

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

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### EDITOR'S NOTES.

**Meetings.**—On November 21st, a most interesting address was kindly given by Sir William Beveridge upon "Family Endowment." Sir William outlined a scheme by which adequate provision could be made for children without direct readjustment of the wage basis.

Mr. G. W. Currie took the chair, and Lady St. Helier kindly lent her house.

The Annual Meeting of the Association was held on November 27th, at Lady Lloyd-Greame's house, followed by an address from Sir Harry Brittain on "Roumania from Within, 1924." Sir Harry Brittain has lately returned from a visit to Roumania, and was able to give a most interesting description of the economic condition of the country.

**Annual Luncheon.**—A very successful luncheon was held at the Hyde Park Hotel. The Countess of Selbourne, the President of the Association, was in the chair, and The Rt. Hon. Neville Chamberlain, M.P. and the Duchess of Atholl, M.P. were the guests of honour of the Association. Mr. Chamberlain gave an interesting address upon "Housing," which has already been fully reported in the Press. Nearly two hundred members of the Association and friends were present at the luncheon.

**Study Circle.**—A Study Circle upon "Housing" has been arranged, and it will meet at 5.30 upon:—

- Monday, January 19th.
- .. February 2nd.
- .. February 9th.
- .. February 16th.
- .. March 2nd.
- .. March 9th.

Miss Biggs, Secretary of the Westminster Women's Housing Council will act as leader of the Circle, but the last two meetings will be devoted to Town Planning, and will be led by the Acting Secretary of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association.

The subscription for the course will be 2/6, with an extra 1/- to be paid at each meeting attended. This latter payment covers the fee paid to the lecturer. The committee will be glad if any member who wishes to join the Study Circle will send in her name to the Secretary of the C.W.R.A., who will gladly send the full syllabus of the course and a list of the books to be studied.

**Bridge Tournament.**—It is hoped to arrange a Bridge Tournament early in February. The price of tickets is 10/6 each or £2/2/0 for a table, and the Bridge Committee would be very glad to receive the names of members who would care to take tickets or to arrange tables. They would also be most grateful for gifts that can be awarded as prizes.

Members are reminded that the increasing activities of the Association involve a corresponding increase in expenses, and that it will be a very real and practical help to the political work of the C.W.R.A. if the Bridge Tournament is well supported.

This month we are publishing an article kindly written for us by Dame Beatrice Hudson Lyall, D.B.E., upon the importance of social work. Members will be interested to remember that Dame Beatrix speaks with special authority upon this subject, for among other activities she is a member of the London County Council, and upon the Parks and Housing Committee of that body. She is also President of the London Mothers' Union, and a Justice of the Peace. She has written upon Housing and other social questions and during the war she worked as a voluntary speaker in the Recruiting campaign, and for the War Savings Committee, the Ministry of Food and for the Land Army, addressing in all over 1,000 meetings.

The question of Socialism has been prominently before the public during the last two months, it has been argued and fought about in the Press and on the platform, and with a feeling of relief one turns back to what the scien-



tists have to say about the matter. The late Professor Alfred Marshall was the outstanding economist of our own times. And in the preface to his last book, "Industry and Trade," writing as an old man, very rich in experience and honour, he summed up his opinion on the whole matter.

"For more than a decade, I remained under the conviction that the suggestions, which are associated with the word "Socialism," were the most important subject of study, if not in the world, yet at all events for me. But the writings of Socialists generally repelled me, almost as much as they attracted me, because they seemed far out of touch with realities, and, partly for that reason, I decided to say little on the matter, till I had thought much longer. Now, when old age indicates that my time for thought and speech is nearly ended, I see on all sides marvellous development of working class faculty, and partly, in consequence, a broader and firmer foundation for Socialistic schemes than when Mill wrote. But no Socialistic scheme, yet advanced, seems to make adequate provision for the maintenance of high enterprise and individual strength of character, nor to promise a sufficiently rapid increase in the business plant and other material implements of production. . . . It has seemed to me that those have made most real progress towards the distant goal of ideally perfect social organisation, who have concentrated their energies on some particular difficulties in the way, and not spent strength on endeavouring to rush past them."

#### SOME RECENT PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS AND OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS.

To be obtained at H.M. Stationery Office, or Messrs. King and King, Orchard House, Great Smith Street, etc.

*Archaeological.* Air Survey and Archaeology. By O. G. S. Crawford, B.A., F.S.A. 5/-

*Agriculture.* Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation. Final Report. 5/-

*Agriculture.* Distribution and Prices of Agricultural Produce. Interim and Final Reports 3/6

*Aliens.* Statistics in regard to Alien passengers who entered and left the United Kingdom in 1923. 6d.

*Building Industry.* Report of Court of Inquiry concerning the dispute in the Building Industry, 1924. 6d.

#### PERSONAL SERVICE.

Many women who have been doing canvassing for the first time at the recent election have had brought home to them, as perhaps never before, the hardships and difficulties of the working women in our great cities, and particularly in London. Many of them I am sure felt that they would like to befriend some of those they met, but they hardly knew how to set about it and also, I think, many have a quite legitimate dread of seeming to do social work for selfish or political ends, or are perhaps trying to organise some fresh society on new lines. As a worker in London for twenty-five years in various sorts of social work, may I deprecate strongly any new society when those we have are languishing for want of workers, quite apart from the over-worked parsons in our huge poor parishes who are crying out for district visitors, workers in Mothers' Meetings, boys' and girls' clubs, guides and indeed, every imaginable work. Again in all parts of London there are settlements where one can either go to live or give one or more days or evenings a week to assist one or other of its multifarious activities, among such settlements that appealed to me for workers are Creighton House, Lillie Road, Fulham, S.W.; the Lady Margaret Hall Settlement, Kennington, S.E.; the St. Margaret's House, Bethnal Green; the Dockland Settlements run by Mr. Kennedy Cox at Millwall and Canning Town, where he wants all kinds of workers for canteens, clubs and visiting, the St. Luke's Mission, Chelsea, the Children's Country Holiday Fund need collectors in all the poor areas in London, and there is no better way of getting to know, as a friend, some of the families who are making the bravest struggle. Added to all these organisations, in London alone, five thousand and more Care Committee workers\* are needed especially in such areas as Deptford, Poplar, Shoreditch, Stepney and Bermondsey. Anyone who has been a canvasser will find this sort of work much pleasanter and easier. I have also received appeals from some Rectors of huge poor parishes for helpers of all sorts, and

\* All information can be obtained by applying to The Secretary, Central Care Committee, County Hall, S.E.

at the recent Personal Service Meeting these men put their needs before the audience in five minute speeches, after my general appeal, and I must say that I have never known such a wonderful response at any meeting. Those volunteers were, however, but a drop in the ocean, and I hope many more such meetings may be arranged.

I need not remind my readers that all the above work is strictly not party, though some Socialists seem to bring much political propaganda into it. That being so I am asked why am I making a special appeal to Conservative women? I do so because belonging to that Party and being on its Executive, it is the Party for whose honour I am most jealous, and also because I feel most strongly that a combination of circumstances has, almost as a miracle, worked together during the last few months to relieve our country of the danger of the Socialist Government and gave into the hands of the leaders of our Party a new chance to set our country once again on an even keel, and to save our Empire, and may be the world, from the dangers that beset them. Mr. Baldwin at the Guildhall, rightly I think, stated that he looked on his Government as a national, not as just a party Government, and hoped for the support of all those who valued stability and their country's welfare. I for one thank God for this wonderful new chance, but I do recognise that we are before the world on our trial. We hope that there may be several years of wise administration before another General Election, but if the recent verdict is not to be reversed at the election, whenever it may come, we shall have to get a different temper throughout the country in order that the efforts of our Government may have the success they deserve in regaining prosperity and happiness. The chief barrier to progress is, in my opinion, the unrest and distrust which we find on all sides fostered by those who would destroy capital, the constitution of the Empire. If we Conservatives are to be worthy of the great trust committed to us by the nation we must not only be politicians, but we must translate our political faith into terms of service and show that we are really in

earnest in our desire for the welfare of the poorest and in our efforts for social reform. We must somehow overcome the suspicion and distrust which contribute to the unrest and industrial strife which ruin trade and make for unemployment. Personal Service and mutual knowledge will, I believe, do more than anything else to break down that feeling. Fellowship is, I believe, more needed than scholarship, sympathy than organised charity and understanding more than legislation.

My great fear is lest, in our relief at the election result, and with the but distant prospect of another Election, we rest on our oars and fail to rise to our opportunity as I am certain the difficulties that confront our statesmen will only be surmounted if we, the rank and file, are working hard in our way in support, by helping to bring about a sweeter atmosphere in the nation at large. Personally I think there are two ways in which this can be done (1) the way I have already suggested, i.e., the Christian, human, non-political way that is being followed already by so many of our best women (2) the way of humanizing our political work. May I make a few suggestions of what I mean. I have often been told by canvassers that they have had this sort of thing said to them in our slum areas: "Oh, yes you ladies come to us when you want our vote, but we do not see you any other time" "Can't you come and see us when there are no elections?—the Labour people are always about." It does seem to me that there are a few things that the Women's Committees in such constituencies might try to get arranged:—

(1) That canvassers make notes of sad or special cases, and after the election call again and try to help or advise, as may be possible. This can be done when looking up possible new members that had been noted. Better still, that canvassers will continue as "Street Captains" and so get to know and be friends with all the people, who they will visit from time to time.

(2) That one or more committee members will be the social work representatives and investigate cases and so encourage complaints re houses, rents, pensions, etc., to come to the Conservative office instead of being brought to



the Socialists who make party capital out of these. It is best to have a man with some knowledge of law and public work to work with the women, or better still the M.P. himself, who I know in some constituencies does allocate a certain time each week to such work.

(3) That in each office a list of local magistrates, the C.O.S. address, Care Committee Headquarters, and similar useful information should be posted.

(4) That the Social representatives should be in touch with charitable and social organisations and so learn where workers are needed, and the members can then be appealed to come forward and undertake it.

(5) In London and our largest towns I think the very safe seats with many leisure people should link with a very poor division that has perhaps no prospective candidate or association and help to provide the necessary workers and funds. I am sure that this will again strengthen the over-safe associations, but much tact will be needed in this arrangement. I am however firmly convinced that no other method will rid us in London of the incubus of 20 Socialist M.P.'s. Some I know fear that my plans are unworkable and that I may draw off political workers. I have no fear myself, as for instance I am sure a canvasser who has a deep knowledge of and love for our working women is over-whelming by the most valuable kind. But I will quote those who will carry more weight. For instance these quotations from a speech of Mr. Disraeli's in 1844 might have been written to-day.

"We want to impress on society that there is such a thing as duty. If that principle amongst rich and poor, had not been lost sight of for the last 50 years, you would never have heard of the classes into which England is divided . . . We want to put an end to that political and social exclusiveness which we believe to be the bane of this country . . . It is not so much to the action of laws but to the influence of manners that we must look . . . But how are manners to influence men if they are divided into classes, if the population of a country becomes a body of sections, a group of hostile garrisons. We see little hope for the country so long as that spirit of faction is fostered and encouraged. We call it a spirit of faction for the principles on which the parties who nominally divide this country were originally found, have worn out and ceased to exist, and an association of men however powerful, is not a party but a faction, with the

inevitable result that public passions are excited for private ends and popular improvement is lost in particular aggrandisement."

Mr. Baldwin has frequently given the call to social work and emphasized its value, and a very striking appeal was recently made by Mr. Austen Chamberlain. He said he was appalled by the amount of work waiting on all sides to be done, and appealing to conservative women in their thousands to undertake social service. Dame Caroline Bridgeman, our leader, supported me at my recent London Meeting, and whole-heartedly endorsed my appeal, and I have letters of warm approval from Mrs. Baldwin, The Duchess of Atholl and Mrs. Neville Chamberlain, the two latter of whom expressed their *delight* at such a meeting taking place, and once again emphasising the need of personal service by those with leisure. It brings its own reward too so wonderfully if one gives of one's best, it is so much more satisfying than amusement, there is no joy greater than that of bringing happiness and light where before was misery and perplexity. The great gratitude for organisers and others to whom one has introduced workers is also most touching, and I do hope that never again can it be said that we only care for the votes of the people but not themselves and their lives. So I would end by repeating that if our political faith is genuine it must translate itself into action, and so let Conservative women (who are not already over-worked) take up their responsibilities and put into practice the splendid ideals for which we stand and which alone will rehabilitate our country and bring prosperity and security.

BEATRICE HUDSON LYALL.

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