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**What the
Conservative
Government
has done for
Women & Children
1925—1928**

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THIRD EDITION—JANUARY, 1929

*"In a progressive country, change is constant ;
and the great question is, not whether you
should resist change which is inevitable, but
whether that change should be carried out in
deference to the manners, the customs, the laws,
and the tradition of the people, or whether it
should be carried out in deference to abstract
principles, and arbitrary and general doctrines."*
—DISRAELI.

PAMPHLET

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WHA

What the Conservative Government has done for Women and Children

WORLD PEACE.

Peace abroad is an essential condition for progress and betterment at home. The Conservative Government has not only maintained peace, it has laboured unceasingly to make peace secure. It has wholeheartedly supported the League of Nations. The Locarno Treaties marked the end of the war spirit in Europe, and the Conservative Government took the foremost part in securing the admission of Germany to the League of Nations.

The Treaty for the Renunciation of War, otherwise known as the Kellogg Pact, which was signed at Paris in August, 1928, was welcomed as a further step to the attainment of permanent world peace.

The Conservative Government, whilst earnestly working for universal reduction of armaments, has given more practical proof of its sincerity than any other country. The Defence forces have been cut down to the bare minimum required for the security of the Nation, and £5½ millions a year less is being spent on Defence than when the Socialist Government was in power.

HOUSING. When the Conservative Government took office the gravest domestic problem was that of Housing.

How has that problem been dealt with?

Almost 800,000 out of the 1,100,000 houses built since the Armistice have been erected during the time the present Government has been in office; and almost all of these have been provided for people of limited means.

Before the War the average annual supply of houses was about 70,000, but under this Government the annual total of house-building has been trebled. No previous Government can show such a splendid record.

To prevent hardship, the Rent Restriction Acts have been prolonged until at least December, 1929.

The Ministry of Health has also confirmed 113 slum clearance schemes, covering some 14,000 houses—a larger number than has ever been in hand at any one time in the whole history of the slum question. Under these schemes about 67,000 people will be rehoused in modern and sanitary dwellings. At the same time every year over 500,000 houses have been made sanitary and habitable.

Special provision has been made for the improvement of houses in rural districts, and leasehold tenants of business premises owe it to the present Government that they are now entitled to compensation in respect of improvements and goodwill.

EDUCATION. Under the Conservative Administration, marked progress has been made in the improvement of educational standards and

conditions. The education authorities in England and Wales are spending £4½ millions a year more than when the Socialist Government was in office.

The whole system has been reorganised, so that better and more advanced instruction is being given to all children over 11 years of age.

Since 1924 the number of large classes with over 50 children has been reduced by one-third.

During the three years ended March, 1928, the building of 221 new schools has been approved. The reconstruction of unsatisfactory schools is also proceeding rapidly, more than half of the 800 black-listed schools having already been taken in hand. The total capital expenditure approved for all types of school buildings during the above three years is nearly £18½ millions, as compared with a total capital outlay of only £8½ millions in the preceding four years.

Since October, 1924, the number of pupils in public secondary schools has increased by more than 25,000, whilst the number of free places, *i.e.*, free of tuition fees, has gone up by over 21,000. There are 3,761 more certificated teachers now than there were in 1924.

The School Medical Services show similar progress—500,000 more children treated for minor ailments, 112 more orthopædic schemes, 30 more open-air schools—compared with 1924.

The Chief Medical Officer to the Ministry of Health and Board of Education reports that there is a steady increase noticeable in the physique of the children of this country. They are better nourished, better housed, better fed and better clothed than the generation immediately preceding the War.

**WIDOWS',
ORPHANS'
AND OLD AGE
PENSIONS.** Liberals and Socialists cannot forgive the Conservative Government for having passed the great measure of social legislation known as the Widows', Orphans' and

Old Age Contributory Pensions Act. And the reason is that people simply do not listen to them now when they assert that Conservatives care nothing for the welfare of those whom Liberals like to call the "Masses" and Socialists the "Proletariat."

Some figures will show the benefits obtained under this Act by those whom Conservatives prefer to call "Fellow-Citizens."

By June, 1928, 251,000 widows were receiving a pension of 10s. weekly and 15,000 orphans 7s. 6d. weekly. Also, 344,800 children of widows were receiving allowances of 5s. or 3s. each.

Insured men over 70 and wives of insured men over 70 who were receiving the unrestricted old age pension numbered 269,000.

591,000 men and women between 65 and 70 are drawing unrestricted pensions of 10s. a week each under the contributory scheme.

The total number of beneficiaries under the Conservative Act of 1925 is 1,500,000, and no less than 31 million people—or three-quarters of the entire population—are covered by the Act.

**LOWER
TAXATION.** The duty on sugar has been reduced, with the result that consumers pay £4 millions a year less.

Income tax allowances for children have been increased from £36 to £60 for the first child and from £27 to £50 for

each other child. This is an important relief which benefits 650,000 families.

Earned income allowance has also been increased from $\frac{1}{10}$ to $\frac{1}{6}$, and persons of 65 or over with investment incomes not exceeding £500 also receive this concession.

The above reliefs, amounting to £12 millions a year, are intended to benefit income tax payers with limited means.

There has been a substantial net reduction in taxation since the present Government came into power.

An illustration of the value of the relief to the family man is provided by Mr. Philip Snowden, M.P. (ex-Socialist Chancellor), who said at the recent Socialist Party Conference at Birmingham, on Oct. 4, 1928:

"Already a man with £500 a year and a wife and three children paid no income tax, and if he had the wisdom not to drink and not to smoke he practically escaped taxation."

A similar argument of course applies to all who receive less than £500 a year.

COST OF LIVING The Food Council which was set up by the Conservative Government
HAS BEEN up by the Conservative Government
REDUCED. has held inquiries and issued reports

on the prices of bread, meat, tea, milk and fish. World prices, of course, cannot be controlled, and most of our food comes from abroad, but the Government is fully alive to the importance of reducing food prices as far as possible. The Food Council, by the publicity given to its findings, and by the pressure of public opinion, stimulates healthy competition and checks attempts to maintain prices at an unfair level.

The biggest item in the housewife's weekly budget is

food, and we know the course of food prices by means of the monthly index numbers published by the Ministry of Labour. These index numbers give the percentage increase of food prices above the pre-War level (July, 1914). By means of these numbers the purchasing power of the £ sterling can be calculated.

When the Government came into office £1 bought only the same quantity of groceries and provisions as 11s. could buy before the War.

By April, 1928, owing to the lower level of food prices, £1 bought as much as 13s. could buy before the War.

So that the housewife gets 2s. worth more goods for every £ she now spends.

Put in another way, this means that the value of wages has been increased by £100 millions since the Conservatives came into power.

Comparing prices in October, 1928, with prices when the Socialists were in office October, 1924* :

British beef is 1d. per lb. cheaper.
British mutton is 2d. per lb. cheaper.
Frozen mutton is ½d. per lb. cheaper.
Bacon is ¾d. per lb. cheaper.
Flour is 1¼d. per 7 lbs. cheaper.
Bread (4-lb.) is 1¼d. cheaper.
Sugar is 1½d. per lb. cheaper.
Butter is 3d. per lb. cheaper.
Potatoes are 2d. per 7 lb. cheaper.
Eggs (fresh) are 3d. a dozen cheaper.

PURITY OF FOOD. Mr. Baldwin, in 1924, pointed out the danger which the use of certain preservatives in food was causing to the health of the people. Regulations to deal with

* These figures, which are taken from the official *Labour Gazette*, are based on average prices throughout the country.

this abuse have accordingly been made and preservatives are not now allowed in any dairy produce, either imported or home produced. This prohibition applies also to preserved bacon, ham, egg yolk and articles prepared from it, etc.

Further, the Food and Drugs (Adulteration) Act of 1928 protects the public against the sale of adulterated articles and against fraud and false description of goods sold. Injurious colouring matter in food is prohibited and the addition of non-injurious matter must be clearly and truthfully stated on the packet or other container.

Every woman appreciates the importance of pure food and the advantage of knowing whether or not other substances have been added to any article she buys.

The Conservative Government has safeguarded the purity of the nation's food.

A CHECK TO FRAUDULENT SALES.

Both the housewife and the retail trader have suffered from a small minority of dishonest shopkeepers who gave short weight or measure. In the interests of both these classes, and following the recommendations of the Food Council, the Government passed, in 1926, the Sale of Food (Weights and Measures) Act, which makes it an offence to give short weight, measure, or number in the sale of foodstuffs. This Act protects the consumer, whilst not interfering with the trade of honest traders, who form the vast majority. As a result the housewife, in making her purchases of food, may now be satisfied that she is getting the correct weight or measure for which she pays and the shopkeeper is safeguarded against dishonest competition.

HEALTH.

In the interests of the health of the nation, the Government passed, in 1925, a Public Health Act which improved and brought up to date all the various ordinances which concern public health and sanitation. It would be impossible even to mention the numerous matters dealt with in this Act: they affect the health and cleanliness of villages, cities, food, water, etc., and it was of the greatest importance that they should be dealt with so that people in their daily lives should have the benefit of the best possible conditions.

The Government's National Health Insurance Act of 1928, amongst other advantages to contributors, gives improved benefits to insured women who cease work on marriage. It provides that they shall receive the normal rate of sickness benefit, *i.e.*, 12s. a week instead of the 7s. 6d. a week they got before; that there shall be no reduction of maternity benefit for arrears; and that weeks of genuine unemployment shall not be taken into account in determining whether a woman is to be transferred to the special class with limited benefits.

The Ministry of Health, under Mr. Neville Chamberlain, is doing a great work to improve the health of our people, and particularly of the children. For example, there are now from 400 to 500 beds in hospitals specially earmarked for the treatment of acute rheumatism in children; the school dental service has been developed so that it now employs some 600 dentists and is treating about a million children a year.

In 1928-29 the Conservative Government was giving £325,000 more for Tuberculosis and Blind Welfare than was given by the Socialist Government in 1924-5.

During the last nine years the general death rate has been reduced from 14 to 12.3 per 1,000, and the infant mortality rate from 89 to 70 per 1,000 births.

The Government's proposed Local Government Reform, which is associated with the Rating Reform Scheme, is intended to improve still further the public health services. As Mr. Baldwin said (Sept. 27, 1928):

"The great appeal which this Poor Law reform makes to me is that it will offer us and offer my friend Mr. Chamberlain, a fresh jumping-off point for a further campaign on behalf of the health of the people in every way in which the health services can assist them and provide for them."

NURSING, MATERNITY, AND CHILD WELFARE.

For the protection of the sick, and more particularly for the benefit of women, the Government, in 1927, passed the Nursing Homes Registration Act. There was urgent need for the registration and supervision by the Local Authorities of Nursing and Maternity Homes, especially of those used by poorer patients. The effect of this Act has been to improve the care and treatment of the sick, to ensure that they are attended to by qualified nurses, and to prevent patients being subjected to unsuitable treatment by unqualified and incompetent persons.

The Government has increased the grants for maternity and child welfare. The combined grants for England and Wales amount to £1,061,500 in 1928-9, as compared with £889,900 in 1924-5, *i.e.*, for every £5 spent by the Socialist Government for this purpose, the Conservative Government is spending £6.

In order to reduce the mortality due to childbirth and to preserve the health of mothers, the Ministry of Health has set up a Committee to investigate the whole subject. Every such case of mortality throughout the country will

be inquired into, so that the knowledge thus acquired may enable improved conditions and methods to be proposed.

With a view to improving existing conditions, another Committee has been set up to inquire into the whole position of midwives—their status, remuneration, training, etc.

GUARDIANSHIP OF CHILDREN. By the Guardianship of Infants Act, 1925, the Government has provided that mothers shall have equal rights with fathers, on applying to the Court, in all cases regarding the custody, upbringing and administration of property of infants (*i.e.*, persons under 21).

The Act, besides applying the principles of equality in law between the sexes, establishes the principle that, in all cases coming before the Courts, the paramount consideration is to be the welfare and interest of the infant.

Further, in order to help poor mothers, the Act provides that nearly all cases may be brought in Courts of Summary Jurisdiction (popularly called "Police Courts"), where the legal costs are trifling.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN. The Adoption of Children Act, 1926, which came into force on January 1st, 1927, legalises and provides safeguards for adoption in certain cases approved by the Court.

Here again the principle is maintained that the welfare of the child is the first consideration.

Before making an Adoption Order, the Court * has (a) to

* Adoption Orders can be made by the High Court, the County Courts or "Police Courts."

enquire into all the circumstances; (b) satisfy itself that all concerned understand the effect of the order and have given their consent or that such consent should be dispensed with; and (c) finally has to decide whether or not the adoption ought to be sanctioned. No money can be paid on either side without the consent of the Court.

The Act humanely provides for the creation of an Adopted Children Register, to take the place of the existing Register of Births, for all public purposes in the case of adopted children. In the many cases where the adopted child is illegitimate, this unhappy circumstance can thereby be concealed.

SEPARATION AND MAINTENANCE. By the Summary Jurisdiction (Separation and Maintenance) Act, 1925, better provision is made for safeguarding the position and rights of any married women of small means who may need to apply for Separation Orders to Courts of Summary Jurisdiction (popularly known as "Police Courts"). Such orders, amongst other grounds, may now be obtained by married women whose husbands have deserted them, or assaulted them, or have been persistently cruel to or wilfully neglectful of them or their children. A wife whose husband is a habitual drunkard or drug-taker can also get an order. In addition she can get maintenance for herself and her children under 16, and their custody will usually be given to her.

The Act also lays down that the children's interests come first.

LEGITIMACY. Public opinion emphatically approved the passing by the Conservative Government of the Legitimacy Act, 1926, and regarded it as another instance of humane and enlightened legislation.

Under this Act, a child born out of wedlock (provided that neither of its parents was married to a third party at the time of its birth) can be legitimised by the subsequent marriage of its parents. Special provision is made for the rights of such children, and they may inherit certain kinds of property.

The Act indicates the determination of the Conservative Government that innocent children as far as possible should not be made to suffer for the faults of their parents.

MENTALLY AFFLICTED CHILDREN.

Yet another instance of the importance attached by the Government to the right treatment of children is shown by the Mental Deficiency Act passed in 1927.

This Act brings under care and treatment cases which arise after attacks of "sleepy sickness." Formerly the children so affected could not be dealt with unless certified as lunatics, and the Act alters the definition of mental deficiency so that they can now be treated without this certification. It also enables cases to be classified and the best method adopted in each individual case.

JUVENILE UN- EMPLOYMENT.

Unemployment is a tragedy for young people, who should be entering upon a life of useful citizenship. To remedy this evil the Government has arranged, under the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1927, for courses of instruction in useful trades for young persons of 16-18 years of age.

Up to April, 1928, one hundred juvenile employment centres for boys and girls had been established in the areas of 43 local educational authorities, and when the scheme is complete there will be a centre available for every un-

employed boy in areas where trade is bad. Already the average daily attendance is 7,000. Further extensions of centres will be made wherever they may be required.

A National Advisory Council for Juvenile Employment has been set up to advise on the question of assisting young persons to enter suitable employment.

PROBATION OF OFFENDERS.

The old system of dealing with offenders against the law tended to turn many into habitual criminals. In accordance with the more humanitarian ideas of the present day, the Government passed, in 1925, a Criminal Justice Amendment Act which developed and improved the probationary system.

This Act does much to reclaim young people who, in former times and because of one offence, would probably have drifted into a life of crime.

ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES ACT, 1925.

This Act, which came into force on January 1st, 1926, formed part of a greater scheme carried through by the Conservative Party for the reform of our out-of-date Laws of Property.

The Act deals with the distribution of property if its owner has died intestate (*i.e.*, without leaving a will). It is of special importance to women, because it abolishes the preference in favour of the male sex which formerly prevailed in such cases. As a result of the Act, complete equality now exists between the sexes, and men and women, related in the same degree to a person who has died intestate, share alike in his property. For example, a husband was formerly in a better position than a wife, in the event of either dying intestate and leaving property, but at the present day both husband and wife are treated exactly alike in such circumstances.

**USEFUL
MINOR
MEASURES.**

Betting on any racecourse with young persons who appear to be under 17 years of age has been made illegal by the Racecourse Betting

Act, 1928.

The Shops (Hours of Closing) Act, 1928, whilst safeguarding the interests of employees in shops, adjusts the hours of closing for the greater convenience of purchasers.

The Moneylenders' Act, 1927, limits the activities of moneylenders and protects borrowers against sharp practice and unfair treatment.

**SOCIAL
SERVICES
IMPROVED.**

The number of people in Great Britain who benefit by the National Social Services is enormous. These services are—Education, War Pensions, Unemployment Insurance, Poor Relief, Health Insurance, Old Age Pensions, Widows' Pensions, Housing, etc. In 1926-7 the number of persons benefiting under each head were :

Education	7,986,000
War Pensions	1,559,000
Poor Relief	2,386,000
Old Age Pensions	1,338,000
Widows and Children and Orphans (1928)	611,000

At the same time over 17 million people were insured under the National Health Insurance Scheme, and 11¼ million under the Unemployment Insurance Scheme.

Although the Government is rigidly enforcing economy and is spending £12 millions a year less than the Socialist Government did in 1924, economies are not being made at the expense of the Social Services. Notwithstanding the fact that total expenditure is lower, *£20 millions more is being devoted to Social Services than in 1924.*

If account is taken of what is spent by the Local Authorities as well as by the Government on the various Social Services, that is, from rates and taxes together, it will be found that nearly 10s. out of every £ which is so expended goes on Old-Age Pensions, Housing, Education, Health and Unemployment Insurance, Poor Relief, Health Services, and Maternity and Child Welfare.

In no other country are the Social Services so well provided for as in Great Britain.

**EQUAL
FRANCHISE.**

Finally, the Conservative Government, in accordance with its pledges, has removed the remaining political disabilities of women, so that, in future, they will exercise the Franchise on exactly the same terms as men. Over five million women will be added to the electoral roll.

Conservatives have worked for, and welcome, the full co-operation of women in political life. They believe that the share which women can contribute to the common endeavour will help to bring about the earlier and fuller realisation of the Party's ideals—the greater happiness, well-being and security of the people of these Islands.

