

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

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE		PAGE
OUR WORK ... ..	9	WOMEN IN THE CIVIL SERVICE ... ..	11
POLITICAL NOTES—LADY LLOYD-GREAME ...	10		

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### OUR WORK.

It is very difficult to make plans during the Easter holidays, so a long interval has elapsed since the last publication of *Monthly News*. For the object of our paper is to keep members in touch with the various activities, political and educational, of our Association, and during the early and long Easter vacation there has been little to record. Even now people are only just back in London, and it makes the organisation of meetings a tedious business when the correspondence has to be carried on in foreign countries. We hope our readers will read carefully the two very able articles we publish to-day. Lady Lloyd-Greame takes an optimistic view of the achievements and prospects of the Government, and a very well-informed correspondent states the case cogently and temperately for equality of opportunity for women with men in the Civil Service.

**Plans.** The Committee think they are very fortunate to have persuaded Mr. Demarest Lloyd, of Boston, to speak on May 29 on "The American View of the European Situation." This is a subject of universal interest, and it will fittingly end the programme for the season. However interesting the subject no one wants to attend drawing room meetings in June.

It is hoped to arrange another meeting for an earlier date, but we are not yet in a position to make a definite statement. The Council meeting will take place on May 30.

The last debate of the session will be held on May 10.

**Debates.** The closing debate has been carefully chosen to be on a theme interesting to all women, and on which every woman is equally qualified to have an opinion. Lady Amherst of Hackney will move that "the time has now come when women should be uniformly clothed." Miss Reynard will oppose. It is very much hoped that an entertaining discussion will follow. It has been found on other occasions that the debate has been sustained by comparatively only a small number of those present, and it is hoped to obtain an expression of opinion from

everybody on a subject which is common ground to all.

The Committee are anxious to re-open the debates in the early autumn, and to make them more definitely educational than they have been in the past. They feel, for example, that it would be far more profitable if people were to discuss a book they had previously studied, rather than to continue only and always to debate in a more or less desultory way a casual subject more or less casually brought forward. It has been suggested that alternate fortnights we should meet to discuss seriously a chapter out of a set text book previously read and considered—and the other fortnight the debates should be in a lighter vein. Your comments are very seriously invited on these proposals. From the administrative side it would be a great help if members intending to join would send in their names early to Miss Raiker.

**Canvassers' Classes.** It has been a disappointment that there was no response to the enquiry about canvassers' classes made in these columns. It cannot be over-emphasised that trained women workers are sorely needed by the Conservative Party, and no amount of goodwill at election time can make up for the lack of knowledge of the ordinary electors' point of view and the true meaning of the political programmes between which he is called upon to judge. All party agents agree that while a good canvasser is invaluable, a bad canvasser may do as much harm as the other does good.

**Past Meetings.** On the 16th of March the Earl of Selborne most kindly gave an address on "The Reform of the Constitution," a subject quite distinct from the Reform of the House of Lords. Lord Selborne spoke in amplification of his speech to the National Unionist Conference in December, and made a very impressive case for the urgency of passing legislation to prevent revolutionary changes in the Constitution being made constitutionally by means of the re-enactment of DORA. Mrs. Alfred Bucknill took the chair for Lady Lloyd-Greame, who was unfortunately prevented by illness from being

present. On March 21st, the meeting of the Council took place, by kind invitation of our President, the Countess of Selborne, at 49, Mount Street. Captain Barber gave a very interesting address on the Ruhr.

On March 23rd Mrs. Hubback, Parliamentary Secretary to the National Union of Equal Citizenship, spoke on "Social Reform matters now before the House of Commons." Mrs. Alfred Bucknill was in the chair, and the meeting was an excellent one.

Our spring programme was a good deal interfered with by the protracted effort to get up a debate on the Capital Levy with a prominent Labour speaker on one side and a prominent Conservative on the other. It proved, unfortunately, quite impossible to secure the former, and very reluctantly the idea had to be given up.

On March 15 a debate was held at Lady Lloyd-Greame's house on "Whether Parental Relationship is happier at the present time than in the past."

Dance. We regret to announce that the Cinderella dance fixed for April 28th has been cancelled. Our little venture has been swamped by the many big entertainments organised to celebrate the week of the Royal Wedding.

Woman Suffrage Congress in Rome. It will interest our readers to know that the International Woman Suffrage Congress is meeting in Rome between May 12 and 18. They are making an appeal for funds. Subscriptions may be sent and information obtained from 11 Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.2.

#### POLITICAL NOTES.

##### ACTIONS AND RE-ACTIONS.

After five months of life, it is possible for us to arrive at some appreciation of Mr. Bonar Law's Government, its faults and its achievements. It is also both possible and instructive to gauge the temper of the public which brought it into being last November, and to compare the difference of feeling manifested at the election of 1918 with that of 1922. Undeniably the country in 1918 showed a tendency to hysteria; sick of horrors it wanted comforting with promises of rewards commensurate with its labours, and to be assured that peace and security were achieved. Mr. Lloyd George, always temperamental, was himself carried away by the spirit of the time, and undoubtedly he promised more than it was possible for him or any man living to fulfil; neither he nor anyone else realised the immense complexities of the situation which lay before him, or if anyone did realise them, his voice was drowned in the universal clamour. But as national excitement cooled, and event followed event, each fraught with its own unexpected difficulties, a more sober spirit prevailed. And on that swing of the pendulum,

with its natural accompaniment of reaction, came the desire to find a new government who would promise less and fulfil more.

##### FOREIGN POLICY.

And what has this sought-for Government promised, and what has it achieved? It promised one thing only, tranquillity; and already happier relations prevail between ourselves and France and America, while our Dominions, stampeded by Mr. Lloyd George's telegram of last August, have regained their accustomed confidence in the Home Government. The American debt is settled, peace is in a fair way to be made at Lausanne, Egyptian affairs are readjusted and the Imperial Economic Conference between the Dominions and ourselves has been arranged.

##### DOMESTIC POLICY.

So much for foreign policy. With regard to the domestic side, Mr. Baldwin has produced a Budget which has given universal satisfaction; and in passing it would be well to remind readers of this paper that in this budget America finds proof that our Government is the sanest and best of all governments at the present time, and that by it we have established London as the money market of the world. Trade conditions are better, unemployment is decreasing, and we are assured by the President of the Board of Trade that immense schemes are being prepared still further to increase trade and decrease unemployment by developing the resources of the Empire upon a sound and lucrative basis. By the time this is in the hands of our readers Mr. Neville Chamberlain will have outlined his housing policy, and undoubtedly seeing that Mr. Neville Chamberlain has wide experience of municipal affairs and goes to the Ministry of Health with a burning desire to rectify the housing shortage, his Bill will be a good one, and we do not think that it is too much to expect that the cry of our opponents that we are doing the working classes out of a parlour will prove erroneous. With regard to agriculture, two Bills will shortly be presented, one based upon the findings of the recently appointed committee, the other to deal with rating; while already the railways have acted upon the suggestion of the Government and reduced their rates to agricultural produce. A feeling of confidence has thus been engendered among the farmers that enabled one of their leaders in Norfolk to say that it was because of this growing feeling of better times to come under Government auspices that they had been able to grant better wages to their men.

##### THE RUHR.

And finally, owing undoubtedly to our wise policy with regard to the Ruhr, the position there shows signs of improvement. Lord Curzon's speech of last week produced a great impression upon both French and Germans, and a more hopeful tone is manifest. Mutual agree-

ment between France and Great Britain, if an honest and workable plan for the payment of reparations is put forward by Germany, is regarded as certain.

In this brief statement I have tried to show that this Government in its first few months of office has already achieved credit, and I believe that we can confidently look for further achievement in the future.

M. LLOYD-GREAME.

#### WOMEN IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

Before the war the only posts of any standing in the Civil Service open to women were inspecting posts under such Departments as the Board of Education, the Home Office and the National Health Insurance Commission, recruitment being by selection, supplemented in some cases by a qualifying examination. The vast majority of women Civil Servants were clerks, recruited by competitive examination and employed on simple routine duties. A very few such clerks rose to controlling positions, but they were concerned only with control of staff, not control of policy. The real directing work of the Service was done by the administrative officers recruited through the Class I examination (a very stiff test taken at the end of the University course) and this was open only to men. So were the "Intermediate" and "Second Division" classes, now grouped together as "Executive."

A new situation arose as the result of the employment of large numbers of women as temporary Civil Servants during the war. By far the largest number of these, of course, acted as clerks. A small proportion, however, did supervise clerical work, generally of the kind which would be assigned to men in the executive class, e.g., they controlled large clerical staffs, supervised the preparation of statistical returns, or acted as secretaries of departmental committees. Very few held administrative positions on an equality with Class I men, but though few there were sufficient to prove that in administrative as in other Civil Service work a well qualified and able woman could hold her own. It might indeed, be argued from the experiences of the war that the Civil Service is a profession peculiarly suited to women. They have a patience in handling tedious detail and a determination in getting to the bottom of a subject which is not often found in the other sex, while their comparative lack of audacity and driving power is not so great a disadvantage in Civil Service work as it would be, for example, in a business career.

At all events the war record of women in the Service was good enough to make it impossible that, in the re-organisation which followed, their claims to wider opportunities should be ignored. Apart from the general question, the individual

women who had given all their energies for several years to departmental work, and had proved themselves competent to perform it, had established a certain claim to continued employment, provided it could be given without interference with existing rights. There were, too, a number of permanent women Civil Servants who had entered the service as inspectors or clerks and had proved themselves fully capable of performing executive or administrative duties.

The Whitley Council Committees which considered these questions in 1920 recommended that there should be an "experimental period" with regard to the employment of women in the higher grades; that during this time women should be appointed not by open competitive examinations like men, but by qualifying examination and selection, and that there should be separate establishment lists for men and women in each class, promotion proceeding separately for the two sexes. It was also recommended that use should be made as far as possible of the experience of the women who had given temporary service during the war.

The value of recommendations such as these obviously depends on the manner in which they are interpreted, and since no minimum number of posts to be allotted to women in the re-organising and re-grading of Departmental staffs was fixed by the Whitley Council, the interpretation was in fact somewhat niggardly. There were several factors at work which tended to keep down the number of posts for women in the higher grades, apart from the perhaps natural prejudice among permanent Civil Servants, particularly in the older Departments, against any employment of women in such posts. One was the generous Government provision for the absorption of ex-service men. Another was the long delay in the ratification by the House of Commons of the regulations for the admission of women to administrative and executive posts. These were laid on the table of the House at the request of the women's organisations, and possibly the arrangement had a favourable effect on their character. But this advantage, if it was an advantage, was more than counter-balanced by the unfortunate effects of the delay. During the period between the Armistice and June 1921 two hundred men were recruited for permanent posts in the administrative class, and these appointments appear to have met practically the entire requirements of the service for some time to come. The post-war contraction in the activities of the State, and the efforts to retrench expenditure, naturally reduced the need for new recruits, and though the regulations for the admission of women were adopted in August 1921, there was no announcement of a competition for women till May, 1922, and the administrative posts then offered were stated to be "not less than two."

In the event three administrative appoint-

ments were made as the result of the competition, with three to the Senior Executive Class, two falling outside the ordinary classifications, and seventeen to the Junior Executive and Higher Clerical Classes. This is a beginning, but it is a very small one, and the hope that a real opportunity would be given to women to exercise higher administrative functions has undoubtedly been disappointed. Nor has the temporary service given by women during the war received a very handsome recognition. It is important to realise that the candidates at this competition were mostly women of between thirty and forty years of age, with considerable service experience either permanent or temporary. Administrative appointments have however been made only on the lowest rung of the ladder, the new recruits (all drawn from among the temporary women) having been placed at the bottom of the junior or "training" grade of the administrative class, without any credit for age or service. They are thus precisely in the position of a young male recruit of twenty-two, except that their opportunities of promotion are limited to the few superior posts earmarked for women, while the man is eligible for any post in the service not so earmarked. It must also be remembered that there has been a tendency, the result partly of the attitude taken up by those who pressed the claims of women Civil Servants in the House of Commons, to confine the important posts earmarked for women to the "establishment" side of Service work, and to limit their scope to the control of women staff. A woman Director of Women's Establishments has been appointed at the Treasury, and a woman Establishment officer at the Post Office. It has been stated in the House of Commons that the creation of similar posts in other departments is contemplated. No announcement however is made of higher appointments given to women on the side of pure administration.

Evidently we are still far from the stage at which an able woman will have an equal opportunity with an able man of influencing the administration of her Department. The late Government pledged itself in August, 1921 that after a period of three years the differences of recruitment as between men and women should be removed. If this pledge is honoured, as it should be, by the Government in power in 1924, there will be one inequality the less. But the main point to be urged by those interested in the improvement of women's prospects in the Service is that successful candidates should be assigned regardless of their sex to administrative and executive vacancies as they are notified by Departments to the Civil Service Commission, and that in the matter of promotion there should be a fair field and no favour.

It remains to touch on the question of pay. The National Whitley Council arrived at a rough compromise on the subject by which men and women in the same class start at the same mini-

mum but arrive at a different maxima. In the present state of the national finances any attempt to enforce the principle of equal pay for equal work over the huge subordinate staffs employed by the Government would obviously be foredoomed to failure. The women civil servants are perhaps wise in concentrating for the present on equal work, or equal opportunity of work, hoping that in the future equal pay may be added unto them.

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### WEEKLY LECTURES.

Wed., 25th Apl., 8.15 p.m.	" <b>Toc H</b> " ... .. Chairman ... ..	Mr. BARCLAY BARON. Lt.-Colonel ARTHUR BATES, D.S.O.
Wed., 2nd May, 8.15 p.m.	" <b>An Alternative Labour Policy</b> " Chairman ... ..	Commander P. H. EDWARDS, D.S.O. Miss MANNING.
Wed., 9th May, 8.15 p.m.	" <b>Experiences in Russia</b> " Chairman ... ..	Mrs. STAN HARDING Miss NINA BOYLE.
Wed., 16th May,	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.	
Wed. 23rd May, 8.15 p.m.	" <b>Utopia and its meaning</b> " Chairman ... ..	Mr. W. LOFTUS HARE.
Wed. 30th May, 8.15 p.m.	" <b>What we did at the Rome Congress</b> " Chairman ... ..	Mrs. FAWCETT. and other Speakers.

### Luncheons, Teas & Dinners.

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