

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

The Peace Pact.

The Government's reply to the Kellogg proposals has been favourably received on all sides, and declares that "the suggestion for the conclusion of a treaty for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy has evoked widespread interest in this country, and his Majesty's Government will support the movement to the utmost of their power." As *The Times* states, "the British Government feel convinced that there is 'no serious divergence' between the effect of the draft treaty proposed by the United States Government and the amended text suggested by the French Government. With the aim of the United States Government 'to embody in a treaty a broad statement of principle, to proclaim without restriction or qualification that war shall not be used as an instrument of policy' the British Government are 'wholly in accord.' The French proposals have 'merely added an indication of certain exceptional circumstances in which the violation of that principle by one party may oblige the others to take action seeming at first sight to be inconsistent with the terms of the proposed pact.'" It is generally felt that the British Government's delay in issuing its answer means that every word carries with it great weight, and that the possible implications have been seriously considered, co-operation can thus be whole-hearted and without reservation. Now it has been definitely understood that signing the pact cannot take away the "inalienable" right of self-defence, and that specific proposals have been made that Poland and other states with whom France has entered into treaty relations can be included, we hope sincerely that France also will see a way to accepting the proposals in the same spirit as has this country.

Equal Franchise: Contents 114, Not-contents 35.

All our readers are familiar by this time with the main facts of the second reading of the franchise victory in the Lords. It was a foregone conclusion and the figures, contents 114, not-contents 35, accurately reflected anticipations in the Lobby. The most dramatic event of the debate was of course the speech of Lord Birkenhead, skilfully deputed by the Government to sum up on its behalf, on the principle we suppose of "set a thief to catch a thief." His warning against making their Lordships' house ridiculous should they turn down the Bill, no doubt clinched many waverers. Writing at the last minute possible before going to Press, time fails us to do justice to the other notable speeches of the debate. An article in next week's issue will record impressions of some of the "old gang" who listened in the gallery.

That Constant Figure.

The Ministry of Health recently showed its intention of taking seriously the alarming fact that the maternal mortality rate is still as high as it was twenty years ago by issuing Circular 888 on which comment has already been made in our leading article of 11th May. In his speech in the House of Commons when the Vote on Supply for the Ministry was taken, the Minister of Health gave special emphasis to this effort his Department is making to obtain information which it is hoped will lead to the discovery of methods for reducing this obstinate death-rate. That the subject is one which is receiving to a certain extent the serious consideration of the legislature was indicated by the line taken in the debate following Mr. Austen Chamberlain's speech. The question is, of course, very extensive, and in the speeches in the House attention was drawn to the close relations between this subject and that of venereal disease, and of too frequent births. The Minister also mentioned the Committee, to which we made reference at the time, which he has set up to inquire into the closely associated question of midwives. During the debate following the Minister's speech, it was pointed out that this question is one of no little difficulty, but we hope that the committee will succeed in indicating the way to make this profession attractive to the best type of women for the work. It would appear that the public conscience is at last being roused on this subject of maternal mortality, but surely it is particularly our responsibility, and that of those who are about to be enfranchised, to see that no stone is left unturned in the effort to make this natural function of birth safe for the mother.

Training of Midwives.

As we go to Press we learn that the Departmental Committee to consider the working of the Midwives Acts, 1902 to 1926, to which, as we have noted, the Minister of Health referred in his speech when introducing the Estimates of the Ministry of Health, has now been appointed. The Chairman is Sir Robert Bolan, and we are glad to note that of the Committee of twelve the following five singularly well-qualified women members are included: Dame Janet Campbell, Lady Cynthia Colville, Miss Alice Gregory, Mrs. Bruce Richmond, and Miss Stephenson. Next week we shall be in a position to give some particulars of the personnel of the women members.

The Savidge Inquiry.

Such a furore has been created in the Press and in the country by the treatment of Miss Savidge that we need not repeat here the discreditable facts stated in the House of Commons by Mr. Johnson last week. The Home Secretary has received universal praise for his handling of a very difficult situation, and his wisdom in enlisting the help of two former Home Secretaries, Sir John Simon and Mr. Arthur Henderson. Some indignation is, however, now felt at the confusion of the two issues in a single resolution, which stands on the Order Paper. This resolution deals with the "Hyde Park Incident" of 23rd April and the conduct of the police officers on 15th May. The two issues cannot be confused, but should be dealt with in two separate inquiries. The first raises the issue whether the present law and established practice work satisfactorily and the second whether this law and practice have not been flagrantly violated. *The Times* is surely hardly right in saying that the former is no interest for the House of Commons. It should at least—as we have pointed out before—throw a fresh light on the deliberations of the Committee on Street Offences.

The L.C.C. in Difficulties Again.

We dared to hope that the London County Council might be continually inconvenienced by its own refusal to employ married women—and, indeed, our wish seems to be mildly realized. Last week it was reported that authorization had to be sought for the employment of married women teachers on temporary work to meet the abnormal lack of permanent teachers occasioned by sickness. It appears that this month about 170 more permanent teachers are on sick leave than during the corresponding month last year. At the same time the London County Council is advertising for women "with experience in social work" to serve as care committee organizers (temporary) at a salary of 66s. 2d. per week, but with the inevitable proviso that "marriage terminates the contract of service."

Italian Electoral Law.

The new Italian electoral law which passed through the Senate last week is notable for many things—among them its peculiarly accentuated sex-discrimination. In effect it completely destroys the existing Italian constitution, substituting for the old elected Parliament a body of 400 nominated deputies. These deputies, it seems, are to be selected by the Fascist Grand Council from a list of 900 nominees put forward by various Government syndicates, including the Fascist trade unions, employers' organizations, and cultural associations. The list thus selected will then be submitted *en bloc* to the electors for a simple verdict of "yes" or "no." A bare majority of *ayes* will secure the election of the whole 400. A bare majority of *noes* would entail something in the nature of a true election from among candidates freely put forward by organizations. It is not really surprising that this reform was carried in the chamber by a majority of 216 to 15, for absurd as the new system may seem to us, it has to be remembered that opposition to Fascist legislation is apt to bring upon the opposer some form of party vengeance varying between destruction of property and (as in the Matteotti case) murder, for which no redress is obtainable in the courts of justice. To return to the new "electoral law" itself: the right to vote for or against the list of 400 Fascist nominees is conferred upon all men over 21 years of age, and all men over 18 years, provided they are husbands and fathers, subject to certain occupational or tax-paying qualifications. It is with difficulty that we bring ourselves to regret the exclusion of women from the tragic farce of such an "electoral law."

Women and the Canadian Senate.

Some weeks ago we recorded the results of a legal decision which denied the eligibility of women for membership of the Canadian Senate on the ground that they are not "persons" according to the intention of the British North American Act. Following upon this decision the Canadian Government has given notice of legislation to rectify the position. Indeed, on the very day that the Supreme Court judgment was given, the following statement was issued by the Canadian Minister of Justice: "In view of the fact that women in this country now have an equal franchise with men, and in view of the further fact that one of the seats in this House is occupied by a woman, the Government has decided that they should have the equal right to sit in the other Chamber, and means will be taken to secure an amendment to the British North American Act in that respect." What will be the attitude of the Senate itself to any such constitutional amendment we have no means of knowing; but presumably the Government has the power, as well as the desire, to make its will effective. We wish that our own Government were equally solicitous for the logic of its Second Chamber.

The Battle of the Bosses.

We understand that in various provincial towns (Derby and Aberdeen have been recently in question) two large national Press combines are actively in competition for the purchase of local newspapers. These two groups are associated respectively with the Berry brothers and Lord Rothermere. In both the cities above mentioned, and probably in others throughout the country, important local papers have been bought out and have passed under the control of one or other of these groups. It is a passing which we cannot record without an expression of regret—not of particular regret concerning the policy of any single local organ of opinion, for we are unacquainted with their individual features—rather of general regret at the consolidation of large financial interests exercising a powerful sway over the development of public taste and opinion. We are well aware that this sway has its limitations, as the failure of the Rothermere

group to inflame public opinion against the "flapper vote" amply demonstrated. But if its power to tell us what we shall think about things is limited, its power to tell us what things we shall think about is very formidable. And the thought that large masses of us throughout the country are continually having our thoughts directed along lines which may serve the economic or personal ambitions of a few individuals is, to say the least of it, a very uncomfortable thought. We are inspired to give thanks for the creation and preservation of such independent organs of opinion as still exist, whether they be of the colour of the *Morning Post*, the *Manchester Guardian*, or the *Daily Herald*, and to regard them as being among the dwindling blessings of this life. Meanwhile, if one by one they are destined to fall prey to one or another of these large rapacious interests, we pray that they may at least be delivered from Lord Rothermere, whose power has, in our opinion, almost invariably been exercised irresponsibly and meanly.

Mrs. Runciman's Maiden Speech.

Too late for congratulations in our issue of last week, Mrs. Runciman, the second woman Liberal M.P. to be elected to the House of Commons, spoke for the first time in the debate on the Estimates for the Ministry of Health on Tuesday, 15th May. Mrs. Runciman chose the subject of Housing for her maiden speech. She has first hand knowledge of this subject as Chairman of the Westminster Housing Association and she knew what she was talking about. Our Local Government correspondent refers in another column to the debate, and to Mrs. Runciman's admirable contribution to the subject, with which we hope to deal more fully in a forthcoming issue.

The Return of Lady Heath.

Lady Heath (Mrs. Elliott Lynn) alighted at Croydon last week at the end of her solitary 10,000 mile journey from the Cape in an Avro-Avian light plane. She made, we are told, a perfect landing, and emerged smiling and very well-dressed to greet a large concourse of welcoming friends. It is possible that had Lady Heath arrived somewhat travel-stained and entertained her earliest interviewers with an even modest account of the very real dangers and hardships of her flight the Press might have achieved some consciousness of the significance of her lonely pioneer endeavour. Our readers will remember that a correspondent in *The Times* recently had some interesting things to say on that matter. As it is, Lady Heath has managed to create the impression that the air above the trackless forests of Kenya is a very pleasant place for a sort of aerial picnic. One can eat chocolates and read novels and be "even more comfortable than in a car." It is, in fact, all quite simple; any fool could do it. The thing needs no peculiar skill—or courage. That's that.

Honour to John Stuart Mill.

The little pilgrimage annually organized by the Women's Freedom League on John Stuart Mill's birthday took place last Saturday, which was the 122nd anniversary of his birth. A group of representatives of Women's Societies, including in addition to the Women's Freedom League the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, the Open Door Council, Kensington and Paddington Society for Equal Citizenship, the National Union of Women Teachers, and the Women's International League, met outside the Temple Gardens and after the message from Dame Millicent Fawcett, who was unable to be present, was read, marched to Mill's statue, where flowers in the colours of the different organizations were placed. Dame Millicent's message ran as follows: "When the anniversary of Mill's birth comes round we realize, even more vividly than usual, what an immense blessing we have had in such a leader. Always clear in thought and in expression, we have never had to puzzle over his utterances trying to guess what he meant by them. Moreover, he never gave us a lead which his followers have had to withdraw. And it is, as he said sixty years ago, through the changed hearts of men that our purposes are to-day in process of being accomplished."

Labour Women and Equal Franchise.

A report of the National Labour Women's Conference is unavoidably held over until next week. Miss Ishbel MacDonald, herself under 30, moved a resolution welcoming the Equal Franchise Bill, though regretting that the Government proposed to increase the number of plural voters.

DISINHERITED FAMILIES: THE OUTLOOK.

Lord Astor's gallant attempt in the House of Lords to press for an inquiry "to see whether a change is necessary in the laws governing testamentary provision for wives, husbands, and children based on the experience of Scotland, Australia, and the other portions of the Empire," marks what we feel will be the beginning of a long fight. Lord Astor's demand was backed by Lord Cecil, but was opposed not only by the Lord Chancellor, but by Lord Haldane and others. The refusal of the Government to grant such an inquiry we had foreseen last week. We had also foreseen that in spite of defeat—a defeat which, it must be remembered, was largely at the instance of that most Conservative of all professions, the law—a remarkable amount of sympathetic interest in the whole question would be shown by the public and the Press, and it is on this interest that the future campaign will be based, and will we think eventually lead to success.

Lord Astor opened the debate by examples of hard cases. One instance he gave was of a man with business connections in two towns—one of the businesses being managed by his wife—who left his wife penniless by his will when he died, and left the whole of his property to a woman and her children in the town where he had his other business premises. Another was of a man who had been compelled by the Guardians during his lifetime to make an allowance for his wife, who he had deserted, but who died leaving all his money to another woman, his wife after his death having to be supported out of the rates. He proceeded to show how this problem has been tackled successfully in other countries, and cited at some length the Testator's Family Maintenance Acts in force in New Zealand, Victoria, and elsewhere, and explained the working of the Scottish law. He showed that he was asking for an inquiry because the matter had not recently been debated and public opinion had not had an opportunity of hearing any expert criticism.

The criticism which met Lord Astor, though varied, did not attempt to deny that hard cases do arise under the present law. Both the Lord Chancellor and Lord Haldane appeared to think, however, that they had settled the matter when they brought out the old proverb that "hard cases make bad law." We have rarely felt this proverb to have any practical application, in view of the fact that most laws, at any rate those dealing with crimes, violence, robbery, protection of children, etc., are built on nothing but hard cases. The notion of testamentary freedom, however, seemed so firmly rooted as to contain for its exponents almost the force of religious conviction. These did not explain, however, why it is at one and the same time considered desirable that a man's freedom of disposal of his estate in his lifetime should not cancel his obligation to support his wife, and that he should be permitted in the name of this same freedom to leave her interests out of account. A logical distinction seems difficult

to maintain. The argument used by certain of the opponents, that going to the courts after the death of a testator to explain the circumstances and to appeal for a portion of the estate should be condemned as the washing of family linen in public, whereas a wife's appealing to the courts under the Summary Jurisdiction (Separation and Maintenance) Act should be regarded as necessary alleviation of a real grievance, is thoroughly inconsistent.

Lord Buckmaster, who it had been hoped would support Lord Astor, brought forward a contention, which while desirable on its merits, seemed to us purely irrelevant to the issue. He opposed the motion on the grounds that a wife should be economically independent. So she should, if by economic independence we mean no artificial barriers to married women taking up paid work, and family allowances for those who remain at home to look after their children. But until that day is reached, it seems to us illogical to refrain from extending to the widow the protection which is afforded to the neglected wife. Lord Buckmaster himself realized that complete economic independence of the wife is not yet at hand, and it is indeed difficult to believe that there will ever be a time when the majority of married women with small children will choose to remain in the labour market rather than give personal attention to their own homes. Lord Buckmaster's argument that the proposed legislation was discriminating in that a wife was not bound to make provision for her widower, arose obviously from his not having read the motion carefully, as it explicitly included both sexes.

Now as to the future. The defenders of the Scottish Law, under which the surviving spouse is entitled to one-third of the estate of a deceased husband or wife, and the children to one-third, were few, even Lord Haldane stating that wherever a marriage settlement is involved, an arrangement is arrived at by which the law is set aside. Many of the speakers who were opposing Lord Astor's motion, however, including Lord Merrivale and Lord Haldane, seemed to be prepared to consider a modest measure which would go far to relieve cases of real hardship. Such a measure would be similar to the Testator's Family Maintenance Acts referred to above, and would give a wife or husband and their dependent children the right to apply to the courts for a share in the deceased spouse's estate, if this has been willed away from them and they are left without proper provision for their adequate maintenance.

We understand that Lord Astor is prepared to proceed with a Bill on these lines, provided it will obtain the support of women's organizations. It is, therefore, up to women's organizations to inquire into the whole subject, and to give Lord Astor the support he deserves. The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship will soon be issuing a pamphlet on the subject.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER.

THREE GOOD WOMEN.

It was fitting that in the debates which affected the quality of the peoples' life that the House of Commons should have the advantage of the diversities of gifts of three good women. It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast than that presented to Parliament in the speeches of Mrs. Runciman on Tuesday and Lady Astor and the Duchess of Athol on Wednesday. I longed for a speech from Miss Susan Lawrence, to whose ability the House of Commons has never done justice, to make a quartet. The subjects under discussion were the votes for the Ministries of Health and Education, and the women Members showed how great a contribution to all discussions as to the real stuff of life the removal of the Parliamentary grille, with all its symbolism to the outer Central Lobby, had made possible.

The Member for St. Ives is a matron of the type whom the anti-suffragists used to say they would like to give votes to but they did not want them, for they were not interested in politics.

Mrs. Runciman spoke with the most attractive of the women Members' voices, as a skilled administrator, and her speech rounded off an austere but moving appeal by Mr. Frank Briant for a forward movement to abolish the slums. Mr. Neville Chamberlain is more generally regarded as a cool and clear brain than as a man of sentiment, but the ice melted when he spoke of the risks of maternity. Members did not generally remember that his own mother died in childbirth. So he has personal cause in his administration of the Health Ministry to remember the saying of Medea that she would sooner fight three

battles than bear one child. The slum debate will leave its mark, for Members are not only pressing for the facts but are rousing the feeling about the facts without which no great cause can be won.

The two peeresses spoke on Wednesday on the Education vote. I thought Lady Astor's the best speech she has made in the House of Commons, in my hearing, since that fine maiden effort. She is a gay, effervescent, and challenging figure and does her best when she scraps her notes and speaks out of full knowledge and a full heart, as she did on the topic of the nursery schools. As always, her best sayings were spontaneous and epigrammatic, such as: "Human nature cannot stand overcrowding" and "It is very different having a thing in your programme to having it in your heart."

The Duchess of Athol is modest and capable and is one of the Ministers who really try to reply to a debate point by point, and on Wednesday she was hampered by lack of time, but found time to reply to Mr. Rennie Smith, who expressed surprise that she had not read of the scholarship offer of a certain Sunday newspaper, "There are other ways of spending my Sunday."

On Thursday a Parliamentary debate of first-class importance arose as the result of a private notice question by Mr. Tom Johnston. It concerned, as my readers will know, the recent Hyde Park case, and concerns women in two ways, first as to the treatment of Miss Savidge by Scotland Yard and also of the alleged use of the woman police officer. If the statement made to the House was accurate the officer was used as a decoy but not allowed to do her duty when she might have been a protection. It was unfortunate that no woman M.P. happened to be in the House. The discussion showed the Commons at their best, and both Mr. Johnston and Sir John Simon, whose speech was great, brought out the gravity of the threat to our civil liberties.

The Government owes the Home Secretary a great deal, for he not only showed himself seized of the inner meanings of the charges but, in associating the previous Home Secretaries (Sir John Simon and Mr. Henderson) with the discussions as to the nature of the tribunal, prevented any partisan discussion of the issue. I understand that Mr. Savidge came to the House on Wednesday to ask for his own Member, Colonel Fremantle, but he happened to be absent at the time, so the case came to the Member for Dundee, who deserved the praise he received for a restrained and delicate but firm handling of a difficult question.

Most of the rest of the week members have been disproving the old saying that only two persons understood currency questions and that one was dead and the other in a lunatic asylum. Mr. Pethick Lawrence spoke most and those who heard him remembered that he was not only a good friend of the women's movement but also a wrangler.

The Secretary for Scotland had to bow before a hurricane of criticism on Friday as to the proposed contract for steamboats to the Western Isles. The debate is worth reading in full. To-day the Commons have been discussing the wireless question, and I have stolen a few minutes to listen to their Lordships on the Franchise Bill. There were rumours of a lively debate, but I found it amusingly dull. It was laughable to hear Lord Hailsham facetious from the Woolsack and quite unable to forget his long years at the bar so that "M'Luds" kept on popping out in his speech instead of your Lordships. Lord Banbury's last bark was a feeble one, and he missed a chance, when he informed their Lordships that the only adult persons now outside the franchise were either in prisons or lunatic asylums, of adding or in the House of Peers. The Duke of Northumberland, as the Caveman of 1928 B.C., was as sincere as he always is, and received the usual cheers for his down-right opposition, but I quite expect a large majority for the measure to-morrow, though the minority will probably be more than "just ten men." This week's smile, one of many, was in a speech by Mr. Wallhead, in which he said: "Mr. Speaker, I have seen the money changers of the world at work for the last hundred years!"

GREEN BENCH.

A WOMAN MAYOR AND A WOMAN MINISTER.

We read in the *British Weekly* that the Lord Mayor of Liverpool (Miss Margaret Beavan) paid a state visit recently to a Congregational Church in Liverpool, which has a woman Minister. One of the City Councillors described the occasion as historic, as never before had a woman Lord Mayor worshipped at a service conducted by a woman minister.

AVIGNON IN MAY.

In the Salon de Correspondance at the Crillon, at Avignon, an American woman was chatting with me.

"... and last Sunday we went and visited John Stuart Mill's grave. And you see the window in the house where he lived and looked out on to his wife's grave..."

And I had not known he was buried at Avignon. John Stuart Mill, Liberty and the Subjection of Women, one of the founders of the first Suffrage societies, he who carried the first petition for our enfranchisement to the House (the petition of Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler), our pioneer!

"Where is the cemetery?" I asked, and was told.

"And where is the grave to be found?"

"Oh," said the American, "ask the concierge. You need only say 'John'. He will understand."

Next Sunday afternoon, I and my best friend started by the Porte Imbert for the Cimetière de St.-Véran, just outside the city walls. Arriving, we asked very correctly to be shown the grave of John Stuart Mill.

"Oh, said the man to a colleague, 'ils désirent voir le tombeau de Tom Mill!'"

The tomb is not far from the entrance. You pass along the walk bordered with crosses on very heavy, square, memorial stones, all very close to each other. It rather suggested that some exceedingly dull persons had been buried beneath these stones and that those who had known the deceased, had used every reasonable endeavour to discourage them from rising again.

Then at the end of the allée, a flat stone covered with a long inscription to the Beloved Memory of Harriet Mill, the dearly Loved and deeply regretted Wife of John Stuart Mill. And underneath at the side written simply, his name—"Born 30 May, 1806; died 7 May, 1875."

Our Provençal guide told us that the walk used to be bordered with trees, and nightingales used to sing thereat in the evenings, and that nothing was ever allowed to be killed there—not even a lizard. My friend, who is a gentle city man, wondered quietly to me why anyone should ever wish to kill a lizard.

Then we saw the cottage, close at hand, where Mill lived with his stepdaughter, and worked, and read, and botanized, and looked through his window to the quiet, beautiful place where Harriet's body had been laid.

Outside the cemetery, toward the town, the Avenue bears his name, that of the *grand écrivain et philosophe Anglais*. There had been a bust of him in a public garden near, the guide told us, but it had been broken by boys in some stupid disturbance. Anyway his name and influence will not easily be forgotten: and this year, the fifty-fifth after his death, promises the completion of that fuller franchise which was worked for and written for by John Stuart Mill during a long and useful life.

Then "John", our generous John, went amongst the vines and olive-trees of Provence to join the wife, of whom he had had engraved in stone—

Were there even a few hearts and intellects
Like hers, this earth would already become
The Hoped-for heaven.

It is well sometimes to think of the past, and of good men.
... Mistral, who lived not so far from Avignon, wrote in his
Cansoun de la Coupo (I give it in French)—

Verse nous les espérances et les rêves de la jeunesse,
le souvenir du passé
et la foi dans l'an qui vient.
Coupe sainte. . . .

T. OUPIE.

A LAUSANNE SUMMER SCHOOL.

Readers will remember that the very successful Conference held at Amsterdam last autumn was to be followed by a summer school on much the same subjects. This has now been arranged, and will be held at the Hotel de Ville, Lausanne, from 17th to 21st June. A very interesting timetable has been arranged, when lectures and discussion will be held on different aspects of arbitration, security and disarmament. We are glad to note that the Swiss Association for Equal Suffrage is taking the opportunity of holding a public meeting on Woman's Suffrage and Peace at the same time. The Lake of Geneva in June is in itself a great attraction, and readers of this paper who are members of affiliated societies of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship who can fit in a visit abroad should try to go to Lausanne.

THE LAST (?) EQUAL FRANCHISE APPEAL.

Our readers will be interested in the letter which we print below, sent by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship to all members of the House of Lords, on the occasion of the debate to which we refer in another column. This appeal will, we confidently expect, be the last bit of work for Equal Franchise carried out by women's organizations—the last act of a long series, extending over a period of activities covering over sixty years.

My Lord,—

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (EQUAL FRANCHISE) BILL.

We feel confident that we may count on your support of the above Bill on its merits, as a measure of justice—one for which our Union has worked, originally under the leadership of Dame Millicent Fawcett, for the past sixty years.

But in case you should be one of those who distrust "Equal Franchise," or who would have preferred to see the voting age for both sexes raised to twenty-five, we venture to submit the following figures and quotations, which will we hope convince you of the impracticability of either amending the Bill in the above respect, or rejecting it altogether.

I. *As to the Age-Distribution of the New Voters.*—The following figures show the absurdity of the description "the Flapper Vote":—

Number of additional voters over 30 who are not at present on the Register	1,950,000
Number of additional voters over 25 and under 30	1,700,000
Number of additional voters under 25 years of age	1,590,000
Total Figure	5,240,000

Number over 25, 3,650,000; number under 25, 1,590,000.

It is estimated that there would be 415,000 over 21 and under 22.

The women of 21 would form less than 2 per cent of the total electorate.

Taking the total number of Members, excluding the University Members, returned to Parliament in Great Britain as 591, this would mean an addition to the Register in each constituency of an average of 702 voters at the age of 21.

II. *As to the Political Impracticability of Raising the Voting Age;* we feel sure you will agree with the view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who said on 10th November of last year:—

"I am quite sure of this—that in view of all the facts as we now know them, it would be a very great danger for the Government to do anything which would allow themselves to be assailed by a charge of breach of faith by any very large section of the population."

The following quotations show that such a charge would inevitably be incurred if the Bill at this stage were either radically altered or rejected:—

The Prime Minister, speaking in the Albert Hall in May, 1927, said:—

"I am quite aware that there is a strong feeling, which has shown itself in many associations, that there should be a franchise for both sexes at the age of 25. . . . I will just put this to any provincial candidate at the next election. You will be asked: 'Are you in favour of a man having the vote at 21 or not?' He will be a bold man who will stand up and say, 'I am not.' He will find it politically, in my view, an impossible position to maintain.

"'Twenty-one' would immediately be taken as the slogan of both the other parties, and to take away a franchise centuries old in a democratic country is a thing which, in my opinion, is not practical politics."

The Home Secretary, speaking in the House of Commons on the Committee Stage of the Bill on 18th April, "on behalf of the Prime Minister and of His Majesty's Government as a whole," said:—

"The effect of this proposal would be that men who are now entitled to the vote at the age of 21 should no longer have it at the age of 21 but only at the age of 25. That would be going back on history. . . . Will anybody go back and say to the toiling masses of our country, 'We are going to disfranchise all these young men till the age of 25,' when every civilized country in this world gives votes to

men at 21? . . . Is the Conservative Party going to tie itself up with this prehistoric idea of going back to 25? . . . The Government on a question of this kind are absolutely united. The Government are as one, and we should be lacking in our duty as those responsible for the Government of this country if we were to shirk our responsibility in a matter of this kind by leaving it to the House."

It is obvious that no Government could consent to a course described by its Prime Minister as "a position impossible to maintain" and by its Home Secretary as "a pre-historic idea."

III. *As to the Main Pledge Given by the Government with Regard to "Equal Political Rights,"* it has been repeated in varying forms on many occasions, but the following quotation is perhaps the most decisive:—

The Home Secretary, speaking on behalf of the Government, on 20th February, 1925, after repeating the pledge for Equal Political Rights between men and women given by the Prime Minister at the last Election, said:—

"I have the authority of my right hon. Friend, who is by my side, to say, as all the House knows would be the case, that he stands by that pledge. One of the attributes of my right hon. Friend is that he does stand by his pledges, and I say to-day he stands absolutely, textually, and in spirit by that pledge. . . . There is no dispute whatever as to the Prime Minister's pledge or its meaning and intention, and we do mean to carry out that pledge. We do mean to give equal political rights to men and women, but we desire to do it by agreement. . . . The Prime Minister's pledge is for equal rights and at the next election, I will say quite definitely that means that no difference will take place in the ages at which men and women will go to the poll at the next election."

IV. *As to the Permanent Political Supremacy of Women;* the suggestion that because women outnumber men their enfranchisement would give them political supremacy carries with it the implication that women are likely to vote on sex rather than on party lines. It is only necessary to consider the way in which the 8 million women enfranchised in 1918 have divided themselves up among the various political parties to realize that this is a fantastic notion and a woman's party is the very last thing wanted by women themselves.

We write too early to know for certain which points are likely to be dealt with in the debate, and must apologize if some of our arguments turn out to be irrelevant.

Yours faithfully,

ELEANOR F. RATHBONE,
President.

EVA M. HUBBACK,
Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee.

CHEAP AND ATTRACTIVE HOLIDAYS.

The Young Women's Christian Association's attractive holiday plans, giving a choice of twenty-one seaside and country resorts in England and Wales and two abroad are given in their Holiday Prospectus for 1928. Most of these Camps are held in well-equipped schools taken for the month of August. Bookings are coming in quickly, but there are still vacancies at most of the centres. The choice includes:—Torquay, Clacton, Ryde, Bexhill, Bournemouth, and Seaford. The foreign centres are at Knocke-Sur-Mer, Belgium, and Lugano, Switzerland. A canvas camp at Pagham with well-equipped tents and a large barn for games is also included in the list at 17s. 6d. a week as well as two permanent Hut centres at Prestatyn and Colwyn Bay where the charge is 15s.

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 WOMAN'S LEADER

EVERY FRIDAY.

ONE PENNY.

SPECIAL TERMS FOR SOCIETIES

Send 6/6 to the Office of the Paper, 4 Tufton Street, Westminster, S.W. 1
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS.

By BERTHA MASON.

DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTION SEQUEL.

Last month Mr. George Foster, a member of the Flaxton Rural District Council, was fined £10 at the East Bulmer Petty Sessions held at York, for offences alleged to have been committed under the Municipal Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Acts, 1884 and 1911.

Briefly, the facts are these: the defendant was successful in the election contest for the Flaxton Council. He was summoned on six informations taken out by the defeated candidate, Mr. Wallace Hargreaves, of Strensall, alleging that the defendant during a municipal election for the purpose of affecting the return of a candidate had published a false statement of fact in regard to the personal character of the candidate. Further, the defendant was charged with having made and published a false statement in relation to the conduct of the candidate.

Mr. Stewart, who appeared for the prosecution, explained the section of the Act under which the information had been laid. The Bench had to consider, he said, whether Mr. Foster had contravened this section. This did not mean that Mr. Foster was in any sense of the word a criminal, but that if he did or said something which was calculated to affect the result of the election, he was guilty of an illegal act under the Section of the Act.

Evidence having been given, the Chairman of the Justices, after consultation, said they were of opinion that the words were against the Act and should not have been used, and the defendant would be fined £10 and costs.

We draw attention to this case for two reasons:—

(1) It is very easy for candidates, unless they are well advised, to contravene even quite innocently, the sections, which are many and complicated, of the Corrupt Practices Acts, or for one or other of their workers to do so without the knowledge of the candidate who nevertheless will be held responsible.

(2) The provisions of the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act, 1895, in regard to Parliamentary candidates are pretty well known. What is not so well known is that the Acts of 1884 and 1911 contain similar provisions relative to municipal elections.

DOG RACING BILL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

On 11th May Mr. John Buchan's Bill, which gives power to local authorities to control and regulate dog racing tracks, passed its second reading by a majority of 222 to 18 after a full discussion lasting for five hours, and was committed to a Standing Committee.

Mr. Buchan repeated the statement he made in introducing the Bill, that the measure is a single measure with a single purpose, viz. the necessity of giving control to local authorities in a matter which vitally affects the well-being of a locality. Apart from the resolutions of teachers and schools, philanthropic and religious bodies which have run into thousands, "I myself," said Mr. Buchan, "have received no less than 123 memorials in favour of the Bill from local authorities of different kinds." The measure, he continued, was a logical carrying out of the democratic principles under which we live. The sport is extending far and wide, new vested interests are being created which will, unless controlled, increase. The debate was wound up by the Home Secretary, who speaking from a purely personal standpoint, could see no reason why local authorities should not have powers given to them to decide the question. He was of the opinion that if the Bill passed second reading, certain amendments would have to be made in Committee. This had already been accepted by Mr. Buchan.

One point of importance to be noted in connection with this Bill is the effect upon Parliament and Governments of the pressure of public opinion.

MRS. RUNCIMAN'S MAIDEN SPEECH.

On 15th May Mr. Neville Chamberlain, presented a review to the House of the work of his department (Ministry of Health) during the past year. The statement should be read and carefully considered by all local authorities, dealing as it does with the Housing and Health of the Nation. At the moment we ask the consideration of our readers to one section only of the statement, viz. the section devoted to the Slum Problem. "The central feature of the situation, the worst and most urgent problem in connection with the slums," said Mr. Chamberlain, "is the overcrowding of the people." Since the end of the war

(Continued at foot of next column.)

NOTES FROM IRELAND.

"SYNODSMEN."

The Church of Ireland, which is a self-governed community, independent of State control, held its annual Synod recently. A proposal of special interest to women was introduced, to amend the Constitution of the Church of Ireland so as to make it possible for women to act as "Synodsmen". The arguments took the line that "it was a great injustice that such a large number of Church members and such faithful and self-sacrificing servants, should be denied any direct voice in the legislation of the Church. An appeal was made to the Synod "not to keep their Church on a level with the lower civilizations, where women were regarded as inferior creatures". According to another speaker, the women who desired to enter the Diocesan and General Synods wanted to do so because of their eagerness to serve the cause of their Church. "Behind the scenes when men were attending to their business and amusements women were doing the spade work of the Church." The opposition was based on the Constitutional principle that the Bill should go in the first instance before the Diocesan Synods. A faint suspicion of "anti" feeling was voiced by one speaker who referred to the experience "on the whole a happy one", of admitting women to some of the Church Councils. Another cleric thought "the door should not be thrown widely open lest women replace men as Synod members." Our old friend "the thin end" also showed dimly in the hint that the people behind the Bill wanted not only admission to the Synod on equal terms, but that the priesthood should be open to them also. Finally the Bill was referred back to the Standing Committee of the General Synod and will be brought up again at the General Synod next year.

THE POSITION OF THE UNMARRIED MOTHER.

Women's organizations have for years worked for the establishment in the Irish Free State of the system of Affiliation Orders. This year an important resolution was carried in the General Synod, throwing the whole weight of that body on the side of the women's demand for Affiliation Orders, raising the age of consent to eighteen, if not nineteen, and abolishing the plea of reasonable belief as to age in cases of assault, and that in the trial of such cases women should be included in the jury. These points were also included in the Report of the Government's Poor Law Commission. The first and third of these points were secured in Northern Ireland under pressure from the Belfast Council of Women in 1924. As the Free State Government has done all in its power to exclude women from juries, the final point is of interest. A member of the Government recently raised the point in Dail Eireann as to the establishment of Affiliation Orders, and received the familiar reply that the measure had been drafted but time so far had not rendered its introduction possible. Governments are remarkably alike whether in Saor Stat Eireann or elsewhere.

EQUAL FRANCHISE IN NORTHERN IRELAND.

At last the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland has definitely fixed the time for introduction of Equal Franchise into the Northern Parliament. In reply to a question from Mr. Devlin, he stated, a measure on similar lines to that carried in the Imperial Parliament would be brought before the Northern Parliament as the first measure in the Autumn Session.

DORA MELLONE.

(Continued from previous column.)

local authorities had submitted 118 schemes of slum clearance, 111 of which had been confirmed, and they proposed to deal with the demolition of about 1,400 houses, but this has only touched the fringe of the question. The progress of clearance had been slow, for a variety of reasons in which we have not space to enter at the moment.

It was in connection with the problem of the slums that Mrs. Runciman, the newly elected Member for St. Ives, made her "maiden speech", a speech described by Sir Kingsley Wood in winding up the debate on behalf of the Government as "distinguished by knowledge, human sympathy and breadth of view."

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Telephone: Victoria 6188.

EQUAL FRANCHISE BILL.

As soon as it was known when this Bill would be discussed in the House of Lords, a letter, of which a copy is printed elsewhere, was sent to each member of that House giving some of the main reasons why they should not raise any opposition to the Bill as it stands. The figures given and quotations made from speeches of leading members of the Government, show the impracticability either of amending the Bill so that the voting age for both sexes should be 25, or of rejecting it altogether. As well as sending out this letter, the Union has been able to supply more detailed arguments in favour of Equal Franchise to a few of the members of the Upper Chamber who are preparing to speak in favour of the Bill.

OXFORD.—4th to 11th September, 1928.

A new leaflet giving particulars of the Summer School at St. Hilda's College, Oxford, is now ready, and we shall be very glad to send copies to all who are interested. The leaflet, as well as giving a summary of the courses, a list of the lecturers and a registration form, also contains a provisional programme for the week. As the number of places will be limited, we urge all those who wish to attend the school to make early application.

N.C.W. ANNUAL MEETING.

The Annual Meeting of the N.C.W. will be held at York from 15th to 19th October. The N.U.S.E.C. is entitled to appoint 10 delegates. We shall be glad to receive nominations for representatives at this Conference. If the number of nominations exceeds 10, a postal ballot will be taken.

NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

CARDIFF W.C.A.

The Annual Meeting of the Cardiff W.C.A. was held at the West Grove Unitarian Church Schoolroom on 30th April. The meeting, which was well attended, was presided over by the Lady Mayoress. The Annual Report was presented by Miss M. M. Sanders, and the Financial Report by Lady Davis, the hon. treasurer. Miss Collins gave a very interesting account of the recent Annual Council Meeting of the N.U.S.E.C.; Miss E. M. Barke gave an indication of the Association's future work and urged the desirability of attracting more of the "about-to-be" enfranchised women as members. The business part of the meeting was followed by a delightful musical programme and a very cleverly performed one-act play.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH.

MADAM,—I write as an uncompromising Anglo-Catholic and as one who looks for the day when women, no less than men, shall be admitted to the Sacrament of Holy Order, i.e. to the fullness of the Sacred Ministry of the Catholic Apostolic Church.

It is hard therefore to keep one's temper and speak with any degree of restraint in face of such a letter as that which comes from the pen of Mrs. Margery Smith. In her criticism of Canon Raven's book and your review thereon she takes it upon herself to interpret your words, "the opposition, whose strength is an unutterable obscurantism" as applicable to "Anglo-Catholic women" and then proceeds to give a "short statement" of what she imagines to be the corporate belief of the total number of such women upon what is, admittedly, a controversial question. Moreover, in the giving of it she displays a lamentable ignorance of Catholic theology, an ignorance with which most Catholics, whatever their views on the Ministry of Women, will not care to be associated.

Her surmise is, in the first place, unfair to you. There are plenty of people who think, for want of knowing better, that Catholicism is merely another name for Obscurantism, but your review suggests nothing of the kind. If Mrs. Smith wishes to call herself an Obscurantist by all means let her do so, but let her refrain from applying the term, *en bloc*, to all Catholics. And if she likes to state that she is not only an Anglo-Catholic Obscurantist but an opponent of the Ministry of Women, by all means let her do so. But let her speak for herself. There is one thing and one thing only, which could possibly justify her speaking for the whole body of Anglo-Catholic women, and that is if the matter under discussion were (in either direction) "of Faith". There are many things which come under this heading, and for which any Catholic may well speak for the whole company of the Faithful, but the Ministry of Women is not yet (whatever the future may bring forth) one of these things. It happens, however, that there is a steadily growing number of Catholics to whom the principle of the admission of women to the Priesthood is an intense personal conviction, and this conviction is born of what seems to them to be the logical outcome of something which is "of Faith", namely a right belief in the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. Space forbids any enlargement,

but my concern at the moment is to point out how grossly unfair it is to assume (1) that all Catholics are Obscurantists, (2) that all Catholics are opponents of the Ministry of Women.

I have no desire, however, to make vague statements without backing them up. I would remind Mrs. Smith, then, that the *Church Times* (which she doubtless reads) some few years ago stated "surprise" at the large number of letters received from Anglo-Catholic women in support of the principle of the admission of women to the Sacrament of Holy Order. And I would also inform her that the society known as the League of the Church Militant to which Canon Raven refers in his Preface, although open to all baptized persons in communion with the Anglican Branch of the Catholic Church, contains a number of people (men and women) who claim the title "Anglo-Catholic" in the more specialized sense. This I know because I myself am a member of this Society and I have there come into personal contact with such people.

For the rest Mrs. Smith makes some extraordinary statements. That part of her letter which deals with the nature of the Church is, in its main contentions, true, although most Catholics would doubtless have preferred to see such ideas set forth in traditional rather than "flowery" language. But the notion of the "strikingly new feature" of the male priesthood of the early Christian Church is strange indeed! Christianity was born of Judaism and however many were the priestesses attendant upon the gods and goddesses of Paganism it is certain that the Jewish priesthood was exclusively male, and it is nothing short of amazing that "Biblical history" should be mentioned in support of the opposite idea.

As to the "matter" of the various Sacraments since when has "male sex" been the "matter" in Holy Order? That which corresponds to water in Baptism and Bread and Wine in the Sacrament of the Altar, is, in Ordination, the Laying On, with specific intention, of Episcopal hands, and that which receives the grace and "character" of the Sacrament is not a male (or female) body but a baptized soul. Valid Ordination has always depended, at bottom, upon valid Baptism, and if men and women receive an identical "character" there (as the Church teaches) it is hard to see how the Ordination of validly baptized women can cause any break in that Apostolic Order which is indeed of the "esse" of the Church, or be a menace to the Reunion all Catholics so fervently desire.

AVIES M. PLATT.

The Corner House, Roberts Street,
Wellingborough.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN FELLOWSHIPS.

MADAM,—After seeing your announcement on 11th May of the award of our first International Fellowship, I think it may interest your readers to know that there were 17 picked candidates from 11 countries, and that although Dr. Du Bois, the Swiss biologist, was finally chosen, a clever English mathematician was declared *Proxima Accessit*. Our International Fellowship Fund is still lamentably small for the needs of women researchers, and we are making a great effort to increase Great Britain's contribution to it by holding a sale of Christmas gifts at the Central Hall, Westminster, in November. Any gifts for the sale will be thankfully received by Mrs. Smedley Maclean (Chairman), at 2 Elm Park Gardens, S.W. 10, and we shall be grateful if you will allow us to advertise it further in your columns later on.

ALYS RUSSELL.

11 St. Leonard's Terrace, S.W. 3.

WOMEN AS BARMAIDS.

MADAM,—I have been interested in reading the correspondence which has appeared under this heading. Miss Perkins deplors the employment of barmaids for two reasons: (1) the prevalence of jealousy and prejudice among those employed; (2) that such employment is open to exploitation.

I would suggest that there are many occupations where jealousy and prejudice prevail, perhaps few without, the employee is indeed fortunate if she has not to contend with rivalry. With regard to exploitation of women by men, this is demoralizing for both sexes; my point is that in view of the strong tendency to sensuality where intoxicating liquor is concerned it is most desirable from our point of view that women should be served by women and men by men; if this involves loss of trade to the publican, well, that is another matter. Why curtail the liberty of the seller only? Will women be entirely free from exploitation when being served by barmen?

I appreciate the practical difficulties involved as referred to by Mrs. L. Gilchrist Thompson, but I am not so ready to agree that they are impossible of solution; the achievement of the apparently impossible is a very fascinating experience. As another writer suggests, can we not reform the public houses, not the barmaids?

NEW READER.

[We publish next week an article by Lady Balfour of Burleigh on this subject.—Ed.]

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