

MONTHLY NEWS  
of the  
Conservative Women's Reform  
ASSOCIATION.  
NEW ISSUE.

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OUR WORK.

The Election.—A great deal of water has flowed under the political bridges since our last issue, and we have thought it advisable to delay the publication of this number until the result of the General Election was past history. Our readers did not need to be urged to vote, nor convinced of their responsibilities, and the time and thoughts of many must have been engrossed in active work in the constituencies.

The result has been satisfactory beyond the expectations of many qualified judges, and a great responsibility has been laid upon the Conservative Party in the House of Commons. They must now vindicate before the country their claim to have a constructive and enlightened policy superior to that of the other parties; and, as Lady Lloyd Graeme points out in her article, it is for us Conservative women to help shoulder the burden, which is a very heavy one in these difficult and anxious times.

Questionnaire to Conservative Candidates.

The following questions were sent to official candidates in London and adjacent constituencies. Will you support?—

- (1) That a mother be recognised as the equal guardian of her child.
- (2) That further steps be taken to make fathers of illegitimate children responsible for their support.
- (3) That married women should have the choice of keeping their own nationality.
- (4) That sex should not be a ground of challenge for women on Juries.
- (5) That the Women Police Force should be restored.

Twenty-eight replies were received from the following candidates :—

Mr. G. Balfour (Hampstead)  
Sir H. Buckingham (Guildford)  
Sir A. Butt (Balham and Tooting)  
Mr. J. D. Cassels (Leyton W.)  
Sir Cyril Cobb (Fulham W.)

Viscount Curzon (Battersea S.)  
Sir W. Davison (Kensington S.)  
Mr. H. Mallaby Deeley (Willesden)  
Viscount Ednam (Hornsey)  
Mr. P. Gates (Kensington W.)  
Sir P. Lloyd-Graeme (Hendon)  
Sir R. Greene (Hackney N.)  
Mr. F. C. Harrison (Kennington)  
Mr. T. Fermor Hesketh (Enfield)  
Sir Douglas M. Hogg (Marylebone)  
Captain A. Hudson (Islington E.)  
Mr. Collingwood Hughes (Peckham)  
Sir Stanley Johnson (Walthamstow E.)  
Mr. H. Douglas King (Paddington S.)  
Mr. G. Locker Lampson (Wood Green)  
Sir J. Leigh (Clapham)  
Mr. J. W. Lordree (St. Pancras)  
Mr. D. Margesson (Upton)  
Mr. J. R. Pretyman Newman (Enfield)  
Mr. F. G. Penny (Kingston-on-Thames)  
Mr. S. Roberts (Hereford)  
Mr. J. Lort-Williams (Rotherhithe)

Mr. Erskine (St. George's division of Westminster), also replied.

Sir Philip Lloyd-Graeme and Sir Douglas Hogg being members of the Government could not commit the Cabinet by expressing any views.

To question (1) 23 answered—Yes.  
To question (2) 26 answered—Yes.  
To question (3) 23 answered—Yes.  
To question (4) 20 answered—Yes; 1 No;  
5 doubtful.  
To question (5) 9 answered—Yes; 5 No;  
12 doubtful.

Congratulations.—The members of the C.W.R.A. will rejoice to offer Lady Lloyd-Graeme their congratulations on the brilliant position her husband holds as President of the Board of Trade in the new Cabinet.

Annual Meeting.—The Editor much regrets that for the reason stated above *Monthly News* could not be on sale at the Annual Meeting at

Dame Louise Gilbert Samuel's house, 32, Sloane Gardens, on Friday the 24th. Lady Selborne, our President, has promised to take the chair, and Mr. Herbert Williams' address on "Reparations" will make the meeting an unusually interesting one.

**Lectures.**—On Thursday, November 30th, Dr. C. Pellizzi of the Italian Department of University College, and correspondent of the "Popolo d'Italia," will speak on the "Fascist" movement. It is a subject which is exciting so much attention that an account of it from an adherent will no doubt attract a large audience.

On December 7th, Mr. Christopher Turnor will lecture on "Agriculture," one of the most difficult and distressful problems of England to-day.

**Debates.**—On November 29th, the subject of the debate will be "Whether the enormous growth in State Expenditure on social objects during the last 20 years has been beneficial." Miss Mercer will support, and Miss T. F. Grant will oppose.

One more debate will be held on December 13th. The subject is not yet chosen.

**Change of Address.**—On and after December 19th, the Office of the Association will be Room 191, Windsor House, Victoria Street (3 minutes from St. James's Park Station).

**Dances.**—All the tickets for the Cinderella Dance to be held at the Lyceum Club on Saturday, November 25th have been sold, and those for the dance on December 16th are going well. They may be obtained from the members of the Dance Committee or from the Secretary, C.W.R.A., 48, Dover Street, W., price 12/6 each, or 10/6 for six or more.

**Municipal Elections.**—The interest in the Borough Council Elections has been necessarily swamped in the excitement of the Parliamentary ones. But it is perhaps interesting to mention that there has been a considerable decrease in the number of women elected in London. In 1919 there were 145, and to-day only 104. This is probably explained by the heavy defeat of Labour at the polls, and the elimination of their women councillors. 207 women were nominated, and only 99 returned. The remaining five are Aldermen. Fulham is the only Council on which there are no women. In the provinces 109 women were nominated and 58 returned.

### Mr. BONAR LAW.

Since the last number of this paper was published, we have returned once again to party government. During the war a coalition was indispensable, and no-one will ever forget the services which, under Mr. Lloyd George it rendered to the Country. But for many months the Country shewed unmistakably that it was weary and not a little suspicious of the coalition. Our foreign affairs did not seem to be prospering, and at home there came repeated warnings that Conservative constituencies were in revolt. There was only one thing to be done, and it was done without a hint of treachery: a new Government was formed, and the last week has shown that this was the solution the Country wanted. This new Government has at its head a Prime Minister whom all feel they can trust.

Mr. Bonar Law is essentially a business man, and all who have heard him must have been struck by his sincerity. His election speeches were not many nor long, but in them he gave us the assurance that he would always think before he acted, and that his mind was capable of assimilating the whole of every question with which he had to deal. He has shewn wisdom and courage in his selection of his Cabinet, wisdom in securing the services of such men as Lord Derby and Lord Salisbury; and courage in allowing younger men to come forward and take part in the Government of the country.

Mr. Bonar Law deserves well of us. He has told us that he wants to bring England back to a position similar to that which she held before the war. And this is not the phrase of a reactionary; the Prime Minister and his colleagues are not men of whom it can be said that they have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. We want to get back to all that was good, and we want to purge away all that was bad, in those years prior to 1914.

But no Government in office in 1922 will have an easy time; the years that the locusts have eaten will be hard to replace and progress must be slow and sometimes almost imperceptible. Conservative women must be prepared to help shoulder the burden that their party is so splendidly preparing to lift.

M. LLOYD-GRAEME.

### RENT RESTRICTION ACT.

The Editor of *Monthly News* has requested the Women House Property Managers Association to contribute an article on the vexed question of the Rent Restriction Act. It will be well to say in starting that it is impossible in one article to deal adequately with half of the varied problems of this Act.

The readers of *Monthly News*, if they have had any experience, have probably been very puzzled as to the interpretation of the Act, also equally confused as to its working both as regards owners and tenants. Possibly the experience of the Women House Property Managers may do something to elucidate some of these difficulties.

First as to the Act itself. The originators certainly thought in introducing this and earlier measures dealing with rents, they were conferring great benefits on poor tenants. Undoubtedly the prohibition as to raising rent (about 1915), and in 1920, of allowing an increase of only 40 per cent. to be made on the rents, was a step in the right direction. The terrible house shortage was a weighty burden for legislators to bear, and this Act lessened the danger of much impending trouble.

But, alas! The Act was rushed through with so little forethought, and the wording was so obscure, that untold hardships have in consequence fallen upon both owners and occupiers of small houses, flats, and tenements.

The present Act is only in force till June 1923, and there is now sitting a commission to consider whether it will be wise that the Act should lapse, or if continued, how it should be amended.

The Country as a whole seems to be in favour of the termination of the Act, on the grounds that, as long as there is government interference, the building trade will do practically nothing to lessen the present shortage of houses. This is a strong and sound argument. But the shortage of house accommodation, in London and other large towns, is still so severe that many people, and presumably the government, think it is inevitable the Act should be continued, to avoid the risk of serious trouble amongst the working classes. Under these circumstances it may be interesting to outsiders to know (1) what are some of the hardships caused by the present Act; (2) how these may possibly be remedied.

The Rent Restriction Act followed previous legislation which prohibited the raising of rents after 1914. The Act only applies to houses up to a rental of £105 in London, and £78 in the country; should however the assessment of any house exceed the rental of £105 the premises are excluded from the working of the Act.

The raising of rents having been forbidden, and the expenses of repairs and management having very largely increased during and after the war, landlords were obviously being very unfairly hit compared with other citizens. This hardship fell also upon the multitudes who were waiting for rooms. Clearly it was impossible for owners, with the rents at the 1914 figure, to keep their property in proper repair, consequently the houses fell out of repair and in time became uninhabitable. The 1920 Act was therefore brought in to allow owners to raise the "nett" rent (i.e. the rent of the houses in 1914 less rates paid at that date), first by 30 per cent. and later by an additional 10 per cent. This was a complicated, and not a very fair arrangement. Probably 30 per cent to 35 per cent., on the actual rent, might have been sufficient, and this would not have necessitated the present calculations which are very formidable to the poor owners. Incidentally there are also a number of details with which, under the present system, it is very difficult to deal; (a) the question of the compounding allowance on rates previous to 1914; (b) the fair allocation of the water rate in subdivided houses. If a simpler basis for the new rent had been used all this might have been obviated.

But the working of the Act entails many far greater difficulties than the calculation of the 40 per cent increase. There are clauses which it is exceedingly difficult to interpret: e.g., Clause 3 (1) "Nothing in this Act shall be taken to authorize any increase of rent except in respect of a period during which but for this Act the landlord would be entitled to obtain possession."

Common sense would put the following interpretation upon these words, viz. that the payment of increased rent if refused by the tenant can only be enforced after the owner (by having given notice and having summoned the tenant to the court), is by the action of the judge entitled to take possession. This is the interpretation which has been put upon this clause by at least one judge, and very many owners; other judges have given a different interpretation, and state that in all cases before there can be any increase of rent or rate a notice to quit must be served upon the tenant. As this notice by itself does not entitle the owner to possession, the result, in the end, is a contradiction in terms. The question of the necessity of the notice to quit has been carried through all the Law Courts and is awaiting the final decision of the House of Lords. In the meantime it is certainly wiser for owners to serve the notice to quit, to avoid litigation and possible loss. The omission of the clause dealing with this useless notice to quit is certainly a much needed amendment.

But there are far more serious amendments than the ones already mentioned which are to be desired from the point of view of the respectable poor. Before the war it was possible for owners to get rid *promptly*, of immoral and drunken tenants. Not only did this power enable the landlord to get rid of undesirables, but the *knowledge* that this could be done, acted as a very powerful deterrent on those who knew their tenancy depended upon decent living. Clause 5. of the present Act deals with these matters, but the provisions of this clause are invalidated by a line and half at the end, which leaves the matter of the eviction of the tenant very much to the discretion of the judge. This is monstrously unfair both to owners and tenants. The tenants do not understand what the law is, or what they can legitimately do, (indeed no one does), but the undesirable tenants *do* know that a plausible tale will often enable them to continue their tenancy to the great detriment of their neighbours. It is perhaps impossible for a judge to guess at the hardship that an action of this kind may bring on decent neighbours, who have in consequence of the judge's decision to live side by side, and often on the same staircase, with immoral and drunken neighbours. It is clear that in the interests of the poor, certain lines and phrases should be deleted from Clause 5. if the Act is to continue in force after next year.

A third point which requires amendment is the length and cost of the proceedings for eviction in the County Courts. It is impossible for poor owners to give either the time or the money now necessary to obtain possession. There has been a suggestion that special courts should be appointed to deal with these matters. That the difficulties in getting rid of undesirable tenants should be lessened in some way is far more important to the decent tenant than to the owner.

Space will not permit of discussion upon other points in this Act which need alteration, but it is hoped what has been said may be a help to readers, who are interested in the housing problem, and the welfare of the poor, and to those who are owners and managers of the poorer classes of property.

Signed—

*A Member of the Association of Women  
House Property Managers.*

N.B.—The House of Lords has upheld the decision that a notice to quit must in every case accompany the notice of an increase of rent.

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### WEEKLY LECTURES.

Wed., 6th Dec. "The International Court of Justice" Mr. OSWALD MOSLEY, M.P.  
8.15 p.m. Chairman ... Mrs. PERCY BIGLAND, M.P.  
Thurs., 14th Dec. "Is Internationalism possible?" Canon The Hon. EDWARD  
8.15 p.m. Chairman ... Miss TURE, M.A. LYTTLETON, M.A., D.D.

N.B.—Kindly note Lecture on THURSDAY, DEC. 14th, instead of the usual Wednesday.

Luncheons, Teas & Dinners.

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