constitution cannot endure, we may, if we are wise, play a part "only second to America" in a world-state, controlled by finance.

But few do believe in prophecy and in this very series we have a volume which seems intended to reduce all the others to absurdity. In *Sibylla*, Mr. Mace goes just a little further than his predecessors in picturing a future transformed not only by the advance of mechanical arts, but by the systematic application of psychology to all our problems and by the increasing refinement of human nature. The citizen of the future "will have perfected wireless concerts and televisual cinemas; he will be conveyed by the moving aerial Pullman from his villa-palace in Devonshire to his office in what was once the Strand. . . His week-ends will be spent in Samarkand or in tobogganing on Mount Everest. His wife too will benefit by the universal progress. Her day's work will be done by 9 a.m. The turning of a tap or two will nourish the ectogenetic child. . . and the pressing of a button will put in action the automatic cook." But there will be much more striking changes than these arising from the use of suggestion in education, industry and war. And Heaven knows what we shall be like ourselves! Even now "you are afraid to forgive your enemies, lest the pain of remorse you thrust upon them should exceed the discomfort inflicted by a direct retaliation. The finer spirits of the age cannot live up to their own ideals because of the sense of inferiority it would impose upon their less advanced companions. Society in the thirtieth century will assuredly be even more refined."

The fact is prophecy, in the sense of fortelling the future, is not possible now (whatever it may come to be hereafter), we are all too much dominated by the suggestions of the present; but playing at prophesying is a very pretty game, as has been abundantly demonstrated by all the clever players in this series, and not least by Mr. Mace himself.

I. B. O'M.

¹ TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW (published Kegan Paul and Co., 2s. 6d. each.) *Cassandra* or The Future of the British Empire, by F. C. S. Schiller, M.A., D.Sc. *Pegasus* or Problems of Transportation, by Colonel J. F. C. Fuller. *Atlantis* or America and the Future, by Colonel J. F. C. Fuller. *Midas* or The United States and the Future, by C. H. Bretherton. *Sibylla* or The Revival of Prophecy, by C. A. Mace, M.A. *Lucullus*, The Food of the Future, by Olga Hartley and Mrs. C. F. Leyel.

WOMEN IN 1926.

"THE WOMAN'S LEADER" NEW YEAR NUMBER.

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DOWN WITH WOMEN IN INDUSTRY!

By BEATRICE CLAY.

The Medical Officer of Health for Kensington has been addressing the Institute of Hygiene on the rivalry of the sexes in the field of industry. To judge from the report in the *Daily Telegraph*, the doctor's argument is that women, by competing in industry with their husbands and brothers are lowering the wages of men, and thereby interfering with "the happiness and welfare of the race. A permanent strike of women doing routine work in offices, shops, and factories, would," he declares, "improve the conditions of men's employment with the result that they could afford marriage and would marry the displaced women." In short, every one would live happily for ever after.

At least, not quite all. There is an excess of women over men. The prescription follows. The ruck of unmarried women is to enter domestic service where the increased affluence of the employer will be reflected in better wages, easier hours, improved accommodation, and heightened dignity for the calling. Women of the educated classes should become—you have guessed it already—sick nurses and teachers. Failing to do that, they should try to float on those literary and artistic channels where they can obtain a living by a "display of woman's individuality and genius."

The doctor does not appear to have stated explicitly wherein his scheme safeguards the "happiness and welfare of the race." He seems, however, to have in mind the production of families. Yet of late, economists not a few have been debating the question whether the population of these islands was not already in excess of the capacity for maintenance. They have even been rehearsing those checks—including celibacy—which, in the past, proved effective in restricting population. Some reason other than increased population, seems therefore to seek for stimulating marriage.

The doctor is not alone in comfortably assuming that nursing and teaching come naturally to all women. It would profit nothing to disillusion him. He may, however, attach some importance to the fact that already the teaching market is overstocked. As for literature and art as a source of livelihood it is good to note that he has his discretions. Women are to "try" to find a living therein. If they find only semi-starvation—well, doctors nowadays are all preaching that most people over-eat.

Experience in the past does not support the doctor's supposition that the employer who finds himself becoming well-to-do exclaims immediately: "Go to, I will increase the servants' wages, lessen their hours, and provide armchairs for their leisure." Nor does the young man with an income covering club fees, sports, theatre-going, and nice little dinners at restaurants necessarily prefer a wife to these personal comforts. The critical also may venture to wonder whether employers—a race obstinately bent on making a living—would necessarily be willing in all cases to substitute male for female labour. Drapers may suspect that women prefer to buy their most intimate undergarments from women. There may be mistaken beings who find merit in women secretaries.

Hurrah! There is a way out. Those who dislike the course laid down by the doctor need not follow it! For there are, he admits, exceptions to every rule. The legal profession, he is convinced, is unsuited to women, yet his own exceptional daughter is to enter it. So all who find it difficult to adjust themselves to the five callings which he has left to women, may assure themselves that they, too, are exceptional and with a conscience untroubled by misgivings for the race, follow their own bent.

A NEW EXPERIENCE FOR THE PRIVY COUNCIL.

Last week, and for the first time in its history, a woman barrister appeared before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Miss Joan Clarkson was briefed in an income tax appeal from New Zealand. She is, it is interesting to note, a granddaughter of a distinguished barrister: Sir John Eldon Gorst.

ERRATUM.—MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

We regret that in our issue of 5th November we described Mrs. Pimblett, who was re-elected to the Preston Town Council, as standing in the Labour interest, whereas she is a Conservative.

ANNE COBDEN-SANDERSON.

A correspondent writes:—"For all who knew her, the late Mrs. Cobden-Sanderson had a very special charm from her sincerity, her beauty, and her wit. But courage was her outstanding quality, courage in opinions and in physical endurance. She was one of the earliest Socialist pioneers, and her death breaks another link with the circle of William Morris. She was his personal friend, and followed him as a resident at The Mall, Hammersmith. From that time to her death she devoted herself to the Socialist cause as few women have done, while her husband sought through the famous Doris Press at Hammersmith to reflect the Morris ideal in bookbinding and printing.

"But the reforming zeal inherited from her father, Richard Cobden, was not satisfied with the Socialist fight only, and she proved herself an ardent worker for Women's Suffrage, and threw herself into the hurly-burly of the suffragette movement. Although far from strong at the time, she insisted on taking her share of imprisonment, and was very much annoyed when she was bailed out. But during all the days of Socialist and suffrage agitation, she proved her reforming principles in the practical work of a Guardian and a school visitor. No drudgery was too much for her, no distance too far to travel to carry out her work, or to supplement the actual duties of office by kind and sympathetic actions, and as the constant and courageous champion of all those in distress, she was much loved by all who came in contact with her.

"After her husband's death she seemed to lose interest in the material side of things, but her spirit of generous indignation burned brighter than ever, and she continued to carry on work which was far beyond her strength. Recently her appetite failed very much, and one Saturday morning she woke up with an attack of neuritis. But she insisted on attending a Labour meeting on Sunday to give an inspiring address, and only then consented to stay in bed, till Tuesday evening, when she died very peacefully, aged 73. Her son, the publisher who has recently brought out Mr. Cobden-Sanderson's letters, and her daughter, who holds an important post in a business house, were with her, and they rejoiced for her that her death should have come quickly and without suffering, and in the midst of her work."

CONTRIBUTIONS TO £1,000 FUND TO NAME "DAME MILLICENT FAWCETT" ROOM AT CROSBY HALL.

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Further donations or promises (due Easter, 1927) will be gratefully received by Mrs. Oliver Strachey, care of the WOMAN'S LEADER, 15 Dean's Yard, S.W. 1, or by Mrs. Alys Russell, 11 St. Leonard's Terrace, Chelsea, S.W. 3.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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Telephone: Victoria 6188.

EQUAL FRANCHISE.

In view of the Prime Minister's statement that the Cabinet are considering the question of Equal Franchise, it was thought valuable to obtain signatures from as many Members of Parliament as possible to a Memorial asking that the Government should deal with this matter without delay. We append the text of the Memorial which is meeting with an excellent response:—

THE MEMORIAL
of the

UNDERMENTIONED MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Sheweth:

That your Memorialists desire respectfully to urge the following reasons in support of their request that His Majesty's Government will take the earliest possible opportunity to carry out their pledge to give before the next General Election

Equal Voting Rights to Men and Women.

They realize that although Equal Political Rights between Men and Women finds a place on the Programme of each Party, the need for Legislation to reach the Statute Book at an early date has become urgent, on account of the provision of the recent Economy Act that the Parliamentary Register shall only be made up once a year. This makes it necessary, if women are to vote on equal terms with men at any General Election which may take place before October, 1928, that Legislation should reach the Statute Book before June, 1927. The Government will desire to avoid any risk of finding it impossible, owing to the passage of time, to carry out its pledge, and your Memorialists therefore hope that Legislation on the matter will be dealt with during the early months of next Session.

They wish, moreover, respectfully to remind you that the present Law, which enfranchises practically only those women over thirty who are either occupiers or the wives of occupiers, means that the great majority of industrial and professional women, three-quarters of whom are under thirty and a large number of whom live in furnished rooms, are debarred from the chief privilege of citizenship and the protection of the Vote. They desire, therefore, shortly to see the removal in the United Kingdom of this glaring inequality between men and women, which does not obtain either in the Dominions, or in the other countries, which have enfranchised their women.

THE FACTORIES BILL.

The Home Secretary has agreed to receive a deputation on the Factories Bill organized by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, which will put before him the case that restrictions in the Bill should apply equally to men and women workers.

RESPONSES TO THE GUARANTEE FUND, 1927-9.

We append a list of those who have already promised to contribute to the Guarantee Fund, and are grateful for this quick response, which we hope will do much to encourage other contributors.

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Dixon, Mrs. L. L.	1 1 0
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Todhunter, Mrs. D. L.	5	0	0
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Wilson, Miss H.	1	0	0
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NEW PLANS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORK.

Our Societies will be glad to hear that we have been successful in obtaining the services of Miss Berry, former Secretary of the Women's Local Government Society, to help to develop the Local Government side of our work at Headquarters. Many of our Societies can bear witness to the accuracy and thoroughness of Miss Berry's expert knowledge with regard to all matters relating to Local Government. We hope that she will not only be able to answer difficult inquiries, but will also increase our stock of literature on Local Government matters, and will be prepared to give advice to Societies anxious to work for the election of women on Local Government bodies, or to approach their Local Authorities on any matter.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS.

The office will be closed from Thursday evening, 23rd December, at 5.30 p.m., to Wednesday morning, 29th December, at 9.30 a.m.

NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

EDINBURGH S.E.C.

On 23rd November, Dr. Joan K. Rose gave an address on "Welfare Clinics and Birth Control," under the auspices of the Edinburgh S.E.C. Miss S. E. S. Mair, LL.D. presided. Dr. Rose said that it always seemed to her that ignorance was a poor thing on which to base any system of ethics or morality, and she believed that it should be perfectly open to adult reasonable men and women to learn what was known of Birth Control as of other subjects.

CHESTER W.C.A.

There was a good attendance, in spite of the inclement weather, at the Refectory on Monday, 8th November, when the Lord Bishop of Liverpool (Dr. David) gave an address on the Oxford Liquor (Popular Control) Bill. The meeting was held under the auspices of the Chester Women Citizens' Association. Miss Patterson, M.A., who presided, was supported by the Mayor and Mayoress (Dr. and Mrs. J. Welsh), the Town Clerk (Mr. J. H. Dickson), and the Director of Education for the County (Mr. F. F. Potter, M.A.). A discussion followed and the proceedings terminated with a vote of thanks to the Lord Bishop.

Over 130 members of what one feels can safely be called one of the most flourishing social organizations in Chester—the Chester Women Citizens' Association—attended the annual dinner, held on 22nd November. Mrs. Wintringham, ex-M.P. for Louth, was the guest of honour. The Chair was taken by the acting Mayoress (Mrs. Crosland-Taylor), supported by Miss Patterson, M.A., Chairman of Committees, the Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, members of the Executive Committee, and others. The two members of the Dinner Committee, Mrs. J. H. Dickson, J.P., and Mrs. C. P. Cockrill, are to be congratulated upon the success which crowned their efforts. Mrs. Paget, J.P., in a witty and telling speech, proposed the toast of Our Guest, and Mrs. Wintringham, who combines a charming personality with considerable powers as an orator, was listened to with evident delight by her hearers. The toast of the Association was proposed by Miss Crosland-Taylor, daughter of the Chairman, and ably replied to by Mrs. F. F. Potter, Hon. Secretary. The toast of the President was proposed by the Hon. Press Secretary and having been drunk with much enthusiasm, the Mayoress replied. The pleasant proceedings closed with the singing of the National Anthem.

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COMING EVENTS.

GUILDHOUSE WOMEN CITIZENS' SOCIETY.

DECEMBER 13. 3 p.m. The Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. Musical Afternoon and Demonstration of Folk Dancing with Miss Elizabeth Wood.

LEAGUE OF THE CHURCH MILITANT.

DECEMBER 10. 5.30 p.m. Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W. Lecture on "Life in the Holy Land" by Mrs. Pollard.

Malden W.C.A. DECEMBER 15. 3 p.m. Congregational Hall, Malden Road, New Malden. Mrs. White debating for motion, "That equal pay for equal work is the only sound policy from the man's as well as from the woman's point of view."

LONDON SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE.

DECEMBER 16. 5 p.m. 35 Marsham Street, S.W. 1. Committee at Home. Topics of the day.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

East Lewisham W.C.A. DECEMBER 10. 8 p.m. Courthall Road Hall, Lewisham. Miss Sayers on "Dickens and the Poor Law," and Miss Goody on "Poor Law To-day."

Edinburgh W.C.A. DECEMBER 15. 8 p.m. 116 George Street, Edinburgh. Public Meeting. Mrs. Chalmers Watson on "The Cow, Milk, and the Public." Chair: Sir Robert Greig.

Gillingham W.C.A. DECEMBER 13. 7 p.m. Oddfellows' Hall, Vicarage Road, Social function.

Horsham W.C.A. DECEMBER 10. 3.15 p.m. St. Mary's Hall. Mrs. Corbett Ashby on "The International Aspect of the Woman's Movement."

St. Andrews W.C.A. DECEMBER 10. 8 p.m. Christian Institute. Demonstration Lecture, "Bauk Work." Mr. J. D. Macgregor.

Scottish Federation of Societies for Equal Citizenship. DECEMBER 11. 3 p.m. Central Halls, Glasgow. Debate on Restrictive Legislation for Women. Miss Monica Whately and Mrs. Rackham.

DECEMBER 13. 7.30 p.m. Dundee W.A. Foresters' Hall. Mrs. C. D. Rackham, J.P., on "The Work of Women Magistrates." Chair: Mrs. David Johnston.

DECEMBER 14. 7.30 p.m. Dumfermline S.E.C. Mrs. Rackham, J.P.

DECEMBER 16. 7.30 p.m. Falkirk W.A. Temperance Café. Mrs. Rackham on "The Law at Work." Chair: Mr. Robert Black.

DECEMBER 17. 7.30 p.m. Gould Hall, Edinburgh. Child Assault Protest Committee, Conference on Reports of Departmental Committees. Chair: Judge Morison Millar, M.B.E., J.P.

SIX POINT GROUP.

DECEMBER 13. 6 p.m. 92 Victoria Street, S.W. Miss Vera Brittain on "Equal Political Rights."

SOCIETY FOR CONSTRUCTIVE BIRTH CONTROL.

DECEMBER 15. 8 p.m. Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, W.C. Lieut.-Col. Sir John Ramsay on "Birth Control as an Official and Administrative Question." Chair: Dr. Marie Stopes.

WOMEN'S ENGINEERING SOCIETY.

DECEMBER 10. 6.30 p.m. Air League Rooms, 26 George Street, Hanover Square, W. Mrs. Elliott Lynn on "Aviation as a Career for Women." Chair: Mrs. L. A. Willson.

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TO LET, quiet attractive BED-SITTINGROOM, for student or professional woman; gas fire and ring; bath (geyser); one minute from tube, Met. and bus; 21s. weekly; also large unfurnished room suitable for business.—Grace Mayman, 108 High Street, Notting Hill Gate.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS.

LONDON AND NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE, 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. Secretary, Miss P. Strachey. Information Bureau. Interviews, 10 to 1, except Saturdays. Members' Centre open daily. Restaurant open to 7.30. (Not Saturdays.)

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 12th December; 3.30 p.m. The Right Hon. Viscount Grey on "The National Genius of England." 6.30 p.m., Maude Royden, "The Suffering of the Innocent."

EDUCATED HOME HELPS BUREAU, Philbeach Hall, Philbeach Gardens, Earl's Court, requires and supplies educated women for all branches of domestic work. Registration: Employers 2s. 6d., Workers 1s. Suits, 7s. 6d. and 2s. Telephone, Western 6323.

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