

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

In Memory of Dame Millicent Fawcett.

The date and time of the service in Westminster Abbey in memory of Dame Millicent Fawcett has now been fixed for Tuesday, 19th November, at 12.30, a time which should suit the maximum number of people. Academic dress and robes will be worn, but, we are glad to see, no mourning. Mourning and the memory of Dame Millicent are a contradiction in terms, for we are glad of every remembrance of her. With the permission of the Dean and Chapter music and scripture readings will be selected from Dame Millicent's own favourites. We wish that a woman might have been permitted to read the lessons as happened at the time of the Council Meetings of the National Council of Women in Manchester recently, but perhaps it is too soon to expect such a startling innovation at an Abbey service. A memorial number of this paper will appear on Friday, 15th November.¹ This will include photographs of Dame Millicent at different stages in her career, a short sketch of her life, and a series of reminiscences from friends and fellow workers under the title adapted from her own book *What we Remember*. Any reader who recalls some interesting or characteristic incident is invited to record it in a short paragraph which should reach the office not later than Tuesday, 12th November.

The New Councils in England and Wales.

Our Local Government Correspondent contributes to-day a survey of the position so far as facts are already available. Though *The Times* complains bitterly of apathy and popular lack of interest in last Friday's municipal poll, figures are not yet to hand which would make it possible for us to assign throughout the country a precise percentage to this apathy and set it in comparison with the undeniable apathy of 1st November, 1928. Meanwhile an outstanding feature of the results is the substantial gains made by the Labour Party in various parts of the country, gains which may be to some extent accounted for by the public optimism which still surrounds the emphatic verdict of the recent General Election. There is after all, a strong element of logic in the view that the constructive expansion of the social services foreshadowed in Government pledges requires a sympathetic backing of local administration if its efficient working is to be secured. This alone would, we imagine, give local Labour candidates a strong ground of appeal to an

electorate which has recently declared itself in favour of a Labour Government and has had, as yet, little time to generate a mood of cynicism or disappointment. We venture to hope that victorious local Labour parties, wherever they may exist, will play up well in tune to the expanding melodies of Whitehall. We hope, too, that they may be delivered from the besetting sin of Labour in local government, and that is a narrowly local view of qualifications for appointments, and an insufficient valuation of the wide benefits of a generous policy in the matter of higher municipal salaries. So far as women are concerned the result appears to show only a slight increase in the numbers of elected members.

In Scotland.

In Scotland, elections for Town Council took place on 5th November, and our present information shows that forty-five women were candidates. In the next issue we hope to give a complete return of the newly elected Scottish women town councillors. At Auchterarder, Callander, Gourrock and Largs, women candidates were returned unopposed. In the latter place, Bailie Mrs. Morris was saved a contest as her opponent's nomination paper was not in order. Contested elections had not taken place in Jedburgh and Keith for eight and five years respectively; in both towns women were among the candidates.

The Private Members' Ballot.

It is very natural that, after such a long lapse since private Members of Parliament had an opportunity of balloting for Bills, considerable interest should be aroused in the recent ballot. Of the thirty Bills which have been introduced, the one with which we are particularly concerned is that presented by Capt. Cazalet (U., Chippenham). This Bill purposes "to allow women marrying foreigners freedom to retain their nationality." Unfortunately, Capt. Cazalet was twenty-eighth on the list, and his Bill is the second private Members' Bill down for Friday, 15th November. It is to be preceded by Mr. Winterton's Annual Holiday Bill, but it is to be hoped that sufficient time will be available for the second reading of the Nationality of Married Women Bill. The urgency of this subject has already been emphasized in this paper, and women's organizations throughout the country are urging the Government to raise the matter at the League of Nations Conference on the Codification of International Law. Of the other Bills presented, the Midwifery, Maternity, and Child Welfare Bill and the Offices Regulation Bill are of particular interest to women. The full title of the former is very comprehensive, and it is interesting to note that it is supported by three women Members, including Dr. Ethel Bentham. While public opinion is so roused on the question of the preservation of the beauty of the countryside, it is very appropriate that Sir Hilton Young should introduce a Bill providing for the better preservation of rural amenities and objects of national interest.

A Committee on the Powers of Ministers of the Crown.

Two women Members of Parliament, the Duchess of Athol and Miss Ellen Wilkinson, are the two women members of the Committee just appointed to consider "the powers of Ministers of the Crown by way of delegated legislation and judicial or quasi-judicial decisions." The ordinary lay mind finds it difficult to understand the extent of Departmental regulations which, though not enacted by Parliament, appear to have the full effect of law. This Committee should clear the position and safeguard the responsibilities of Parliament. Our only criticism is that we should have welcomed the addition of at least one woman with legal training.

¹ As only a limited number will be printed orders should be sent at once.

Votes for Women in Ceylon.

The prospects of the vote for the women of Ceylon are exceedingly good. The correspondence between the Governor of Ceylon and the Secretary of State for the Colonies relating to the report of the Special Commission on the Constitution of Ceylon and the attitude of the legislative council and general public towards the proposals embodied therein now lies before us. In his despatch the Governor states that local opinion is generally in agreement with the proposal to admit women to the franchise and that the Legislative Council in considering the report dissented from the proposal of the Commissioners to fix the age qualification for women at 30 instead of 21 as for men. It adopted without a division a motion that the qualification for the franchise and for membership of the State Council as well as of local bodies should be the same for women as for men and the Governor gives his support to this motion. He suggests, however, that it may be necessary to make special arrangements for the recording of women's votes by the provision of separate polling booths. In his reply, Lord Passfield accepts the Governor's view on the grant of the franchise on equal terms. This is even better than we had hoped. When the report of the Commission was first published it was expected that the age for women voters would certainly be 30. Our readers will remember in this connection the visit of Dame Millicent Fawcett to the island in the early part of the present year. She took part in a meeting arranged by the Women's Franchise Society and passed on to the women of Ceylon some of the wisdom born of her own rich experience. Who knows if the favourable decision of the Legislative Council was not influenced by her words.

Voting Rights in the City.

The law officers of the City of London have already given their ruling with regard to the rights of non-resident voters as the result of the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act, 1928 (see page 293, issue 1st November). They consider that no change is rendered necessary by the new Act beyond the reduction of the voting age and the increase in the minimum yearly value of premises required for qualification from £5 to £10. We take it that this means that wives of occupiers can vote, but are ineligible for election on the Common Council or Court of Aldermen. But though women occupiers in their own right are still few, they are increasing, so that a woman Lord Mayor of London is not outside the range of possibility.

Reaction in Oldham.

The Oldham Town Council has succumbed to the pressure of its Education Committee and agreed to the proposal that married women should be discharged where necessary to ensure the absorption of from twenty to thirty newly trained teachers each year. This proposal was accompanied by the assurance that in discharging teachers, efficiency, eligibility for pension and financial position should be duly taken into account. The resolution to delete the minute in question was defeated by 25 votes to 12, a vigorous opposition being put up on behalf of the married teachers by Alderman Hague and Councillor Kenyon. At an earlier stage, in the Education Committee itself, Councillor Marjory Lees, the daughter of Dame Sarah Lees, had fought a losing battle in the same good cause. One factor which appears to have played a part in the discussion was Councillor Shepherd's shocking revelation that "a number of married women teachers drove to their employment in motor-cars." One is tempted to wonder how many of the Councillors who took this last argument to heart were themselves guilty of the same riotous extravagance. They would, however, doubtless reply that they were not seeking economic relief from public expenditure, since this appears to be their view of the contract which exists between teacher and education authority. It is regrettable that no reasoning has succeeded in convincing them that it is a wrong view. Perhaps they are following the example of their local Co-operative Society which decided some months ago (as recorded in these columns) that it is part of the duty of a consumers' co-operative society to provide remunerative jobs for the children of its members.

London Teachers and Married Women.

We advise the members of the Education Committee of the Oldham City Council to read and digest a letter which appeared in *The Times* on Tuesday of this week. They refer to Circular

1404 recently issued by the Board of Education, which offers suggestions as to increasing the supply of teachers when the school leaving age is raised in 1931. Among these is included the withdrawal of regulations requiring married women teachers to resign on marriage. The letter, which is signed by five officers of the London Teachers' Association (all men, engaged in the teaching profession), proceeds to state the case for the employment of married women to which it is committed. The Association expects that the Government will shortly be drafting a Bill embodying their proposals with regard to education, and submits that this should contain a clause which would give the Board of Education the obligation to veto any attempt to dismiss or refuse to appoint members of the teaching service, solely because they are married or become married and that the Board should have statutory power to make regulations to prevent any clause to the effect that marriage ends the contract being inserted in teachers' agreements or in resolutions or minutes of local education authorities under which teachers are engaged for service. This is in accordance with a resolution passed by the Association in February this year. We regret that we have not space to print this admirable letter in full.

The Coming Factories Bill.

The Home Secretary should be in an excellent position to know the views of women's organizations on industrial legislation. He has within the last week received two deputations, last Friday, as reported elsewhere in these columns, one organized by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, and on Tuesday of this week another consisting of organizations affiliated to the Equal Rights Committee under the leadership of Lady Rhondda. Such early representations before the Bill has been finally drafted will, we trust, have their effect.

"The Law must be Amended."

The Chairman of the Fleetwood Bench had reason to see the irrational character of the existing law in singling out women for so-called "protection" when he was obliged to fine a firm of fish-curers for employing women for necessary work on Sundays. The women prefer Sunday work to Saturday afternoon; the fish must be cured on Sunday if it comes in on Saturday as otherwise it perishes. This is surely a work of economic necessity. Yet it is illegal to employ the women. As the Chairman said, "The law must be amended." We understand that the Home Secretary at the deputation referred to above appeared to be specially interested in concrete instances of the unfair working of sex distinctions in industrial legislation. We commend the above to his notice.

The Unsuicidal Sex.

Mr. Frederick Hoffman, Consulting Statistician of the American Prudential Insurance Co., writing in *The Times* of 2nd November, presents some interesting figures relating to the suicide rate of England and Wales during the past ten years. He himself is concerned mainly with the fact of its increase—from 7.5 per 100,000 in 1918 to 12.4 per 100,000 in 1928. But an incidental matter of interest as far as we are concerned is its sex-distribution. A tendency to suicide is, it appears, a preponderantly male weakness. The 1918 rate of 7.5 per 100,000 quoted above, is composed of a male rate of 11.1 and a female rate of 4.7. The 1928 rate of 12.4, contains a male rate of 18, a female rate of 7.2. In that year the total number of suicides is given as 4,882, comprising 3,409 males and 1,473 females. How shall we account for this striking contrast? On the face of it the average woman's life, by reason of its relatively restricted interests and greater opportunity for brooding and self-absorption, would seem to offer larger temptations to suicide. Are we to conclude that women are not merely physically tougher than men but also mentally more stable?

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 woman'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.

THE BOROUGH ELECTIONS.

By BERTHA MASON.

On Friday last, 1st November, polling took place in 84 county boroughs and in about 256 non-county boroughs of England and Wales, for the election of members to serve on the Municipal Councils for the coming three years. As our readers are aware, there were no elections for the London borough councils, as in London the elections are triennial and took place last year. In the provinces, one-third of the councils retire every year. It was to fill the vacancies which were created in this way, that polling took place on 1st November.

As we have repeatedly pointed out, special interest is attached to the elections in county boroughs, in view of the fact that under the Local Government Act, 1929, county boroughs, as well as county councils, will become on 1st April, 1930, responsible for the administration of public assistance. It is well to remember also in connection with the administration of relief, that additional responsibility will fall also on non-county boroughs, which under the new Act are empowered to make nominations to the Guardians' Committees, if such are formed in their areas.

As at the time of writing complete returns of the municipal elections are not before us, we propose in this article to direct attention to just a few main points, postponing our impressions and comments on the results as a whole to a later article when we hope to have fuller information of the situation not only in England and Wales, but in Scotland also, where the elections take place this week.

The returns so far as they are to hand show that the Labour Party has increased and strengthened its hold on local administration in the country—notably in Salford, where seven seats were gained, in Sunderland, Burnley, Plymouth, Bristol, Portsmouth, Stockport, Leyton, East Ham, and in the newly incorporated borough of Walthamstow, where thirty of the Labour Party candidates and six others were returned to the new Council. Returns from about eighty of the larger boroughs show a total Labour gain of ninety-one seats as against twelve losses. On the other hand the total gains of Conservatives, Liberals and Independents, all told, amount in the same areas to thirty-four, and the losses to 121.

As is customary, both parties, i.e. the Conservative and Labour, have expressed satisfaction with the results from a party point

NOTES FROM WESTMINSTER.

Without preliminary ceremony of any kind, the House on its reassembling on Tuesday plunged straightway into constructive legislation. This was the more necessary because the programme announced by the Government to fill the period between this and Christmas was so substantial as to provoke the jibe from the front Opposition Bench that it showed the child-like faith of a very youthful Government. A Bill dealing with the subject of Coast Erosion, a resolution on the dumping of German bountified cereals, the second reading and the financial provisions of the Widows' Pensions Bill and a resolution on the Abolition of Capital Punishment were the main items of the first week's bill of fare.

The debate on the Widows' Pensions Bill was perhaps of the most practical importance but was excessively protracted and marred by an air of unreality, since it was obvious from the first that no party dared, whatever its real opinion of the Bill, to offer it serious opposition. Much capital was made quite legitimately by the Opposition of the extravagant promises made by the Labour Party during the General Election which the Bill only very partially redeems. But since nobody in his sober senses really expected or desired the Government to extend pensions to all widows indiscriminately, whatever they may have promised, reproaches on this score did not ring true. The other ground of attack was the heavy cost, especially of the provision for pensioning uninsured widows of 55 upwards. This is more solid criticism, but it came ill from the late Government who set the dubious example of granting pensions to the young childless widow. In defending the financial clauses, Susan Lawrence dealt with complicated figures with her usual skill and manifest delight. A sparring match between her and Lady Astor amused much more than it edified the House. Lady Cynthia Mosley made the same subject the occasion for a maiden speech which was received with much applause. "Charmingly feminine" perhaps describes it best, but one sought in vain for any trace of resemblance either in form, matter or substance to her distinguished father, Lord Curzon. What must that arch-anti-suffragist think of the situation if from some nebular position in the wings he is able to survey what happens on the Parliamentary stage—a daughter of his addressing the House of

view. "We have made considerable advance in many parts of the country," an official of the Labour Party is reported to have stated. "The results do not exhibit any great swing of the pendulum," says an agent of the Conservatives. Under these circumstances we place the above figures before our readers with no comment.

From the majority of the returns at present to hand, it is obvious that the electors did not display any great interest in the contests, and polling on the whole was light. In Manchester, for instance, out of 279,537 electors entitled to vote, only 107,334, i.e. about 38 per cent, took the trouble to go to the poll. In Salford, of the 103,434 on the register, only 49,039 recorded their votes. At York apathy, it is stated, was the feature of the election. At Sheffield, in one of the wards, 80 per cent of the electors failed to poll.

Though the exact number of women who went to the poll is not yet in our hands, we have reason for saying that the number was considerable. In Manchester, for instance, ten women stood for election, of whom three were returned. The number of women now on the Manchester Council is nine, the same number as before the election. Two women who came forward were defeated. The Salford Council is composed entirely of men. Clitheroe has returned its first woman councillor. Mrs. Brown, the Mayor elect, was defeated at the poll in Chester. The retiring woman Councillor at Mossley was re-elected at the head of the poll. In Sheffield five women were returned. Miss Mabel Clarkson, the first woman Sheriff of the City of Norwich, was returned unopposed. In Newcastle three women returned, each at the head of the poll in her respective ward. Mrs. Hartree, formerly Mayor of Cambridge, has been re-elected after several years' absence. Grimsby has returned its first woman councillor, and four women were elected at Worcester. Amongst the unopposed candidates we note with pleasure the names of Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., Liverpool; Mrs. Stanley Murphy, Leeds; Mrs. Johnson, Norwich. In as many as nine other instances women were returned unopposed. Two women have been elected to the Buxton Council on which no woman has previously served, and Arundel and Clitheroe have one woman each for the first time. A more complete analysis of the position will appear next week.

Commons on behalf of a measure introduced by another mere woman, and she the spokeswoman of a Socialist Government!

The debate on Capital Punishment produced some excellent speaking and led to perhaps the most fruitful result that was to be expected from a private Member's resolution on so important a theme—namely the promise of a Select Committee to investigate the subject. The introducer, Mr. W. J. Brown, a young Labour Member of great promise, made out an exceedingly strong case. He had in effect a powerful advocate in Sir Herbert Samuel, although the latter moved the amendment to refer the matter to a Committee instead of expressing a direct opinion. Speaking with the authority of a distinguished lawyer and a former Home Secretary, Sir Herbert's arguments were nearly all on the side of abolition of the death penalty. Speakers in its defence were few in number and with the exception of Mr. Hacking poor in quality. Sir Charles Oman thought the subject a suitable one for the display of his particular kind of humour.

The chief sensation of the week, as not infrequently happens, came on at question time, when on Friday Captain Wedgwood Benn made the astounding admission that the Simon Commission had not been consulted with regard either to the Viceroy's notable declaration in India or as to the Government's endorsement of it. The careful phrasing of his answer only made more obvious the dilemma which has struck everyone: either the Viceroy's statement signifies a change of Constitutional policy and if so should not have been made save in consultation with the Simon Commission or it signifies no such change, and if so why has Indian opinion been allowed to acclaim it as a momentous concession?

Opinion has been clarified, at least in this country, by the explanation subsequently given in the House of Lords that the Government's intention was merely to reaffirm the statements previously made at various intervals from 1917 onwards as to the ultimate goal of British policy in India and that the only new feature was the decision to hold the suggested Conference with Indian leaders before, instead of after, the Government had framed their proposals based on the Simon Commission's Report, this change having been agreed to by the Commission. At the time of writing, we are awaiting the further discussion of the subject in the Lower Chamber. CROSS-BENCH.

THE WORK OF MEDICAL WOMEN IN INDIA.¹

One of the most outstanding facts emerging from the above book by Dr. Margaret Balfour and Dr. Ruth Young is the debt which the progress of women in the medical profession in India (and possibly in this country) owes to the early response of missions to the call of purdah women.

"The answer to that call was given almost before the study of medicine was taken up seriously by women in the west." Untrained missionaries attempted to cope with the "sore need" of women in Zenanas. Soon Missionary Societies began to send out medical women, and "quite a large proportion of the first women medical students in Edinburgh and London took up the course with a view to becoming medical missionaries."

The tragic position of the purdah woman is described. "During ill-health unless women doctors are available, she cannot get any adequate advice. Messages are frequently sent describing her symptoms to male doctors through her husband or servants. The husband may even bring in a male doctor to sit behind a screen and feel her pulse, and one surgeon was allowed to remove cataract through a hole cut in a sheet. But it is in childbirth that the full horror of the purdah system is seen, when women are allowed to die undelivered rather than show themselves to a man."

The heroic pioneers of the 'seventies had both to meet the lack of educative facilities for women in medicine owing to the prejudices of the time, as well as the incredible difficulties of starting work in strange eastern surroundings. Alone without an assistant, often without a nurse, the doctor had often to be her own anaesthetist and her own compounder. "There was no hospital. She had to make the best of some Indian house and perhaps live there herself, while devoting all her spare time and energy to raise money for building. Worst of all there were few patients, for women doctors were an innovation and ignorance, superstition and prejudice were rife..." Grave problems confronted them. "Medical women see most of the dark side of Indian life... the purdah woman, the woman in childbirth, the unfortunate child-wife, the unwanted girl baby, the childless woman making her last frantic effort after offspring."

From the earliest days Government and Municipal Hospitals admitted women patients, but this opportunity was hardly taken at all before women members of the staff were forthcoming. The first qualified medical woman, Dr. Clara Swain, an American missionary, reached India in 1870, and began at once the dual task of treatment and tuition which has since been the policy of the medical service for women. Dr. Swain's first class of fourteen Indian girls received a simple training in medicine, nursing and compounding, and three years later were examined and "pronounced competent" by a board of three doctors. Her patients multiplied rapidly, and the immediate needs of a dispensary and a hospital were supplied by the Nawab of Rampur. Short accounts follow of the many courageous women who initiated similar work in India in those days.

Interviews with Queen Victoria held by two of these pioneers, i.e. Dr. Elizabeth Bielby and Dr. Mary Scharlieb, resulted in the formation of the first All-India organization having as its object the provision of women doctors and hospitals. The Countess of Dufferin's Fund or National Association for supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India was founded in 1885, in answer to a request for such action from Queen Victoria to Lady Dufferin, who had recently gone to India as Vicereine. The appeal met with a "burst of applause," and money from Indians and Europeans "poured in". A Central Committee of the Association met at Simla or Calcutta and formed a link with the Provincial branches, assisting them with advice and grants-in-aid. With the exception of the services of medical supervisors, and of a clerk, no help was given by Government until a later stage.

The sex prejudice of the age was unfortunately evident. Until 1909, when Dr. Kathleen Vaughan was appointed, there were no women members of the Central Committee; objection was made to surgery by women and the position under the Civil Surgeon was one of dependence and inferiority. Yet "The Civil or Military Surgeon with all his onerous duties is never faced with a more terrible emergency than the medical woman who attends a case of obstructed labour in a coolie's hut."

Friction also naturally resulted from the inspection of purdah hospitals by men. Representations made in 1909 by the Association of Medical Women in India included amongst other points the need for "an efficient service of medical women for India, organized and carried out by the Government of India." This resulted in a tour of inspection by Dr. Vaughan being arranged, her above appointment, and in the formation of the Women's Medical Service in 1914. A subsidy of about £10,000 was in future to be paid yearly to the Dufferin Fund which should administer the new service. Though disappointment was, and is still felt that Government status was not given to the Women's Medical Service, these and other developments brought great benefits, of which not the least was greater professional control by medical women.

The training of the indigenous dai, for ages the "genius presiding over childbirth", had received attention in early days when, horrified by her methods, male assistant surgeons attempted to give training. Such training classes were, however, abandoned in a year or two without result. This most difficult of problems is still in the course of solution, though laborious work has been devoted to it by many outstanding women. The Victoria Memorial Scholarship Fund founded in 1903 by Lady Curzon had as its object the training of indigenous midwives, as opposed to those of other classes and castes already catered for by Dufferin and mission hospitals. The writers do not speak with enthusiasm of the success of this and of similar movements. Where women doctors are unavailable in the villages the problem has been scarcely touched. Supervision is stressed as the keynote of success. "It is a question which must take years to compass in a country the size of India where there are some eight and a quarter million births annually. Supervision will require as a matter of course a permanent staff after all dais are trained and registered."

The Lady Chelmsford All-India League for Maternity and Child Welfare was founded in 1918 in order to provide health visitors and maternity supervisors. Health schools have been opened in several Provinces, and much propaganda has been accomplished by means of welfare exhibitions.

There is now a Medical College for Women at Delhi and four other medical schools staffed by women. Of 183 hospitals staffed by women 93 are managed by medical missionaries, 25 by members of the Women's Medical Service, and 62 by other medical women in the employment of Government, Indian States or local Committees. The inadequacy of this provision for the 120 millions of women in British India needs no further emphasis. Research and preventive measures are also crying needs. Will the awful toll of death and suffering continue, the authors ask in conclusion, until Indian women become sufficiently strong and united to demand organized relief for themselves and their children?

A. R. CATON.

BARMAIDS AND THE I.L.O.

A correspondent writes: Sessions of the International Labour Conference which deal solely with maritime affairs are not usually of such vital interest to women as those concerned with industry, but the 13th Session, which is just closing at Geneva, discussed a proposal which affected intimately the rights of women to paid work. It is gratifying to note that the inclusion of a question as to the desirability of prohibiting the employment of women as barmaids in dock areas, among those to be issued by the International Labour Office to Governments with a view to the adoption of a draft Convention, has been definitely rejected. For this unjust proposal, which would have been as ineffective as it was inequitable, the Commission on Seamen's Welfare has substituted a question of prohibiting the employment of attendants of both sexes in public-houses under a certain age. It is gratifying to learn that Mr. Somervell, British Adviser, supported the rejection of the original proposal, saying that it was useless to put to Governments a question on this subject since some of them would not accept the proposed restrictions. Feminist societies have a definite piece of work before them in order to ensure that the age will be the same for both sexes, and they will find here an excellent opportunity for again pointing out to the International Labour Conference the undesirability of discussing matters vitally affecting the paid work of women in a Conference in which those women are not directly represented, and of which there is no woman member.

QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT.

Wednesday, 30th October.

ELECTORAL REFORM.

Mr. Mander asked the Prime Minister whether he can state the progress made by Lord Ullswater's Committee on Electoral Reform, and when a report may be expected.

Mr. Snowden: The Committee is in process of being set up, and in the circumstances the second part of the question does not arise.

Thursday, 31st October.

PRISONS (WOMEN COMMISSIONERS AND INSPECTORS).

Mr. Lovat-Fraser asked the Home Secretary (1) whether, as there are no women on the Police Commission, he will appoint an adequate quota of women commissioners; (2) if there are any women inspectors of prisons: and if not, whether he will appoint such a number as are necessary for the inspection of women's prisons or women's sections of prisons.

Mr. Clynes: There is no woman commissioner or inspector of prisons, and the reason why such an appointment has not been made is that women prisoners form so small a proportion of the total prison population. The daily average of women prisoners has steadily fallen from 1,604 in 1919 to 804 in 1928. The women now constitute about 7 per cent only of the prison population.

Viscountess Astor: Does not the Rt. Hon. Gentleman think it would be wise to have a really able woman in the Home Office?

HONG-KONG (CHILD LABOUR).

Mr. O. Baldwin asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether His Majesty's Government will insist upon the enforcement of the 1922 and 1923 order abolishing the *mui tsai* system in Hong-Kong.

Mr. Lunn: Yes, Sir. We have every intention of enforcing, with the co-operation of the Governor of Hong-Kong, the laws designed to bring about the abolition of the *mui tsai* system.

Thursday, 31st October.

BIRTH CONTROL.

Mr. Thurtle asked the Minister of Health if he has received a resolution passed by a recent conference of the National Council of Women's Societies asking that local authorities should be permitted to give information on birth control to married women who desired it; if he is aware that this resolution was passed by a large majority; and if he is proposing to take any action to carry out the wishes of this representative body of organized women.

Mr. Greenwood: I have received this resolution, though I have not been informed by what majority it was passed. The question has been considered by the Government, and they do not propose to depart from the policy hitherto followed in this matter.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMITTEES (CO-OPTED MEMBERS).

Mr. Lovat-Fraser asked the Minister of Health if the country borough councils have decided not to co-opt persons on the public assistance committee; and if so, how many.

Mr. Greenwood: Thirty-one county borough councils do not propose to co-opt members on their public assistance committees.

THE OPEN DOOR COUNCIL

A SUPPER

will be held on
THURSDAY, 14th NOVEMBER, at 7 p.m.

at
PINOLI'S RESTAURANT, LEICESTER SQUARE, W.
SIR CHARLES PETRIE will speak on the Royal Commission on the Civil Service—"The Demand for Equal Conditions for Women."
Chair Mrs. E. M. WHITE.

The Supper is open to all who are interested. No tickets required. Supper, 2s. 6d., exclusive of wine, etc.

DEPUTATION ON THE FACTORIES BILL.

As it was felt to be of particular importance that the views of women's organizations on points to be dealt with in the proposed Factories Bill should be made known to the Government before the form of the Bill was finally decided upon, the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship recently organized a deputation for this purpose. The deputation was received by the Home Secretary on Friday, 1st November, and in addition to the National Union, consisted of representatives of the London and National Society for Women's Service, the National Council of Women, the Women's Engineering Society, the Women's Freedom League and the Women's National Liberal Federation. Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., C.C., J.P., led the deputation on behalf of the National Union and explained that its object was to ask that in the proposed Factories Bill legislation protecting workers in industry should be imposed according to the nature of the work and not according to the sex of the worker. Mrs. Oliver Strachey (L. and N.S.W.S.) welcomed the ratification of the Washington Hours Convention, and asked that regulations as to hours in different industries drawn up in order to implement the Convention should, if incorporated in the Bill for women workers, be also incorporated for men. Miss Haslett (W.E.S.) asked that the same regulations with regard to prohibition of night work should be laid down for men and women. The request that provisions regarding weight lifting and lead processes should apply to all workers irrespective of sex, was put forward by Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence (W.F.L.); and Mrs. Hubback (N.U.S.E.C.) urged the application to all workers of provisions and regulations for health, safety and welfare, such as fire drill, protection from machinery, etc. She asked also that the Secretary of State should not be given power to exclude female young persons from any industry, unless he were given power to exclude also male young persons. The final point, that women should not be classed with young persons in industrial legislation, was made by Miss Bertha Mason (N.C.W.).

The Home Secretary assured the deputation that he would weigh carefully the points that had been put before him, and that he would be guided by considerations of reason, justice and fairness to the thousands of women at present employed in industry.

THE DEATH PENALTY

Since a resolution of the House of Commons has no force of law, and does not necessarily even function as the prelude to legislation, even the most convinced opponents of Capital Punishment can have little cause to regret the outcome of the House of Commons debate on the subject on Wednesday of last week. In deference to a request from the Home Secretary, Mr. Brown's resolution calling for the abolition of the death penalty was not pressed to a division, though there is strong ground for the belief that it would have received a majority. Instead, Sir Herbert Samuel's proposal for a Select Committee to inquire into the experiences of other countries and the possibilities of evolving alternative means for the protection of the community against murder, was accepted, and we may assume that after a century or so of academic discussion the matter is now about to receive the serious attention of a Government in office. On the profounder ethical aspects of the question, for instance, the right to take life even within the framework of judicial procedure we will reserve comment. There is, however, one consideration raised by the mover of the original resolution which we venture to emphasize. Mr. Brown referred in the course of his speech to the "note of conscious or unconscious sadism in the public mind which fastens upon newspaper reports of murder trials." "It is not," he said, "the trial which makes the centre of attraction, but the fact that a life is at stake. There is reason for believing that the very publicity given to these trials creates other crimes of a similar nature." A peculiarly senseless and brutal double murder which occurred some years ago in Abertillery bears out his point. So does the public glamour which recently surrounded two peculiarly vulgar and shallow personalities when they stood for a brief period as suspected murderers, strangely illumined with the dignity of the shadow of death. Given the temper and organization of the modern Press, it must be conceded that the question under consideration involves something more than the ethics of killing, the danger of an irrevocable miscarriage of justice, and the protection of the community against crime. It involves far-reaching questions of popular taste and balanced values.

¹ Oxford University Press. 9s.

SPEECHES ON PENAL REFORM.

The Magistrates Association and the Howard League for Penal Reform both held their annual meetings last week with the result that at least nine speeches on Penal and Prison Reform were delivered to the public in two days. The speakers included the Home Secretary and the late Home Secretary, the Chairman of the Prison Commission and one of the Inspectors, the Chairman of the London Sessions, a Director of Education, a psychologist, and last but not far from Miss Margery Fry. Some of the speeches were well reported in the Press, and no attempt will be made to reproduce them here. The object of this article is to indicate some general lines of thought which ran through the proceedings.

It is clear that great uneasiness prevails as to our prison system, and speaker after speaker spoke on prisons. Those hardy annuals of Penal Reform and Magistrates' meetings—Probation, Legal Aid and Juvenile Courts—were hardly mentioned, and, except for the fact that Dr. Gillespie spoke as a mental specialist and entirely on his own subject, no topic except prisons received much attention. Two of the most hopeful schemes which are being carried on in prisons to-day—the Educational work at Maidstone and the experiments at Wakefield—were described in detail by those who know most about them, but in spite of this it is doubtful if anyone left the meetings with any feeling of satisfaction with things as they are.

The Home Secretary rightly drew attention to the remarkable advances that we have made—the huge reduction in the prison population and in the committals for drunkenness, and also the fact that we now have 500 voluntary prison visitors. Many of these are at Maidstone—a convict prison—and, as Mr. Clynes said, what a perilous and impossible innovation it would have seemed in pre-war days that volunteers should be allowed to visit convicts in their cells and are in some cases actually in possession of a pass key so that they can visit without escort. It encourages one to think that proposals now dismissed as dangerous may come to be adopted some day. Perhaps at no time did it appear more clearly how far we have to go in penal methods than in Dr. Gillespie's speech: it brought home to us how little we know of criminals, and that while the law is active in investigating the facts of a crime we have not yet given much opportunity to the psychologist to tell us the reason for it.

A good deal was said on short and long sentences. Colonel Turner pointed out that the long sentence is not the only alternative to the short one. Probation or fine or dismissal may be the right method. The Chairman of the Prison Commission strongly condemned the effects of solitary confinement: he considers it leads to morbid broodings and to mental stagnation on the part of the prisoner. It makes him bitter, and instead of leading him to reflect on his own sins it leads him to reflect on his own bad luck and the sins of other people. Efforts are of course made to get some of the prisoners out of their cells after tea for work or classes, but the fact remains, that all spend a very long time in them, particularly on Saturdays and Sundays. It is difficult to understand the view that more of this is better for people than less of it, and this is presumably the argument of those who advocate the long sentence.

Two hopeful experiments are being tried at Wakefield: payment of wages to a selected party of young prisoners (this out of a voluntary fund subscribed for the purpose); and some kind of communal life, at least to the extent that if privileges are abused the whole community suffers. It is to be hoped the wages experiment will go further. Our prisons are sadly unremunerative. As Mr. Clynes said, they are so much more expensive than the so-called "dole", and there is no doubt that other countries have gone ahead of us in making prisons pay their way.

Some opinions were expressed on the old controversy as to whether it is the object of prison to punish or to reform. Miss Fry reminded the meeting of a deputation which went to the then Home Secretary about ten years ago, and was told that the basis of our criminal procedure was not to improve the prisoner but to prevent people from committing crime. Since that time the theory that prison has for its object the reform of the prisoner has gained ground, and most people pay at least lip service to it. The danger is that we may be deluded into thinking that the object is achieved and prison is reformatory to-day. Mr. Horace Wyndham bluntly remarks in his "sixpenny Benn" on "Criminology": "While morally indefensible under the changed conditions in which we now live, retributive punishment has one good point. This is that there is no humbug about it, or any preposterous claim that it either deters or informs."

C. D. RACKHAM.

WHEN THE MANDATES COMMISSION MEETS.

By HEBE SPAULL.

On 7th November the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations met at Geneva. This is, of course, the first time that the Commission has met since the unfortunate incidents in regard to the "Wailing Wall" occurred. Considerable interest will, therefore, attach to this meeting. The Annual Report for Palestine was presented to the Commission at its July session by Sir John Chancellor, the High Commissioner for Palestine, so that in the ordinary way she would not be one of the chief subjects under review. It is certain, however, that in view of the grave situation that recently arose there, the problems of Palestine will be discussed. A considerable number of petitions may be expected from Palestine this time for it has to be remembered that, in addition to hearing Annual Reports, the Commission has to examine petitions from groups or individuals that may be addressed to it. It is significant that at the October session last year under the heading—"Petition concerning the Incident at the Wailing Wall (Jerusalem, 24th September, 1928)," it is stated that the Secretariat of the League had received a considerable number of communications from various countries concerning the incident. In addition, the Commission has to consider questions of general principle affecting the Mandated Territories such as—to quote some of those dealt with recently—"Definition of Terms concerning the Liquor Traffic," "Postal Rates," "Status of the Inhabitants of Territories under 'B' and 'C' Mandates," and "General and Special International Conventions."

The territories whose annual reports have to be examined at the forthcoming session are British Togoland, Western Samoa, South-West Africa, Ruanda-Urundi, British Cameroons, Iraq and the Islands under Japanese Mandate. Of these territories Great Britain holds the Mandate for Togoland, New Zealand for Western Samoa, the Union of South Africa for South-West Africa, Belgium for Ruanda-Urundi, Great Britain for the Cameroons and for Iraq. As already indicated, Japan is the remaining Mandatory Power who has to present a Report to this month's session.

DEATH TO END SUFFERING.

Those who have watched the prolonged unbearable suffering of one dear to them condemned to death by an incurable disease cannot but regard with sympathy even if they condemn the action of a young man Richard Corbett, at Hyères last May, who shot his mother to put an end to her agony in the last stages of cancer. Corbett is British on his father's side, and was partly educated in this country; his grandfather was British Consul at Hyères. After his mother's death he shot himself, but not fatally, and his trial, which took place this week, aroused a furore of interest on the Riviera. He refused to accept the plea of temporary aberration, and his defence is that every incurable person should have the right to demand release by death, and that after adequate inquiry the doctor in charge of the case should be given power to administer "a merciful and liberating death." The verdict was inevitable in the circumstances. The jury was equally divided, and according to French law the prisoner was acquitted amid scenes of great enthusiasm. This tragic occurrence will focus the attention of the thoughtful section of the public on a grave problem which must have perplexed many both in and outside the medical profession.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

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THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF IRELAND.

From a Correspondent.

The annual meeting of this Council was this year held in Belfast. Among the Dublin delegates present were Senator Mrs. Wyse Power, Mrs. Russell, M.B., and Professor Mary Hayden, M.A. The International work of the Council tends to increase in importance and this year it was possible to record that a representative of the Council had obtained a temporary post in the Secretariat of the League of Nations in Geneva, the nomination having been made at the instance of the Joint Standing Committee of Women's Organizations, and in consultation with the Irish branch of the University Women's Federation. The Council considered the question of the nationality of married women and the position of women in the field of "gainful occupations". Instances were given of a lady domiciled in Northern Ireland, being left without nationality by marriage with an American citizen, and another case of a woman of eighty, left without support by the death of her husband, an Italian hairdresser, finding she could not obtain an Old Age Pension.

The position of the woman in "gainful occupations", whether in the Civil Service, the professions, or in industry, was considered with special reference to the Berlin decision to hold an inquiry into the subject and a sub-committee was appointed to deal with the matter. As the country is mainly agricultural the question has never been very pressing in Ireland. With the advent of electric power in the Irish Free State, many look for the establishment of new industries, but to the outsider it does not appear that the employment of women in night shifts will ever become important, as the newer type of electrically driven machinery seems likely to lessen the amount of nightwork required. The beet sugar factory works for four months in the year on the night shift basis, but this very highly skilled occupation is so far mainly in the hand of foreigners. The unemployment in the linen towns of Northern Ireland renders any investigation at present useless. For these and other reasons, the tendency in Ireland at present is rather to ascertain as far as possible whether existing protective legislation, applying to women only, should not be extended to men, or whether it is in reality required. This applies especially to the various protective notices, etc., at present posted in factories where women are employed.

Against this last view there is another argument advanced, that owing to the inevitable tendency among young women to marry when a chance is offered, and the equally inevitable tendency of this chance to offer itself to "the brighter and more amiable and better looking among the young teachers", the schools will be staffed with single women lacking the above-mentioned qualities. A member of the junior branch of the Women Citizens' Union summed up the position from the younger woman's point of view "I think the married women should be free to go on with their teaching if they want to do so, but I don't think they ought to want." For the moment, the Union has limited itself to the suggestion that the matter of raising the school age should be considered as an alternative to dismissal of women teachers on marriage in order to make room for the "bright young girls". If this were done, it would at one stroke bring into employment the younger teachers and tend to ease the general distress, as it would remove the children of fourteen to fifteen years from the labour market. This step has been urged by the Advisory Council for at least five years, without result. The remark by a member of the Northern Government that it would be a pity to keep children loitering in the schools for another year tempts the rejoinder better loiter in the schools than at the street corner.

"THE HOLY ESTATE OF MATRIMONY."

A storm is raging in Northern Ireland over the employment of married women teachers. The province has hitherto enjoyed an honourable position in this respect, since under the Education Acts, women teachers are not liable to dismissal on marriage and can provide a substitute when necessary. In June of this year the Belfast Education Committee carried a resolution under which teachers would be compelled to resign on marriage. At the full meeting of the Council this resolution was referred back, and nothing further has been heard of it. Now, it is a rural Education Authority which has taken a hand in the persecution of the married woman and in North Antrim a similar resolution has been definitely carried. It remains to be seen if the local

(Continued in next column.)

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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General and Parliamentary Secretary: Mrs. HORTON.

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DAME MILLICENT FAWCETT MEMORIAL SERVICE.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 12.30 P.M.

Large numbers are expected to be present at the Memorial Service, and all those wishing to attend are reminded that tickets will be allotted in strict order of application, which, therefore, should be made as soon as possible to the Memorial Service Secretary at 27 Marsham Street, S.W. 1.

"WHAT THE 'SIX MRS. GREENES' THINK OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT."

TUESDAY, 12TH NOVEMBER, AT 3 P.M.

The reception which Sir Philip Sassoon is generously allowing to be held at his house, 25 Park Lane, on the 12th November promises to be particularly interesting. Mrs. Lorna Rea, author of the very successful novel "Six Mrs. Greenes", and Mrs. Stocks are to discuss the possible attitude of the "Mrs. Greenes" to the Women's Movement. We feel sure that all who were at the reception to Miss Edith Evans when "The Lady with a Lamp" was discussed, and which everyone appreciated so enormously, will be glad of this opportunity of meeting Mrs. Rea. Tickets, price 5s. including tea, may be obtained on application to the Secretary, N.U.S.E.C., 15 Dean's Yard, S.W. 1.

DEPUTATION ON FACTORIES BILL.

A full report of the deputation of Women's Societies organized by the N.U.S.E.C. which was received by the Home Secretary on Friday, 1st November, will be found in another column. The National Union was represented by Miss Rathbone, M.P., Miss Picton-Turbervill, M.P., Mrs. Hubback, Miss Goddard, and Miss Margesson.

NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

BANGOR.

Mrs. Thoday, the Local Correspondent for the National Union in Bangor, arranged for a speaker from the N.U.S.E.C. Headquarters to be invited to address a meeting of the local branch of the N.C.W. on 25th October, when Mrs. Mott addressed an interested audience on the subject of Family Allowances.

MILL HILL W.C.A.

At the invitation of Mrs. Grey, Mrs. Ryland addressed a meeting at her home with the object of forming a Local Feminist Society. After hearing Mrs. Ryland's account of N.U.S.E.C. activities, national and local, it was decided to form a Women Citizens' Association in Mill Hill, and several ladies present joined the Society forthwith.

(Continued from preceding column.)

Committee has the power to do this, and meanwhile fierce controversy is proceeding. The familiar arguments are advanced, the neglected children in the home, the overworked married teacher, unable to do justice to either home or school—and most common of any, the bright young girls unemployed and wasting their freshness on the desert air, while the schools are staffed by elderly and dreary married women.

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COMING EVENTS.

B.B.C.

Wednesday, 13th November. 10.45-11 a.m., "A Woman's Commentary," Mrs. Oliver Strachey.

Wednesday, 13th November. 3.30-3.45 p.m., "How We Manage Our Affairs": Mrs. Rackham, J.P.: "How the Councillors Hold Their Meetings."

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE.

12th November. 1 p.m. 17 Buckingham Street, Strand. Luncheon: Speaker, Miss Edith Onians.

DAME MILLICENT FAWCETT MEMORIAL SERVICE.

19th November. 12.30. Westminster Abbey. (Organized by The London and National Society for Women's Service and the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.) Reserved seats (issued according to priority of application) from Memorial Service Committee, 27 Marsham Street, S.W. 1. Unreserved seats without tickets.

FABIAN SOCIETY (WOMEN'S GROUP).

12th November. 8 p.m. 11 Dartmouth Street, S.W. 1. Mrs. Hubback: "Marriage, Divorce, and the Guardianship of Children." (First of series on "Women and the Law.")

FEDERATION OF WORKING GIRLS' CLUBS.

13th November. 3.15 p.m. 35 Lowndes Square, S.W. (by permission of Lady Melchett). G. Dyson, Mus. Doc.: "Music in Social History." Tickets from Lecture Secretary, 73 Bolsover Street, W. 1.

GUILD OF GIRL CITIZENS.

20th November. 8 p.m. The Guildhouse, S.W. 1. Mrs. Corbett Ashby: "This Month in Parliament." Chair: Miss A. Helen Ward.

GUILDHOUSE W.C.A.

11th November. 3 p.m. Miss Edith Pye: "Peace Work at Prague and Geneva."

HOWARD LEAGUE FOR PENAL REFORM.

8th November. 1 p.m. Luncheon, Pinoli's, Wardour Street, W. 1. Speaker: Mr. E. Roy Calvert: "Sing Sing through English Eyes."

MORLEY COLLEGE FOR WORKING MEN AND WOMEN.

8th November. 8 p.m. 61 Westminster Bridge Road, S.E. Professor Seton Watson: "The Balkans." Chair: C. R. Buxton, M.P.

15th November. 8 p.m. E. D. Simon, M.P.: "Housing."

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN (BIRMINGHAM BRANCH).

15th November. 5.15 p.m. Medical Institute, 154 Great Charles Street. Dr. Alice Hutchinson, M.D.: "Report on the Manchester Conference on Child Guidance."

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP

12th November. 3 p.m. 25 Park Lane, W. 1 (by permission of Sir Philip Sassoon). Reception: Mrs. Lorna Rea (author of *The Six Mrs. Greens*) and Mrs. J. L. Stocks will discuss "What the Six Mrs. Greens think of the Women's Movement." Tickets (5s.) from 15 Dean's Yard, S.W. 1.

Acton W.C.A.—22nd November. 3 p.m. Municipal Offices, Winchester Street, W. 3. Mrs. H. Archdale: "The Nationality of Married Women."

Cardiff W.C.A. (in co-operation with Cardiff branch of L.N.U. and Fed. University Women). 13th November. 7.30 p.m. Girls' High School, The Parade. Dr. Ethel Bentham: "The Medical Work of the League." Chair: The Lady Mayoress.

East Lewisham W.C.A.—15th November. 3 p.m. Courthill Schools, High Street. Mrs. Ryland: "Social Insurance."

Edinburgh W.C.A.—13th November. 8 p.m. Gartshore Hall. H. F. Kerr, Esq. (A.R.I.B.A., etc.): "The Beauties of Edinburgh." Chair: Lord Dean.

Preston W.C.A.—19th November. 7.30 p.m. Orient Café, Friargate. Mr. Carlin: "The Work of a Probation Officer." Chair: Mrs. J. Todd. J.P.

St. Pancras S.E.C.—13th November. 8 p.m. 27 Grove Terrace, Highgate Road, N. 5. Councillor Tibbles: "The Future of Local Government." Chair: Miss E. Neville.

SIX POINT GROUP.

12th November. 5 p.m. 92 Victoria Street, S.W. Mrs. Sen: "Feminism in India."

WOMEN'S ENGINEERING SOCIETY.

19th November. 6.15 p.m. Lyceum Club, W. 1. Miss W. Pink: "An Amateur's Experience of Motor Racing." Chair: Lady Moir, O.B.E.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

14-15th November. 3-9 p.m. Caxton Hall, Westminster. "Green, White and Gold Fair." To be opened on Thursday at 3 p.m. by Dr. Ethel Bentham, M.P.; on Friday at 4 p.m. by Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P. Tickets from 144 High Holborn, or at doors.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE.

13th November. London School of Economics, Houghton Street, W.C. Conference on Opium and Dangerous Drugs. 10.30-1. "The present position"; 2.30-4.30, "Possible Remedies"; 5-6.30, Discussion. Speakers include Mr. Noel Baker, M.P., Mr. Lyall, Representatives from India, China and Egypt. Admission free.

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EDUCATED HOME HELPS BUREAU, 190 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W. 1, requires and supplies educated women for all domestic work. Holiday engagements. Registration: Employers, 2s. 6d.; workers, 1s. Suiting fee: Employers, 10s. 6d.; workers, 2s. 6d. (Victoria 5940.)

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 10th November, 6.30 p.m., Maude Royden: "Armistice Day, the Eleventh Anniversary."

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