

THE
WOMAN'S LEADER

IN POLITICS IN INDUSTRY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
IN THE HOME IN LITERATURE AND ART IN THE PROFESSIONS

AND

THE COMMON CAUSE

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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.

NOTES AND NEWS

The Consultative Committee.

The Consultative Committee of Women's Organisations, which met last week, displayed a great deal of activity, although some of it was of that necessary but aggravating kind which leads to alterations of rules and constitutions. If, however, the Committee is to be a real machine through which differing groups of people may confer to find the greatest common measure of their agreement, it is absolutely necessary that its powers and functions should be clearly understood and implicitly obeyed. The Committee has made great progress in that direction, and promises to be most remarkably useful. At the meeting last week some of the Societies joined together to write to Mr. Balfour and congratulate him on the part he played in Geneva in securing the advance of the Traffic in Women and Children Convention, and another group petitioned the Government to pass at once the Equal Guardianship Bill. All Societies agreed to receive information from each other upon Trade Boards, Licensing Hours, and Women Police, and the action subsequently to be taken will lie with each Society. The Committee is full of life, and Lady Astor is greatly to be congratulated on the promise it shows. As our first M.P. she has done pioneer work to make things easier for the next ones, though, indeed, the job is none too easy yet, as Mrs. Wintringham has no doubt already discovered. But at any rate the Consultative Committee, as well as every separate women's society within or without it, will do their best to work without friction. Nothing is so wide of the mark as the popular belief that women cannot work together.

Lady Mayors.

Miss Christina Hartley has accepted an invitation to become Mayor of Southport in November. She has been a member of the Council since last year, and since 1917 has served on the Board of Guardians. She devotes much time and attention to maternity and child welfare, and Southport, in welcoming its first lady mayor, will be welcoming a woman whose public service in the past well entitles her to the position of the First Citizen of the Town. Councillor Clara Winterbotham, co-opted in 1918 as Cheltenham's first woman councillor, and whose

appointment was endorsed by the electors last November, has just been chosen by the Town Council as the next Mayor. The vote in the Town Council was practically unanimous, and it is stated that no other name was put before the Selection Committee. Miss Winterbotham belongs to a family that has long been prominent in Cheltenham and Gloucestershire politics.

The Trade Boards.

Lord Cave's Committee, which is inquiring into the working of the Trade Boards, has wisely decided that the proceedings should be public, and the evidence of Mr. Humbert Wolfe, Principal Assistant-Secretary to the Ministry of Labour, was interesting. The majority of the results were arrived at by agreement, he said, and he did not know of a single instance of a strike or lock-out arising from any decision. Except in regard to learners, no evidence has been found that the rates fixed were likely to result in unemployment. Three million workers are covered by the Trade Boards, there are thirty-three inspectors, and the expenses this year would probably be about £80,000. It is quite unthinkable that the Boards should be abolished while wages of threepence and fourpence an hour are still paid in exceptional circumstances, and fivepence an hour is a figure, Mr. Wolfe said, comparatively widespread in one particular trade. The complaints against bureaucracy can only legitimately be directed against the appointed members, and against the Minister of Labour, but the appointed members have absolutely free discretion and have nothing to do with the Ministry. They have been criticised at times by the employers as being pro-trade union, and by the other side as being pro-employer. The Minister himself exercises no power in connection with the fixing of rates, and if he is withdrawn it will mean the withdrawal of the constitutional control of Parliament; and without the Minister and the independent members there would be no provision for considering the point of view of the general public. This, in brief, is the official defence of the Boards, and, like most official things, it is dry and soulless. But there is a lot in it. In this same connection it is interesting to note that the Portsmouth Drapers' Association has decided to pay the full rate of wages laid down by the Trade Boards. Our readers will remember

that recently some of the Portsmouth drapers were summoned for not paying the Trade Board rates, but that the summonses were dismissed by the magistrate. The Association writes that the action resulted, as they had hoped it would, in drawing the attention of the country to the hardships inflicted on large numbers of women and girls in these industries, and that it led to the establishment of this inquiry. Under the present rates, the private dressmaking industry is, they say, threatened with complete extinction, and with the accompanying unemployment of thousands of young girls. There is a certain self-righteousness in their communication which is peculiarly offensive to those who consider that their recent action in taking advantage of the prevailing unemployment to strike a blow at the workers' standard of living, was mean and cowardly; but, in view of the controversies and misconceptions which are abroad, the authoritative public inquiry is all to the good.

Married Women's Right to Work.

We heartily congratulate Dr. Miall-Smith (now Mrs. Fox) upon the stand she is making in St. Pancras. As our readers will remember, she was and is the Assistant Medical Officer of Health for Maternity and Child Welfare. On her recent marriage the Council asked for her resignation—which they have not received—and as we write they are meeting to discuss the situation and to consider whether or not to dismiss her. The case is as plain as a pikestaff. Dr. Miall-Smith is a first-rate medical officer, and St. Pancras is well known as one of the model boroughs for infant welfare work. Her marriage only increases her qualification, and, no contract having been entered into by her to resign in such circumstances, she sees no reason why the Borough Council should interfere in her private affairs. We hope she will stand firm and make a test case of it, for she would have the support of the women in the teaching profession and the Civil Service also. We believe that if the case were taken to court the law would undoubtedly be on her side. The Act under which it would be judged runs as follows:—"No person shall be disqualified by sex or marriage from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to or holding any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering or assuming or carrying on any civil profession or vocation, or from admission to any incorporated society."

Women Doctors.

There are now 450 students at the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine for Women, of whom seventy are new this session. There has been so much talk about the overcrowding of the profession by women, and the little chance they will have of work in the near future, that it was encouraging to hear Dr. Louisa Aldrich-Blake's views on the subject. The whole question of maternity mentality requires fuller investigation, she said, and this has been arranged for under the supervision of Dr. Janet Campbell, Senior Medical Officer at the Ministry of Health. In the case of cancer the woman doctor was especially needed, and the time would come when gynaecology would fall more and more to the task of the women doctors. The whole organisation of the modern hospitals was changing and might develop in several ways, and in any case there would be ample opportunities for the woman doctor of the future. The only serious check to the present career of some women practitioners is their inability to get appointments on the honorary staff of some of the more reactionary of the general hospitals, and this is making the establishment of women's hospitals, entirely officered by women doctors, necessary. Miss Aldrich-Blake says there is no need for students to be discouraged about the future, and we cordially agree with her.

Cambridge.

We write before the result of the voting at Cambridge is made known, and at the moment when heated and abstruse arguments are pouring into the daily papers from the pens of our friends and our enemies. It seems very strange, in this year of grace, that such a matter should raise any trouble at all; and, whatever the outcome, we can only say that Cambridge has revealed a very serious state of affairs within its precincts. If Grace I. has been carried, no doubt things will settle down, and the minority of reactionaries will be forgotten; but if it has not, the unedifying spectacle will go on. All we can say is that a learned education seems not always to be synonymous with a liberal education, and University life not quite so up-to-date as we might have hoped. For, after all, it is but a compromise which they offer us at the best, and, at the worst, it is an insult. The daughters of Cambridge cannot feel very proud either way.

Women Jurors.

At the Oxford Assizes last week, Mr. Justice Roche took advantage of the provision in the Juries Act making it possible to have a jury of one sex only in the opposite sense to the one usually adopted. The case was one against a young mother, and the judge very truly remarked that it was a case "which might well be tried by women." We are very glad to see this provision coming into force and cutting both ways; but, of course, the number of cases which should be tried by single sex juries on either side is very rare, and we hope the principle of joint service will remain the normal one.

An American Woman Magistrate.

Judge Norris who has now been for two years City Magistrate of New York, practised at the Bar for ten years before her appointment to the Bench. She is the first American woman to judge women, and her Women's Court has not made her despondent about either first offenders or incorrigibles. It will be ten years before we in this country shall have an opportunity of appointing a woman lawyer of ten years' standing to any public position; Judge Norris' success may encourage us to ask for a woman stipendiary before 1931.

A Change in the Law Needed.

At an inquest recently held on the body of a newly born child, the coroner drew attention to a curious point of law. If a child is criminally injured during birth and died before it was completely born, it was no murder or crime. In 1878 the Attorney-General in the House of Commons declared that if in the course of birth a mother, midwife, or any bystander deliberately inflicted any injury upon a child before it had an entirely separate existence, not only had murder not been committed, but there was no offence punishable under the law. The jury found in this particular case that there was insufficient evidence to show that the infant was completely born at the time of its death, and there can be no disagreement with the coroner's demand for a change in the law.

Dinner to Dame Adelaide Anderson.

A complimentary dinner to Dame Adelaide Anderson (late H.M. Principal Lady Inspector of Factories) has been arranged, and will be held on Friday, October 21st, at Princes Restaurant. The Committee includes Mrs. Fawcett, Dame Florence Leach, Lady Rhondda, Miss Durham, Miss Clemence Dane, Dr. Flora Murray, and others. Dame Adelaide Anderson, on her retirement, had completed twenty-seven years of splendid service, during which time she had built up the women's branch of the Factory Department, and had inaugurated reforms in the conditions of work which have been far-reaching. She is at present a member, together with Dame Edith Lyttelton, of Lord Cave's Committee which has been appointed to investigate the working of the Trade Boards, and her intimate knowledge of industrial conditions will be invaluable.

Drink Hours.

The extension of hours under the new Licensing Act is resulting in an increase of drunkenness in the Metropolitan areas, and figures collected tend to show that the most harm is done by keeping the public-houses open later rather than by opening them earlier. At Bow Street recently, of thirty-eight night charges twenty-two were attributable to intoxicants, and at Marylebone Police Court out of sixty-four charges, thirty were charges of drunkenness and twenty-six of them were arrested after 11 p.m. For the thirteen weeks preceding the new Act the weekly average of convictions for drunkenness in the Metropolitan police district was 432. For the four weeks following the change of closing hour to 11 p.m. the average rose to 643. In most cases a man will prefer to go home to tea, and will go out to the public-house later, and for at least an hour after closing time there is singing and noise in the streets—and the women and children suffer. Temperance societies suggest that every woman in London interested in social reform should write to the Licensing Justice in her area and protest against the extension of hours; they also suggest that women who are interested should attend the Courts of the London Licensing Justices when the subject of extending the hours is discussed, as on these occasions anyone interested in the matter may bring forward objections or other relevant observations. Lists of the Justices can be obtained from the Temperance Societies, or from the Town Clerk.

THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS.

Municipal councils are elected from wards returning usually either three or six members. In these wards (except in London, where elections are triennial) one-third of the members retire every three years, and the vacancy or vacancies are filled by an election in which all registered electors in the ward may take part. That scheme was adopted when municipal corporations were formed nearly ninety years ago, with the idea of securing continuity of life within the councils, of preventing them from passing through those shocks of violent change which would be involved in a complete alteration of the personnel at any election, and also of discouraging the introduction of political parties and political combinations into the reformed municipal life. The objects of the framers of the scheme have not been completely secured. Continuity of personnel and of policy there indeed is, to an extent which is sometimes hardly an advantage, for a radical change in public opinion is effective at the annual election over only one-third of the councillors, and the clearly expressed wish of the municipality may be obstructed or defeated by the votes of the non-retiring councillors; and party politics, either frankly or under the thin disguise of another name—e.g., "Moderate," "Progressive"—has invaded municipal contests, and the choice of representatives upon considerations merely of fitness and ability becomes less common.

Election by simple majority is only justifiable so long as the choice is primarily a personal one. When citizens are marshalled into supporters and opponents of a policy, or of a theory of government, this form of election cannot be trusted to give a true picture of public opinion. The reason for its failure is that in each ward, the majority (not necessarily half the voters, if there is a three-cornered contest) gets all the representation, the minority nothing. A municipal party, even though it can command a considerable following, can have no voice in the council chamber, unless it has the good fortune to have a local majority. Compare the success of "Liberals" and "Conservatives" in Leeds in the municipal election of 1919, as shown below:—

Party.	Votes.	Seats.
Labour	26,324	9
Conservative	17,693	1
Liberal	19,575	6

The possession of local majorities is usually a matter of chance, but they can be created by a careful adjustment of voters having double qualifications. The extent to which good fortune or a clever agent outweighs solid opinion is a grave defect of the existing system.

The fact that all the representation in each ward falls to the majority, tends to exaggerate the changes of public opinion. The movement of a few votes may alter the representation in many wards, so that a passing gust of public feeling may have an influence in the elections far beyond any correspondence with reality. Further, the fluctuation of local majorities involves every year a loss of valuable personnel to the council. Councillors who have placed the interests of the whole community above ward interests are always in danger of being driven from public life, and this is especially so where the election of an obviously inferior successor can be justified as a party victory.

The time has come to consider whether the general welfare would not be better served by a new method of choosing members of the council. Proportional Representation has much to offer—fair treatment of all sections, dependable correspondence with public opinion in all its movements, broader treatment of public questions, continuity of the best personnel of the council, and—one might possibly add—a larger share of attention to questions, such as child welfare, which are of general interest to the community, but which women have made peculiarly their own.

Proportional Representation has already won extensive applications in local government elections. It is practically universal on the Continent of Europe. It is used under permissive acts in New Zealand, in Canada, and in other parts of the British Dominions. In January, 1920, it was applied all over Ireland with complete success, and the Irish Press was practically unanimous that the results were excellent, and that the system had inaugurated a new era in what had long been a field embittered by the intrusion of politics and religion.

The optional adoption of P.R. in English municipalities would be possible if the Local Elections (P.R.) Bill could be passed into law. Over forty councils have already passed resolutions in its favour, and every such resolution strengthens its position. All electors in the present municipal campaign who desire to improve the character and authority of representative bodies, should press candidates to consider the P.R. proposal favourably and to support it, if elected, in the council.

A. J. G.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER.

By OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.

The present session of Parliament, which opened on the 17th, is going to be an important one in many ways, and although Ministerial pressure is being exerted to cut it as short as possible, no one yet really knows how long it will last.

The second woman M.P. took her seat, introduced by Mr. Asquith and Sir Donald Maclean, her Party leaders, and her advent marks the settling down of women members as a normal part of Parliamentary life. She is welcomed with open arms by Lady Astor, and with real cordiality by practically the whole House, irrespective of Party; and the only people in the country who are known to regret her position are her defeated opponents, and Sir Frederick Banbury.

The Prime Minister's statement on Unemployment left the House, as it found it, face to face with gigantic problems. No doubt in the present session something will be done about unemployment, but even the Wizard from Wales is hard put to it to find any short cut, especially in view of the attitude of Labour. Not that Labour is not ready to be helpful; but the trouble is that it will keep on facing facts, and facts and short cuts are very incompatible in this case. It is a bad look out, and every member knows it; and the only remedies which will really cure will take a long time to become operative, even if they could be adopted at once.

This unemployment problem overshadows everything else in the Parliamentary mind, but since it is impossible to consider it without reference to foreign markets and exchanges, a great deal of thought is running in the direction of foreign affairs. Washington and the League of Nations are in everyone's minds, though it is doubtful whether Parliament can itself do very much which is helpful.

Of all the happenings of political life, nothing provokes so much comment as the shifting of Party leaders and the rise of new groupings. Lord Grey's return to active political life is an event of first-class importance to the Independent Liberals, for whom it may well mean a revival in the constituencies; and the adherence to his banner of Lord Robert Cecil may have equally important results. Times are confused, and parties muddled. The present Government is extremely strong in the House, and has its firm hold upon "the man in the street." But almost all the middle section of Society has swung away from it, and the chief of its security is the lack of an attractive alternative. A party, or group, or coalition such as would result from a Grey-Cecil combination would be a very welcome element in public affairs. It would be very straight and clear, and very upright and reliable. It would lack, perhaps, the adroitness which untangles small knots, and the dramatic vision which cuts through great ones; but there would be a stability about it which would be very welcome indeed. Unless I misjudge the readers of this paper very greatly, there will be many of them who, little as they like Party politics at all, would feel decidedly at home in such a party fold.

It is not, however, my business to promote the purposes of the present Government, or of the new Opposition, or of the Labour Party. My function is to record facts and tendencies as I see them: and this fact of Lord Grey's return and Lord Robert Cecil's manifesto is making less mark in the House than outside it.

The Irish negotiations are the subject of much anxious thought, but then, at the moment, there is little to be done by Parliament. In the conduct of such parleys the Prime Minister is at his best; and even his enemies admit that his best is very good indeed. The atmosphere is all saturated with hope, and that in itself is helpful, even though the Irishmen shut themselves tightly up in Chelsea so as to escape its insidious influence.

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A COUNCIL OF WOMEN IN PALESTINE.

English women who are so used to political associations, social leagues, and suffrage societies will not look upon a Council of Women as anything particularly new and wonderful, but in the annals of Palestine it is unique. For some time there have been charitable societies and organisations for social service among the Jewish and Christian women of Palestine. The Moslems, of necessity, have played no active part in work of this kind, though recently there has been a little stir among the better educated, who realise their responsibilities towards their less fortunate sisters and who have united in order to provide help and clothing for orphan girls. There has never before, however, been any society which has had direct communication with the Government.

When a Civil Administration had taken the place of the military régime many of the advanced women living in the country thought that some association should be formed to help the Government in connection with questions regarding women and children. In order to prevent overlapping and with a view to connecting the various organisations already dealing with such questions, the women decided to form an organisation of women workers. The executive body was to be known as the Council. Accordingly, a provisional Council was elected by ballot; five members were chosen from Jerusalem and three from the districts. The Government proved sympathetic and grateful, promising at all times to refer to the Council questions affecting women and children in Palestine and to give serious attention and attach full weight to any resolution emanating from this body. Work then began in real earnest, and since the formation of the provisional Council a permanent Council has been elected to meet once a month and to hold office for a year.

The first question which the Council tackled was that of prison reform. In the days of the Turk, women were never imprisoned, but were put in the charge of the head of their community, who detained them or made himself responsible for their good behaviour, and the fact that women are now arrested by male police, escorted through the town by them, and dealt with entirely by male officials, is little short of scandalous in the eyes of a Moslem. While investigations were being made it was quickly realised that something immediate must be done to provide for the humane detention and reform of delinquent women and children by establishing reformatories and by changing completely the present method of dealing with such prisoners.

In many of the prisons there were no wardresses. In some cases the women were locked in all night with no power of communicating with the individual in charge. Children were shut up with women leading immoral lives. Provision was seldom made for segregating infectious cases, and the same drinking vessels and dishes were used indiscriminately by women who were diseased or healthy. Women serving short sentences or awaiting trial had no occupation other than that of occasionally helping with the cooking. Day in day out, they sat, after the Eastern manner, on their heels, sometimes talking to one another but more usually perfectly quiet, too helpless to find a way out of their difficulties, and made hopeless by their curious fatalistic attitude that anything which might happen was "min Allah." They had usually been arrested on one of three accusations—"Loitering in the Streets and Round the Camps" (soliciting), "Thieving," or "Insulting the Police." When questioned by anyone from the outside world they gave fantastic accounts of what had happened, frequently as untrue as they were ingenious and quite impossible to unravel.

The case of the children was even more difficult. Sometimes they looked as young as ten or eleven, but it was impossible to arrive at an accurate estimate of their ages as they themselves never knew, and answered questions on this point to the effect that "I was four when father's big ewe died," or "I was still very small the year the cholera came." They were almost invariably charged with loitering round the camps, and seemed quite helpless to save themselves from the life they were leading. Some were war-waifs who had been violated on their way down from the north while escaping from the Turks. Others were exploited by their parents or by the "Mothers" of brothels, evil old haridans who accumulated wealth at the expense of these children. Others chose this way of bringing money into a home where food was scarce.

"Can you help me with two naughty little girls?" said the Chief of the Police, and we went round to his house, where the children were seated on the steps guarded by a policeman who looked a veritable giant beside them. One, small, stunted, and hungry-eyed, did not look a day more than ten, but her language was that of an old woman long used to evil society and proficient in the most original of curses. The other, obviously a bad little witch (if a child of fourteen can be so described) was crying. They had been sentenced to a flogging and deportation by the native magistrate, but the British official refused to have the first part of the sentence carried out. Was he to get a policeman to do this? "If I deport them," he said, "they will be dropped over the border by a guard. In ten minutes they will be back again, and we can do nothing. They'll be on our hands again in no time." And they were. There was nowhere to put such children. There is nowhere to put them.

A report of these conditions was sent to the Administration, and, owing to the recommendations of the Council, and to the fact that a salary was found through a private agency, an English woman of experience was appointed to care for all women for whom the Government carried direct responsibility. The work is as wide as the parish (the whole of Palestine), for women in Government employ come under the heading, and it is delightful to see how the girl clerks respond to the friendship offered them, and how they come with their difficulties and complaints, and even for a little cosy chat. Many of them are very young and friendless, and need help in their choice of lodgings or advice as to doctors, &c. With regard to the children, the Administration asked the Council to send a representative to attend a Conference dealing with the problems and the protection of the child.

The Public Health Department also communicated with the Council with a view to getting their help in connection with the supervision of Midwives. There are very few trained women in Palestine outside the hospitals, and in the country districts much of the work is carried out by Eastern Mother Gamps, whose hands, if skilful, are as dirty as their very attractive tattooed faces. Experience is a good teacher, and they have a knowledge of their subject, but the use of hygiene and science is far removed from their minds, and they often do much harm. Little by little it is to be hoped that they will be superseded by native workers who have been properly trained. Unfortunately there is still a strong feeling against unmarried girls taking a hand in such matters, and, of course, a married woman is too busy. Skill and pluck combined will live down the prejudice, but this will take time—and every day babies are being born. The Council formed a sub-committee to inquire into the conditions, and investigations are still being made.

Another step in the right direction has been made with regard to women whose claims have been taken into the Land Courts. Questions of inheritance, right of ownership, and land-purchase present many difficulties to the inexperienced woman who has lost her husband, and who is left to fight her own battles. Ownership of land must be registered. Rights of tenure are complicated, and women who have to appeal in Court and make their own claims are often hopelessly at sea. Their position is so helpless that they are at the mercy of unscrupulous lawyers, and are pathetically apt to sign documents which they do not understand, or to succumb to brow-beating and threats about which the Court knows nothing. The Council asked the Administration to allow a woman, qualified to speak on the point, to look into cases where the claims of women were concerned, and the request was granted.

Besides dealing with these matters, the Council has discussed questions relating to infant welfare, child-marriages, boarded-out orphans, welfare of the immigrants, milk inspection, prison and hospital visitors, free dispensaries, &c. All this useful work has been accomplished in six months, and the Council is fortunate in having the recognition and sympathetic appreciation of the Administration. Yet mere man, in his individual capacity, is often apt to be jocose on the subject and laughingly refers to the Council as "The Ladies' Parliament." Readers of THE WOMAN'S LEADER will remember that there is a proverb which begins with the words "Coming Events. . ."

R. D. P.

THE NURSING PROFESSION TO-DAY.

A REPLY TO SOME CRITICS.

When I was asked to write a series of articles upon this subject for THE WOMAN'S LEADER, it was with the object of presenting, to any young woman who contemplated entering the nursing profession, a concise picture of the average conditions prevailing in its many different branches; and since the paper has a pretty wide circulation, not only in London but in the provinces, it would have been altogether beside the point merely to single out this or that famous metropolitan hospital as one where the training and conditions were unusually good, or where the work, perhaps, was unusually strenuous. I am, however, quite prepared to stand by everything I have said; in fact, I was particularly careful to under-state rather than to overstate the little trials and difficulties which the beginner must encounter; and I purposely refrained from mentioning several cases of genuine hardship and injustice which I knew to be exceptional and unlikely to occur within the experience of any ordinary probationer. I am, of course, willing to give further particulars to anyone who cares to write to me privately; and, moreover, anybody who wishes to confirm my statements may easily do so by obtaining the probationer's application forms and time-table of duties from the nearest training school, or, better still, by inquiry amongst the nurses themselves. I have lived in the hospital "atmosphere" all my life; my mother was not only a trained nurse herself, but a pioneer of reform at our foremost training school; and if my health and domestic circumstances had enabled me to obtain my full training as a nurse, I should certainly be exercising that profession in preference to journalism.

Certain of these critics, by the bye, have not troubled to read my articles very thoroughly before rushing in to contradict me. For example, Miss McAra, on October 7th, scornfully assures me that "washing dresses are a necessity in the wards"—when what I had been pleading for was a dress that could be washed every day (see my article of September 10th). Others, again, in their explosive haste to call me a liar, have overdone things a little, and painted such a roscate picture of the probationer's lot that one is irresistibly reminded of the prospectus of Mr. Wackford Squeers' establishment. Methinks these ladies do protest too much; and anyone who would defend a stiff linen collar as a suitable garment for doing hard and dirty work in, would defend pretty well anything.

None the less, I can very well understand that those sisters and matrons, a considerable part of whose time is spent in real, disinterested efforts to lighten the lot of their subordinates, may feel justifiably annoyed with me for suggesting that further reform is still rather urgently necessary. But,

indeed, the truth of the matter is just this: that a hospital exists primarily for the benefit of the patients, and that since it is impossible nowadays to treat educated and refined young women as nurses were treated in the 'seventies and 'eighties, it would be better to place all these questions of their board, lodging, and recreation outside the sphere of the hospital authorities altogether; otherwise one of two things will happen—either the nurse's welfare will remain a very minor consideration, or else there will be a real danger that it will occupy too much of the time of sisters and nurses alike, and far too much of the money which the charitable public subscribes, after all, for the use of the patients and not to provide the nurses with tennis courts and swimming baths. The point of view of the over-worked probationer, vividly set forth by Miss E. Evans in your issue of September 30th, whilst quite comprehensible, is rather appalling when one realises that she evidently regarded the hapless "emergency appendix" less as a suffering fellow creature whom it was at once her duty and her pleasure to succour, than as a malicious disturber of the day's routine. But it would be equally disastrous if the emergency appendix was in any way neglected because his misfortune had befallen him upon the day of the hospital hockey match or Christmas theatricals!

"When once you begin to treat servants as human beings," says Bernard Shaw, "they are not worth keeping." That is to say, when once you begin to provide ideal conditions for your domestic staff it will cost you more than their services are worth. Precisely the same thing applies to the staff of a hospital. Far better to demand a rigorous standard of efficiency from every worker whilst she is in the wards, and when she leaves the ward to let her go where she pleases and do what she likes, and not bother the hospital authorities with a hundred and one personal claims which they have neither the time nor the money adequately to satisfy. Every hospital is at present in very low water financially, and if to provide further amenities for the nurses means closing down a ward, then it would be better to let the nurses sleep on the floor—but better still to pay them an adequate salary, reduce their hours of labour, and let them look after themselves from the moment they leave the hospital gates. One of those hospitals where the present nurses' quarters are admittedly out of date might very well be the first to try this experiment.

I am obliged to your correspondents who have reminded me of the co-operative system of supplying private nurses. I had, of course, heard of this organisation, but I had no personal knowledge of its workings, and I did not wish to make any statements which I could not substantiate.

MADGE MEARS.

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Telephone Museum 6910.

WOMEN AND THE LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS.

The League of Nations Union is organising a campaign to be conducted all over the country during the coming autumn on the question of the Limitation of Armaments, and is inviting the support of Women's Organisations. The N.U.S.E.C. has also been approached by the League of Women Voters in the United States of America, asking it, on behalf of English women, to join in working for the same end.

In view of the fact that the N.U.S.E.C. has given work for the League of Nations an important place on its programme, and that the Limitation of Armaments is an essential part of the work of the League, it has most gladly consented to co-operate with the League of Nations Union. The following resolution has been sent in to the Prime Minister, and to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and will be sent to all representatives of the British Dominions at the Washington Conference:—

"That this meeting, convinced that great armies and navies are a menace to the peace of the world, and that their upkeep imposes an unwarrantable and intolerable burden upon the people, strongly urges His Majesty's Government to do everything in its power to achieve a general limitation of armaments by agreement with other nations, and especially to advocate this policy at the Washington Conference and within the League of Nations."

Affiliated Societies are asked to organise meetings (in co-operation with Branches of the League of Nations Union, or, where no Branch exists, by themselves), of all suitable organisations in their locality to pass similar resolutions.

The Final Report of the League of Nations Union on the Limitation of Armaments can be obtained from Headquarters, price 6d. The League of Nations Union is prepared to send speakers and to supply literature and special information.

CONFERENCE OF NORTH WESTERN GROUP OF SOCIETIES.

A very successful Conference of the North-Western Group of Societies affiliated to the N.U.S.E.C. was held in Warrington on Tuesday, September 27th. Mrs. Abraham, of Birkenhead, occupied the chair, and delegates were present from Ashton-under-Lyne, Bebington, Birkenhead, Bolton, Chester, Farnworth, Liverpool, and Warrington.

The chief subjects of discussion were—Parliamentary Work and Preparations for General Elections, Municipal Elections, Women Police.

The following resolutions were passed:—

"That Societies be asked to approach their local Party Organisations with a view to urging the adoption of suitable Women Candidates for Parliament."

That, in the event of a Parliamentary Election, Societies are advised to present a list of questions, based on the N.U.S.E.C. objects, to the Candidates, and to arrange for a Women Voters' Meeting at which all Candidates be invited to speak.

That Secretaries be asked to make special efforts to urge the need of Women Police to the Home Secretary, Chief Constables, and Municipal Candidates, and to hold meetings on the subject."

A scheme to strengthen the work of the Group was drawn up, and consisted of (a) The formation of new Societies in districts where no affiliated Society already exists, or (b) The adoption of towns by Societies in their neighbourhood, or (c) The appointment of Corresponding Secretaries to keep in touch with Members of Parliament for those districts.

It is hoped that the holding of these Conferences will be of great assistance to the work of the N.U.S.E.C.

E. G. MAMOURIAN, Hon. Sec., Ashton-under-Lyne.

LARGS WEEK-END AUTUMN SCHOOL.

The Week-end School arranged by the Glasgow Society for Equal Citizenship was held at Elderslie, Largs, Ayrshire, from October 7th to 10th, and was most successful—arousing interest not only amongst the members of the School, but also amongst the residents in the neighbourhood. Miss Elizabeth Macadam, M.A., was the leader of the School, and gave lectures on Equal Franchise, Women in Industry and the Professions, Women in Parliament, besides taking an important part in the discussions which followed each lecture. The other four lectures were: "Women's Divided Interests" (Dr. Jane Suttie), "Equal Moral Standard" (Miss Tancred, Dr. Jane Suttie, Miss Lyall), "League of Nations" (Mrs. Paisley, Miss Macadam), "Women in the Church" (Miss Bury). The chair at each lecture was taken by a member of the Glasgow Executive Committee—Miss Snodgrass, Miss Buchanan, Mrs. Toms, Mrs. Paisley, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Stewart Barrie, Miss Story. The School was favoured with ideal weather, and the excursion to Millport undertaken on Saturday by the larger number of the members was much enjoyed. On Monday everyone agreed that the Week-end School had been very successful, and that similar schools might be held in future with advantage to the members of the Equal Citizenship Society.

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