

# THE WOMAN'S LEADER

## AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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### CONTENTS.

	PAGE
OURSELVES . . . . .	227
NOTES FROM WESTMINSTER. By Cross Bench . . . . .	227
THE TWELFTH ASSEMBLY. By Kathleen E. Innes . . . . .	228
REVIEWS :—	
The family Tested. By Lady Pentland . . . . .	229
A Notable Trial. By M. I. C. . . . .	230
WISE SPENDING AND SANE ECONOMY By Bertha Mason . . . . .	230

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

#### The Election.

It is difficult, from a national as distinct from a party-political point of view, to conceive of any time less propitious than the present for a General Election. In the world at large, with the suspension of the gold standard, the value of the pound sterling has no other anchor than a precarious balance of trade and the confidence of ill-informed foreign newspaper readers in the British Government's ability and will to balance its budget. That confidence is unlikely to be fortified by the hurly-burly of an election campaign. At home, the very real sufferings of close on three million unemployed and the anxieties of many more than three million insured workers who sit under the shadow of potential unemployment, are likely to introduce an element of evaporation into the campaign on a scale never before known in this country. Such campaigning may well develop on class-war lines. Indeed, there are those who intend that it shall. Such risks seem a high price for the Conservative Party to pay for the strong probability of a popular mandate for a general tariff.

#### The British Pound.

The fact that the British pound is no longer linked to gold,—but has its value determined partly by the relative demand for pounds by foreign traders, and partly by the number of pound notes in existence or likely to be printed,—is of overwhelming importance to every housewife in view of the effect it is likely to have on prices. Inasmuch as it is now worth only 15s. in the other countries with which we trade, it is clear that the price of imports will rise and that of exports will fall. The extent to which, however, prices will rise to the consumer in this country cannot as yet be foreseen, though the fact that retail prices are, on an average, 45 per cent above wholesale prices gives a big margin for the wholesale prices to rise without affecting the retail. The extent to which these anticipated changes will take place depends also on another unknown quantity, viz. the number of other countries which are likely to follow our lead. At the time of writing, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, New Zealand and Australia, have all gone off the pound. Should this list eventually be extended to include our larger competitors the advantages hoped for from a devaluated currency will, of course, inevitably disappear. In the meantime we can only hope that conditions will soon make

it possible for a stabilized currency to be once more established, which will, it is universally admitted, involve a lower value for the pound than the pre-war parity to which it returned in 1925

#### The Status of Indian Women.

The Round Table Conference is once more in session and already a difference of opinion has disclosed itself between the women delegates. Mrs. Subbarayan made an admirable speech at the Federal Structure Committee, declaring her continued belief in the necessity for some reservation of seats for women in elective bodies under the new constitution. But she had to admit that the Indian women's societies which had first endorsed this principle have now swung round and are demanding adult suffrage and no reservation of seats for women. Their first thoughts on this issue were, we believe, more rooted in practical reality than their second. We note that Mr. Gandhi, while declaring his intention of boycotting any Legislature which failed to include women and his belief that Congress would do the same, replied to Mrs. Subbarayan's question as to what would happen if no women were elected: "Then they will have to enjoy the honour of being elected by the elected Legislature." A very sensible answer and we hope that the Mahatma will stick to it. But he has to reckon with the powerful eloquence of Mrs. Naidu, who has ranged herself on the other side. Mrs. Naidu, we understand, is a real poetess, and she is certainly a fine orator. But she has never identified herself closely with the social reforms which make special safeguards for women necessary. If her confidence in the willingness of her fellow countrymen to elect women proves misplaced, not she nor her emancipated sisters will pay the price but the child wives and the widows and the "dumb millions" of India's women. Mr. Gandhi seldom speaks without reference to the "dumb millions" of peasants. We wish we saw signs that the women's side of the problem occupied as great a place in his thoughts.

#### Women and the Front Bench.

Miss Bondfield's resignation leaves us for the first time since 1925 with no woman in the Government. First the Duchess of Atholl under the last Government, then Miss Bondfield and Miss Lawrence took their places on the Treasury Front Bench. The Opposition alone can now boast of a woman on its Front Bench in the person of Mrs. Mary Hamilton, who attained this position as the only woman returned to the Executive of the Parliamentary Labour Party. It was a tribute to her fine mind and to her debating ability that Mrs. Hamilton was entrusted with the important task of summing up on behalf of her party the case against the Economies Bill.

#### Miss Bondfield.

All our readers, irrespective of party, who followed with admiration Miss Bondfield's storm-tossed navigation of the Ministry of Labour, will now learn with regret that she has fallen ill of a kind of fatigue poisoning and has had to abandon work for a time. We understand, however, that she is in the firm hands of Dr. Jane Walker, and that a month or so of rest and treatment should restore her to health and activity. Meanwhile there is this much comfort in the situation: It is of course regrettable that Miss Bondfield should be ill at all. Nevertheless, if she has to be ill there is a lot to be said for doing it now. She has, as it were, remained on the bridge until the end of her watch, and her temporary withdrawal coincides with a phase of party political muddle and recrimination that must be gall and wormwood to her. We hope that she will re-emerge into a clearer atmosphere.

'Keep fit on  
COCOA'

**BOURNVILLE**  
SEE THE "Cadbury" ON EVERY PIECE  
OF CHOCOLATE

Write  
Cadbury, Bournville  
about Gift Scheme

#### Family Allowances and the Teachers.

During the agitation carried on by the Teachers' Organizations against the proposed cuts in their salaries, public attention was drawn to the particularly unhappy position of the teacher with dependents. The married man especially, whose family of dependent children had placed on him commitments in the form of a comparatively large house and school bills, was about to suffer not only the same cut in salary as his unmarried colleague, but also a much larger increase in his income tax owing to a greater reduction in tax rebates. Surely this is a time above all others for the introduction of some form of Family Allowances in the teaching profession. The expense would not be very considerable in view of the fact that the proportion of teachers with children to support is comparatively small. So large indeed are the numbers of women teachers, and of men teachers without children, that there is on the average only one child to every five teachers. It has been estimated that an allowance of £14 for each child could be defrayed out of a sum equal to 1 per cent of the present salaries bill. It is to be hoped that when the Burnham Committees ultimately get to work, they will give the proposals for children's allowances in the teaching profession their very serious consideration. Incidentally the introduction of children's allowances would remove the most widely used arguments against equal pay.

#### The Married Woman Ramp.

We have become familiar, of late, with the suggestion of a "banker's ramp", and suspecting that here might be a suitable term to apply to the combined agitation carried on by trade unionists, employers, newspapers, hearsay-distributors and clubmen against unemployed married women, we took the precaution of looking it up in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Our suspicion was correct. It is clearly the word we want, for it means "stand on hind legs with fore-paws in air, assume or be in threatening posture; storm, rage, rush about . . .", and that is the kind of gesture which the afore-mentioned categories have for some time past been displaying to the married women in industry. But on reading further we learn that there is a further meaning to this pregnant word. It also means "to descend to different level"—as the bankers presumably have done with the pound sterling. In this sense it is high time that there was a married woman ramp, for the minutes of evidence which the Royal Commission on Unemployment have recently published, comprising eight reports on the subsequent history of persons with disallowed unemployment benefit claims, brings the whole question into much saner proportions. In the first place, the fact that women are in the majority among disallowed claimants though they constitute a minority on the unemployment register suggests that they are being drastically dealt with by existing machinery even without the additional big stick which special regulations under the Anomalies Act will presently put into the hands of the Minister for Labour. In the second place, though five out of the eight reports from sample industrial centres declare that disallowed married women were able to live on their husbands' resources, there is no general indictment of frivolous claims. Meanwhile in Manchester, where the century-long tradition of married women's work prevails, it is shown by an analysis of specific cases that there is no justification for the accusation that married women are exploiting the insurance fund. It is therefore high time that public mistrust of industrial married women should "descend to lower level"—or in other words: "ramp."

#### Public Assistance and the Unemployed.

Meanwhile another conclusion emerges with quite amazing emphasis from the batch of evidence quoted above: the deep reluctance of unemployed persons whose benefit is disallowed to seek help from the Public Assistance Authorities. Of the 2,354 cases of disallowed claimants examined, only 17 per cent sought any form of Public Assistance after disallowance; 33 per cent managed to find work. The rest pegged along somehow with the precarious and sometimes heroic help of relatives, but often (as far as the married men with families were concerned) under conditions of great hardship. From which it would appear that in at least eight great centres of industrial population, there is a deep-rooted and widespread differentiation in the public mind between insurance benefits, to which a man or woman is fairly entitled, and public assistance, which an independent-minded citizen will seek only under pressure of dire distress—and not always even then! One cannot help being gratified by the fact that such a feeling should have survived so many years of depression and so much indiscriminate talk of doles. Yet it has certain disquieting implications in view of the present "economy" proposal to entrust the administration of

transitional benefits to the Public Assistance Authorities. It may be that many proud citizens—and their children—will go hungry under the new régime. It may be, on the other hand, that the old prejudice will disappear and large sections of the population become perfectly accustomed to the receipt of Public Assistance, and fully inured to the ministrations of that ill-omened authority.

#### An Appeal for the Chinese Flood Area.

We have never appealed in vain in these pages, and we believe that many readers are not too wholly absorbed with their own difficulties to welcome an opportunity of giving some practical expression of their deep sympathy with the homeless and destitute victims of the Chinese floods. The disaster is on such a stupendous scale that from utter helplessness we have shunned the heartrending reports which have reached the Press from reliable Chinese correspondents. But once again the Society of Friends has taken the initiative and opened a Relief Fund. It is intended that money raised in this country will be used if possible through the League of Nations in bringing surplus wheat and other commodities from other countries to the stricken areas. The British Government has lent aeroplanes for help in transporting supplies, and other countries, even including Japan in face of its present position in Manchuria, are doing what they can. We hope the Friends' appeal will meet with a speedy response. In making this appeal we have not forgotten the Lord Mayor's appeal for the survivors of the British Honduras hurricane on 10th September. One of the fundamental duties of the public-spirited citizen to-day is to keep up so far as is in his or her power subscriptions to voluntary enterprises that are playing an important part in the community. But if our motto is "Buy British" it must not also be "Give British". While our first duty is at home we cannot close our eyes to the agony of our fellow creatures overseas.

#### International Agreements.

Although, as is recorded in another column, the Assembly of the League of Nations took but few important decisions this year, and has postponed the discussions on the more interesting points on its agenda, it would appear that our common need has already brought together nations for consultation and mutual aid in a way that nothing else could have done. At long last there is every reason to hope that both America and France will agree to those discussions on the financial situation which have so long been ardently desired in this country, and without which no satisfactory solution of the currency problem can be obtained. M. Laval's and M. Briand's journey to Berlin, and the projected visit of M. Laval to America offer further grounds for hope. Although we regret the failure of Signor Grandi's proposal for a temporary armaments truce, it is a very real comfort to know that the Disarmament Conference itself is still to be held next February.<sup>1</sup> A discordant note it is true, has been struck by the fight between China and Japan in Manchuria, but even this we feel would have flared into a bigger blaze had there been no machinery for the settlement of international disputes.

#### In Honour of Miss E. R. Conway.

At a gathering of teachers held in Manchester in her honour Miss Conway was presented with her portrait by the President of the Lancashire County Teachers Association, on behalf of 18,000 of her colleagues throughout the country. Miss Conway, who in addition to a successful career as a teacher, has been member of the executive of the National Union of Teachers for twenty-one years, is now about to retire. She has served on almost every important body on which teachers have been represented for many years, and has found time for much other public work, including that of Justice of the Peace in Liverpool. Almost every good cause finds her representing the goodwill of the teachers and no one has done more to bring about harmony between teachers and education committees. Though she has retired from the Executive Committee, we are confident that her wide influence will continue to be felt in many spheres of usefulness.

#### Memorial to Dame Millicent Fawcett.

The plans for the memorial in Westminster Abbey, which we referred to in August, are advancing. The Chapel of the Holy Cross, in which Henry Fawcett's memorial stands, is in process of being made more accessible and open. This chapel is near the grave of the Unknown Warrior, and is a centre of great interest in the Abbey. Full particulars of the proposals of the Joint Memorial Committee will be given later, when the actual designs are completed.

<sup>1</sup> Later news states that a resolution was adopted, recommending a one year armament truce.

#### OURSELVES.

At a time of International and National emergency we are unwilling to spend much space on our own intimate affairs, but we feel that we owe our readers and generous supporters some explanation of the change in the fortunes of this paper which will take effect at the end of this month. This change, however, unlike the shocks and surprises to which we are becoming accustomed nowadays, is in the line of natural and hopeful development and not entirely unexpected.

Perhaps many of our older readers have hardly realized that during the last year THE WOMAN'S LEADER has been attempting to perform a dual rôle with greater or less success. It has combined its regular weekly issues on the accustomed lines, adapted once a month to meet the needs of a new body of subscribers, the members of the Townswomen's Guilds which are rapidly spreading throughout the country. The difficulty of utilizing one of the ordinary issues of a weekly paper as the monthly organ of a new movement is obvious. The claims of the two sets of subscribers, now almost equal in numbers, were not always easily reconcilable, the monthly readers requiring explanations of events familiar to those who saw the paper every Friday, besides having special interests of their own. The possibility of a monthly issue had often been canvassed and attempted experimentally this summer, but the Directors and Editors shrank from adopting it owing to their desire to keep the circles they reached in the closest and freshest touch with the political development of the woman's movement. Financial stringency, however, and changing circumstances have at length brought us, though with reluctance, to take the plunge. The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, which is by far the largest shareholder in the Common Cause Publishing Company, Limited, has agreed to take over the control of the paper which in future will appear only on the first Friday of

every month.<sup>1</sup> With the removal of the overhead charges of a separate concern and by means of other "cuts" the National Union hopes to carry on without any further appeal to our generous guarantors for financial assistance, and we are confident that all readers, new and old, monthly and weekly, will give this courageous venture the cheering support that has never failed it in the past.

Before we turn to the future, we may permit ourselves one backward glance. Our paper has a history of which we may justifiably be proud extending over nearly a quarter of a century. Among its Editors have been women whose names have become known to a far wider public than our own. Its first Editor was Mrs. Swanwick, C.H.; its next Dr. Maude Royden, then Mrs. Ida O'Malley, and Mrs. Oliver Strachey. Until a short time before her death Dame Millicent Fawcett was Chairman of its Board of Directors. Among its regular contributors have been men and women of strong individuality and undisputed authority. But such success as the paper has had has been due less to any of these individuals, much as it has owed them, than to the distinct personality which it has acquired from the singleness of purpose which has inspired its pages. The events it has recorded, the controversies in which it has taken part, the theories it has discussed have all been brought into relation to the Common Cause, the achievement of "a real equality of liberties, status, and opportunities between men and women". To this in later years when the vote was secured has been added "the education of women as citizens to make their best contribution towards the common good". These are the twin objects of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, and as the organ of the Union, the paper will continue to encourage independent thinking and constructive action among ever widening circles of influence.

#### NOTES FROM WESTMINSTER.

Since these notes were last written, we have had three weeks of Parliamentary life which have seemed like so many months, so tightly packed have they been with political happenings which have been but the repercussions of happenings in the world of finance, industry and commerce.

The benches of the House have been more crowded than I have ever yet known them. Its lobbies have also been crowded, curious visitors anxious to obtain admission to the galleries being mingled with cohorts of teachers and other people affected by the proposed economy cuts seeking interviews with their Parliamentary representatives. I doubt whether those visitors who reached the galleries can have been greatly reassured by what they heard there. Some may have chanced upon serious and informative speeches from experts on financial problems or on the living conditions of those whose lives are in the clutch of these mysterious forces. There are some of these speakers who have the art of so impressing either their personality or the weight of their message upon the House that faction is silenced and even the most frivolous Members listen with strained and awed attention. But more often this is not so, both when the speaker of the moment has something to say worth hearing and when he has not. The atmosphere then becomes more worthy of a prize-fight or a football match than of the Mother of Parliaments during a period of grave crisis. Speakers are interrupted by hoots of derision answered by roars of cheering, by guffaws of silly laughter and by inane and irrelevant interjections. A favourite device, especially on the Opposition side, is to raise perpetual points of order on points which the veriest Parliamentary novice must know to be no points of order at all, but merely excuses for getting in some debating point. Another device, practised especially when a Minister is speaking, is to fire in incessant questions, often on points which the speaker has already dealt with or is clearly about to deal with. According to the rules of the House, the Speaker or Chairman of Committee must listen to a point of order and the speaker who holds the floor must sit down if such a point is raised, but only does so by courtesy while a question is addressed to him. Hence the former species of obstruction finds special favour with the more irresponsible and illiterate type of Member, whether carried away by his emotions or merely anxious to obtrude himself, regardless of the effect upon his own reputation for fair play or intelligence. It must be admitted that the Opposition is behaving worst in these respects. But Oppositions do generally behave worst, on the much-abused theory that it is the business of an Opposition to obstruct.

Perhaps the chief real difference between the two sides is that which includes the greater number of conventionally educated Members shows, when in opposition, the greater skill in disguising its obstruction beneath the forms of courtesy and reason.

Beneath all this show of folly and passion there is no doubt a profound perplexity and uneasiness. Members are concerned about their party loyalties, their separation from trusted leaders, or their association with distrusted leaders of other parties with whom they disgustedly find themselves in the same lobby. They are concerned too about their electoral prospects and the dismal necessity which faces many of them of running an expensive campaign on an overdraft from their banks. But beneath all these personal issues, there is perplexity and concern for the national issues. No one, or scarcely anyone, is half so sure that his own side is right as he professes to be. The desire for "more light" was pathetically shown by the densely packed attendances in Committee Room 14 on the two successive days when two leading economists of widely divergent views, Mr. Henry Clay and Mr. Maynard Keynes, accepted the invitation of a few Members to expound the economic situation as they saw it and to answer questions thereon. Not even Mr. Gandhi, when he addressed a similar meeting the following week, attracted so big a crowd. I doubt whether either of these experienced teachers ever addressed so motley an audience, comprising as it did several ex-Chancellors as well as many Members whose economic knowledge was about on the level, as I heard one expert remark, with a good W.E.A. class. Whether "more light" was the result of these gatherings, it would be hard to say. The rival physicians differed not greatly in their diagnosis of the nation's economic sickness, but utterly in their prescriptions for its treatment. For such a crisis as the present, neither a Parliament elected by universal suffrage nor yet the electorate itself seems a fitting body to cope. But as it is certain that no one has time for constitution mongering at present, we must make use of the blundering old machine as we find it and hope that the horse sense of the British people and its motley crew of leaders will somehow pull us through.

Of one thing we are all thoroughly sick, and that is the interchange of "backchat" between the two Front Benches as to the history of the negotiations which preceded the break-up of the last Government. It was inevitable and legitimate that the present Government should wish to rub in the fact that the

<sup>1</sup> Subject to confirmation at a meeting of Shareholders on 29th October.

Opposition leaders of to-day had given a reluctant consent to most of the "cuts" which they are now denouncing, and that the late Ministers should be equally anxious to stress that their consent was only "provisional". But all the nails in that controversy were driven home during the first few debates and the incessant hammering on them which still continues, though it has begun to diminish, has got on everyone's nerves. We are concerned with the present and the future, not with the past, and the too obvious obsession of the leaders with the engrossing subject of their own political reputation does but defeat its own end.

Before these words are in print, the fateful question of whether an immediate general election is to be or not to be will probably have been decided. This may be the last time that "Notes from Westminster" will appear over the signature of Cross Bench, and it is also, I understand, the last issue of this paper under its present Directors. But the maxim "Le roi est mort, vive le roi" is true of Parliaments. May it also be true of THE WOMAN'S LEADER, for it is certain the objects which that paper was founded to establish are not yet completely assured, and they will need faithful guardians during the dark and difficult years that lie ahead.

CROSS BENCH.

## THE TWELFTH ASSEMBLY.

By KATHLEEN E. INNES.

The work of the Assembly always falls into two main divisions. The first days are occupied with discussion, which though it bears on the Report of the year's work, does so in a very general way. This discussion provides opportunity for important pronouncements of policy by different Governments and for this reason it is of great importance. The second division comprises the detailed work of the six Commissions (or Committees), into which the Assembly splits up after the first week or so, and the general discussion on the results of that work at the close. In the Commissions the Governments check the work done in the past year; discuss it, together with any resolutions sent to them by the Assembly; and plan the work for the coming year.

The first measure of interest this year was the invitation to Mexico to join the League. This was accepted at once by cable. Next, a resolution of sympathy with China in her terrible flood disaster was put forward by Lord Cecil on behalf of the British Government and cordially supported. If China asks for expert League help in her recovery it is assured, and a direct result of the resolution was a gift by Denmark of medical supplies.

The chief subjects of the opening discussion were, of course, economic problems and disarmament. Of the great speeches, mainly on these subjects, comes first and foremost Lord Cecil's. Outspoken, tactful, and with a moving appeal for Franco-German rapprochement, it was the greatest speech of the Assembly.

Signor Grandi, of Italy, was specially interesting because Italy came out definitely for security through disarmament; for an armaments truce till February, 1932; and for no postponement of the Disarmament Conference. M. Briand later on also declared against postponement. Dr. Curtius, Foreign Minister of Germany, delivered a speech significant for its emphasis on the imminent danger of disaster if the Disarmament Conference should not achieve drastic measures of reduction.

By the end of the general debate two important conclusions stood out. There will be no postponement of the Disarmament Conference; and there is a growing belief among Governments that while armaments cannot bring security, disarmament is really an essential factor in establishing it. While, as M. Briand showed, France has not come round to that view of security, it is very important that so many should be veering towards it.

A feature of interest is always the part played by women in the delegations. Twelve countries this year sent women substitute delegates. Among these, women came from Spain, Poland and Czecho-Slovakia for the first time. Democratic, Republican Spain was proud to have among its representatives the woman member of the Cortes, Mlle Campoamor—fresh and able. From the new Spain came too an interesting resolution, part of which urged the Assembly to request the Council, in the furtherance of peace, to study the "means of associating feminine action and feminine feeling with the work of the League of Nations by an effective and direct collaboration". The discussion on this in Committee led to no definite conclusions, but, again, the tendency is interesting.

A delegate, new to the Assembly, though her country has repeatedly included a woman in its delegation, was Mrs. Plumtre

of Canada. She is a member of the Board of Education in Toronto, and a prominent worker among women's organizations. A roll of three attachées, five expert advisors, among them Mme Cantacuzene, Vice-President of the International Council of Women from Roumania; six Secretaries, all with British delegations, and one interpreter with the Italians, completed the list of women taking part. The Fifth Commission, which dealt with the Opium Traffic, penal reform, traffic in women and children, and child welfare, as usual claimed most of the women. Mlle Hesselgren, from Sweden, was elected Vice-Chairman, and acted as Chairman at one of the first sessions. Dame Edith Lyttelton, once more with the British Delegation, was on the Fifth Committee, and took special interest on the discussion on the opium traffic.

Among the multifarious activities passed in review at Geneva I can select for comment a few only. Last year a proposal for the creation of a permanent office to deal with evidence and information on Slavery, was made by the British delegation but was not accepted. Some special provision is needed because advance in the abolition of Slavery is too slow, and information too often reluctantly given, even by those nations which are pledged to abolish it as signatories of the Slavery Convention of 1926. That five million people still live in slavery is a blot on our boasted progress. The need for economy made it inadvisable to press this year for a special Bureau to be constituted, but a special temporary Committee of experts was proposed by the British Delegation and was agreed to.

Another piece of work, affecting the happiness and health of thousands, is the attempt to put an end to the illicit traffic in opium and other drugs. This year great steps forward have, it is hoped, been taken in the agreement to limit manufacture to legitimate needs, and in the better collaboration of Turkey, a notable centre of manufacture and illicit traffic.

A more limited field of work, but one of wide humanitarian appeal is that of penal reform. After last year's Assembly the model rules of the International Prison Commission were sent round to Governments for their comments. This year the hope was the formation of a special Committee to ensure that the question should continue to receive attention. No general agreement was reached on this point, but the clear recognition of the work as a proper matter for League co-operation is satisfactory, and its place on the agenda is assured.

The development of Juvenile Courts was one of the important reforms which received frequent mention.

Investigations concerning the traffic in women and children in the Far East are about half completed, and any new developments must await their conclusion.

The question of the Nationality of Married Women has been on the agenda of the first (Legal) Committee. The Consultative Committee of representatives of Women's Organizations, set up by invitation of the League of Nations, presented a report opposing the conclusions of the Hague Convention on the grounds that it is based on the recognition of inequalities between men and women, and is in many cases behind actual practice. They urged on the Assembly the calling of another Conference to reconsider its clauses. While this was not agreed to as a definite proposal, Dame Edith Lyttelton, on behalf of the British Delegation, put forward a resolution designed to secure the continuance of inquiries "which are of interest to millions of women", and it was finally agreed that the Consultative Committee's report was to be included among the various documents which are to go for comment to all Governments. The matter will therefore be reconsidered at the 1932 Assembly.

The Health Committee has continued its admirable labours. Subjects reported upon to the Second Committee included maternal and infant welfare; the health of children at school; treatment of tuberculosis; malaria in Europe and the East; leprosy; and rural hygiene through a special conference. Help and advice are continually given to Governments and both China and Greece have profited greatly by assistance over organization of health services during the last year.

Progress in disarmament may be helped forward a little by the Convention to strengthen the means of Preventing War, thrashed out in the Third Commission. This will give the Council certain powers of action in case fighting breaks out. But the main issue awaits the Conference next year.

As regards the Committee of Inquiry for European Union, while the time is not felt to be ripe for attempting to plan the scheme as a whole, it is recognized that useful work has been done, in particular to help agriculture by arrangements for loans, and to get producers and buyers into closer relations, and the Committee is to be continued. More important at the moment

is the latest proposal, by Sir Arthur Salter, for a general Conference on the world economic situation. If this and the Disarmament Truce Conference lead to positive results, the Assembly may still prove to be one of the most fruitful yet held.

The value of what perhaps should hardly be called the minor activities of the League—so wide is their range—strikes one afresh at every Assembly.

Owing to the general depression; to the need for economy; to the doubts as to the economic future; to the fact that Disarmament is in the balance; and to the absence—inevitable under the circumstances—of a strong and well-prepared British delegation, this has not been a specially interesting or progressive Assembly. But the solid development of international co-operation in many spheres has gone on steadily, and faith in the possibilities inherent in the League method has grown again as the routine work has been carried through.

If by next Assembly the Disarmament Conference is on the way to success, marking time will be over and the way will be clear for great developments in 1932 and after.

## THE OPEN DOOR INTERNATIONAL.

The Second Conference of the Open Door International, which was held in Stockholm at the end of August, marked a definite step forward in the activity of this new international organization. Members of the Conference represented ten different countries, and included medical women, a factory inspector, several industrial women workers, and at least one well-known international trade unionist. Among the twelve resolutions adopted unanimously was one putting out a Draft Equal Pay Convention, and it was agreed to seek to get this Convention adopted by the International Labour Conference. Another resolution protested against the attitude of the I.L.O. to the woman worker, as shown in an article entitled "Women's Work" in the Encyclopedia published by the I.L.O. under the title of *Occupation and Health*. The resolution declared that the article was unscientific and in the nature of misleading propaganda and asked for its withdrawal. The resolution on women in Trade Unions aroused great interest, especially since several of the delegates who supported it were themselves Trade Union women. It declared that where the women members of a mixed Trade Union found themselves obstructed by the Union forbidding women to work in certain processes or seeking to turn them out of certain jobs, or negotiating a lower wage for them, they should be encouraged to form a separate women's union. An urgency resolution declared that the present justice provided an added reason for securing equality and justice between men and women so that the new economic system which is developing should be based on a just foundation.

## MISS JOAN PROCTOR.

The early death, at the age of 35, after a long and gallantly borne illness, of Miss Joan Proctor, has robbed our generation of one of the most brilliant and promising of its younger women. Her scientific tastes developed at an early age, and she was only a girl of twenty when she was appointed assistant to Dr. G. A. Boulenger, the Keeper of Reptiles at the Natural History Museum, whom she later succeeded. More recently she became responsible for the Reptile House at the Zoological Gardens, and she took an active part in planning the new quarters at Whipsnade. She knew and loved the creatures under her care, and her delicate operations on them were the admiration of all who witnessed them. Her life was short and handicapped by bad health, but she went far and won unusual success in her chosen career.

## WOMEN AND THE FARADAY CENTENARY.

Not the least change in the hundred years since Faraday's discovery has been the emergence of women as electricians, and the foundation of an Electrical Association for Women. This Association played its part in the recent celebrations, and one of the articles in *The Times Centenary Supplement* is by its Director, Miss Caroline Haslett. The Association has an exhibit at the Albert Hall Exhibition, which shows the development of electricity in the home. Unfortunately this Exhibition closes on 3rd October, but we hope the women's section may find a permanent home.

## THE FAMILY TESTED.

How grateful we should be to those whose alert minds do not take things for granted: it is they who secure both our protection and our progress. Hitherto most people, whether individualists, socialists, or feudalists in principle, have in practice taken the family for granted. But when we see so many changes in the structure of society, it must be well to examine its foundations. Everyone who believes in the family as the natural and best basis of our complicated modern fabric will welcome the original, extensive, and interesting research into the subject which is being directed by Dr. Alice Salomon. Readers of THE WOMAN'S LEADER are probably well acquainted with the name of Dr. Salomon, one of the most distinguished leaders of modern thought and social effort. Schools of training in social welfare work have been started all over Germany on the pattern of her pioneer enterprise in Berlin. The Academy of Women's Social and Educational Activities, which was organized by her creative genius, has already published several studies of modern problems. Now Dr. Salomon and Dr. Gertrud Bäumer are editing a series of volumes all designed to throw light from different aspects on the position of The Family at the present day and the dangers that threaten it. It is characteristic that the plan of the survey is so wide, and the detail so carefully filled in. It is carried out with the co-operation of various organizations and of the trained and experienced social workers of the Academy, by whose unpaid labour, undertaken in leisure time, many of the investigations have been recorded. The volumes already issued have been warmly and widely praised in the German Press.

The first volume is a collection of monographs about 182 families in different parts of Germany. Through the information gained by teachers and social workers about the families of their pupils and neighbours we see the vivid unvarnished details of age, origin, health, means, occupation, recreation, habits of all the members of the families in the different homes represented. Vol. ii, by Dr. Anne Marie Niemeyer, gives various statistics about the family; vol. iii deals with the families of children in day nurseries, kindergartens, and institutions; and the fourth volume is composed of accounts written anonymously by over 2,000 young people attending trade schools in Berlin. In answer to a questionnaire they describe the conditions and mutual relations of their homes, often so difficult and uncomfortable that we may indeed wonder how the family holds together at all; it can only be through sheer physical pressure and necessity. Especially we realize the intolerable overcrowding that goes on in our large towns to-day, and how our first urgent duty in the interests of family life and of common humanity is to insist on better housing. We get glimpses of distressing scenes and feelings like those that exist behind many windows in our own country. What wonder that the cry of some of these young people is so bitter as they describe four, five, and six people herded in one room, or seven and eight in two rooms. "The house in which we live is not a house but a pig sty," as one of them says.

The coming volumes will study the question from different points of view, and it is clear how valuable such a collection of living material will be in supplying us with the knowledge and insight which may enable us to meet the needs of our day. The interest of such records is equally great; we get a whole gallery of "conversation pictures" in minute detail, a cycle of dramas observed in settings of real life, a collection of stories that move and engross us. Many libraries and students outside Germany will do well to acquire these illuminating works.

M. PENTLAND.

- I. *Family Life To-day*. 182 family monographs, edited by Alice Salomon and Marie Baum. 15 RM.
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- IV. *Young People and their Families in a Large City*, by Günter Krolzig. 5.75 RM.  
Published by F. A. Herbig, Berlin, W. 35.

## THE NEW OFFICERS OF THE N.C.W.

We congratulate Lady Trustram Eve, for many years a member of the London County Council, on her election in succession to Mrs. Keynes as President of the National Council of Women. Marjorie, Lady Nunburnholme, is Acting Vice-President. The treasurer is Mrs. Patrick Ness, and the hon. parliamentary secretary is once again our valued contributor, Miss Bertha Mason.

## A NOTABLE TRIAL.

Readers who are already acquainted with the "Notable British Trials" Series will not need to be told that, even to the sophisticated "crime-fan", these volumes are in general of more absorbing interest than the most thrilling detective stories. This is the more remarkable because, from their very nature, these books are unable to draw support from the astonishing coincidences and unexpected happenings which in crime fiction spur on the reader's interest from page to page. There can be no surprise in store for the reader of an account of a trial which has already become part of legal history. Yet, in spite of this handicap, the gradual building up of the cumulative evidence, in its meticulous detail and scrupulous observance of fair play in the interests of the accused, far outweighs in its horror and inevitability almost any work of fiction dealing with a similar subject.

The latest addition to this Series, *The Trial of Alfred Arthur Rouse*, edited by Mrs. Helena Normanton (published by Messrs. William Hodge & Co., Ltd., price 10s. 6d.), is no exception to the rule. The introduction, which is written in popular style, gives a capable summary of the case, adequately drawing attention to the unusual features of this "real life story"; a story which, had it appeared in the guise of fiction, would surely have been dismissed as too far-fetched to be credible.

The Editor, however, we believe, would be the first to agree that it is to the verbatim report of the trial, following her introduction, to which the reader will turn for its chief interest. This interest is sustained unflinchingly throughout in spite of the inevitable length of any complete account of a British murder trial, necessitated by its detailed examination and cross-examination of witnesses, both for the prosecution and the defence.

While the Rouse case is too recent to require detailed recapitulation, a summary must be given to recall the main facts. Arthur Alfred Rouse, an ex-Service man (discharged before the end of the war owing to a severe head wound), was a commercial traveller, aged 36, when, in January, 1931, he was tried at the Northampton Assizes on the charge of murdering an unknown man on 6th November, 1930. The corpse was found burnt in the accused's own car in a fire which it was alleged was deliberately set alight by him.

The prosecution produced an enormous quantity of evidence, expert and otherwise, to show that the fire was deliberately started by Rouse, and that the unknown victim, from the position of the body as it was found, was already unconscious when the fire started, and that the accused's conduct after the fire was more consistent with guilt than innocence. The defence sought to prove that Rouse's passenger himself accidentally started the fire while Rouse was temporarily absent some distance down the road.

We ourselves are satisfied that few unprejudiced persons, after a careful reading of the verbatim report of the trial, could fail to come to the same conclusion as the jury, namely that Rouse was guilty of the murder of his unknown passenger. This view is in agreement with that of the Editor, who observes: "In the Rouse case, circumstance after circumstance dumbly pointed, and practically all pointed in the one direction—the guilt of the driver of the car. No one piece of evidence was conclusive by itself. A good many admitted of possible alternative explanations. No doubt the jury tried to add together all these possible alternatives to see if they could make the one broad alternative of innocence ring true. The unknown chance passenger who in the course of lighting a cigar managed to set a car ablaze whilst its owner was many yards down the lane—and that the latter, alarmed by the event, went into too complete a state of panic to bring any assistance and fled from the scene, as if a complete stranger to it all—that was the broad alternative which the jury had to consider, and which the defence invited them to accept. But would all the circumstantial details fit into it? The jury, after a singularly fair summing-up found themselves unable to adopt it. The fact that a good two-thirds of the evidence was circumstantial in no way weakens the moral effect of their verdict. . . . All those present at the trial unite in declaring that Rouse hanged himself in the witness box. To the writer the fact that the car debris indicated more than one practically simultaneous origin of fire would make her think just what that fact would make her think in a case of arson. Most convincing of all was that the piece of cloth from the crotch of the trousers, sheltered as it was by the peculiar bendings of the human remains, was still damp from petrol after a fire which had melted metals near it requiring heat to approximately 2,000° Fahr."

There are certain dramatic features in this case which render it remarkable but perhaps the most unusual one is that the victim was never identified. It is difficult to realize that to-day in England under modern conditions of publicity and resource an adult human being can come to a violent end without being missed or inquired for by at least one of his fellows.

Rouse's psychology is another extraordinary feature of the case. The average criminal's egoism and overweening conceit is a commonplace amongst criminologists but Rouse's ill-conceived tissue of unnecessary lies is hard to reconcile with his evident power of deliberate planning. The only suggestion that may serve to explain away something of the difficulty is that the head wound from which he suffered in the war may have in a measure affected his judgment and control and increased his loquacity and boastfulness, though it is evident from the systematic manner in which his plans must have been laid that he was quite legally responsible for his actions.

It is interesting to note that Mrs. Normanton is herself fully satisfied that Rouse's "Confession" published in the press, after his execution, was authentic as well as substantially correct.

Without committing ourselves to any opinion as to the authenticity or otherwise of the confession, it is obvious to anyone familiar with the Rouse case that in the main it sets out a story which was amply proved by the evidence produced by the prosecution and that it substantially recites the manner in which Rouse must have put his unknown victim out of the world.

M. I. C.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS.

By BERTHA MASON.

## WISE SPENDING AND SANE ECONOMY.

Since our last article for THE WOMAN'S LEADER was written in August, much water, as our readers are aware, has flowed under the bridge.

At last it has been brought home to the minds of most people that our country is very sick, that a crisis has occurred, that if the life of the patient is to be saved and recovery made possible, strong and drastic treatment must be applied without delay.

In this article we are not concerned with the causes which have led to the crisis, nor are we examining the many and perplexing political and economic theories which are advanced in explanation of the crisis, theories which are rendered more perplexing to the mind of the ordinary citizen owing to the somewhat wordy wrangling which at the moment of writing is going on in Parliament which often makes it difficult to see the wood for the trees.

Reprimations at the moment seem to us of little avail, discussions as to the causes which have led to the present situation, right and necessary as they are, are surely out of order just now.

If a house is on fire, people as a rule do not sit down to consider the reason of the fire, if they are intelligent. They concentrate on getting it under as speedily as possible, with a view to saving life and property.

Four our purpose, therefore, and so far as this article is concerned, it is sufficient to emphasize this one fact. For some time the country has been spending more than it has been earning: it has been living beyond its means, exports have declined, unemployment has increased; our international credit has been shaken, and the country is faced with disaster.

That is the situation in a nut-shell. A wise housewife knows that if the expenditure side of the domestic balance sheet exceeds the receipts side drastic measures must be taken, if the family is to be saved from disaster.

This is precisely the position of the country to-day. Severe treatment is necessary, drastic remedies are imperative, borrowing must stop, the financial structure must be put on a sound basis. A National Government composed of members of all three political parties has been formed to find and enforce remedies to meet the case, remedies which must and will entail sacrifice, suffering, and, in many cases, great hardship.

*A Difficult Task.*—It is a difficult and far from congenial task which the National Government has had to face. It is always so much more easy and pleasant to spend than to economize, to give than to enforce retrenchment.

It is readily admitted by everyone probably, theoretically at least, that the situation calls for drastic economy and retrenchment. No one, we think, will deny the need. The trouble

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## RECEPTION TO DAME EDITH LYTTTELTON.

TUESDAY, 20TH OCTOBER, 4.30 P.M.

We are very glad to be able to announce that Dame Edith Lyttelton has consented to be our guest at a private and informal reception in her honour which the Hon. Mrs. Franklin is very kindly holding at her house, 50 Porchester Terrace, W. 2, on 20th October. As readers will remember, it has been our practice for many years to hold such a reception for the woman delegate to the League of Nations Assembly, and we know that many will welcome this opportunity of hearing from Dame Edith a confidential report on the progress at Geneva of questions that particularly concern women. Applications for tickets (price 2s. 6d., including tea) to attend this reception should be made as soon as possible to the Secretary, N.U.S.E.C., 4 Great Smith Street, Westminster, S.W. 1.

## CONFERENCE ON TWELFTH ASSEMBLY OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

WEDNESDAY, 21ST OCTOBER, 2.30-5.30.

The N.U.S.E.C. is co-operating with the Women's Advisory Council of the League of Nations Union in the Conference to be held at the Livingstone Hall, Broadway, S.W. 1, on 21st October, at which the speakers will be Lord Lytton, Sir Norman Angell, M.P., and Dame Edith Lyttelton. Arrangements are being made for ten representatives of the National Union to attend.

## WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN BERMUDA.

Representatives of the Bermuda Women's Suffrage Society have recently been in England and the N.U.S.E.C. is watching sympathetically the endeavours of Bermudan women to obtain the franchise which at present they hold in no form whatever. The National Union was represented at a dinner organized by the Women's Freedom League in July, and at a luncheon organized by the British Commonwealth League, at both of which Mrs. Morrell, Vice-President of the Bermuda Women's Suffrage Society, reported on their strenuous endeavours to secure the desired reform of the Bermudan franchise.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

MADAM,—In your issue of 4th September, under Notes on "Women and the Indian Problem," Mr. Gandhi is quoted as saying:—

"Does not the Hindu widowhood stink in one's nostrils when one thinks of old and diseased men over fifty taking or rather purchasing girl wives, sometimes one on top of another?"

If the quotation is accurate, the wording shows some confusion of thought—unusual in a lawyer. Is it not "Child Marriage" rather than "Hindu Widowhood" that is intended in this particular connection? Surely it must be the child-wife, and not the hardly more unhappy widow, who has to submit to the outrages that are visualized as so offensive?

It may not be generally known that, not only are orthodox Hindu marriages preferably contracted in babyhood with the risk for the girl of the widowhood that is socially punished as if it were a crime, but a good Brahmin father—for fear of his own degradation in a future life—is bound to get his daughter's marriage consummated as soon as she can possibly become a mother. The usual early death is often a merciful release from the terrors and sufferings of infantile wifehood and immature motherhood, especially when the poor girl's actual lord and master answers to the quoted description. As indicated, his widowhood only lasts until he can buy another victim.

Whether we believe in Mr. Gandhi or not, we can certainly echo (with a difference) the other question of his that was also quoted in your paper, viz. "Where are the brave women who work among the girl wives and girl widows and who would take no rest and leave none for men, till girl marriage becomes an impossibility?" But, alas! we know something of the sinister force that they are up against—the age-old power that was even strong enough to overcome the pure doctrine of the great Reformer, Buddha. What chance have any lesser reformers against the hideous sex aberrations and hateful customs that are fostered by a corrupt priesthood in the name of a religion decadent now, though venerable originally.

Much good work has been done by native reformers, with the moral support of Great Britain, but all too little has been achieved for, except where life is at stake (as in the prohibition of *suttee*) our Government in its wisdom may never actively interfere with the observances of any of the numerous religions of British subjects.

(Continued in previous column.)

begins when theory has to be reduced to practice, and the trouble about economy so often is that we want to exercise it at the expense of someone else. It is a human point of view, of course, but national economy if it is to be really of practical value at the moment must include each and every citizen in varying degrees and every spending body.

*Local Economy.*—Someone may say this is an article dealing with local government, not national economy. Precisely.

Surely it is hardly necessary to labour the point of the interdependence between national and local finance and economy.

It is so obvious when we remember that something like a ninth of the whole national income is dispensed by the local authorities of the country. Bearing this in mind it becomes at once apparent that the national measures which are being enforced will be, to a great extent, valueless unless they are strongly supported and seconded by local effort. It is encouraging to note from returns which have come in and lie before us as we write that local authorities on the whole (there are, of course, exceptions) are keenly alive to the call which has gone out to the nation, for economy and also to the un-wisdom of "embarking hurriedly on any wholesale and ill-considered course of cutting down all local expenditure whatever be its character or its purpose."

*Panic Economy.*—We believe that local authorities on the whole will avoid what is known as panic economy, which will embarrass rather than help the Government and the nation in this time of trial. "Economy," does not mean any kind of ill-considered scheme, or the curtailment of expenditure which can be well afforded. On the contrary, sane spending which can be afforded and which may benefit the nation may prove in the long run to be a form of wise and real economy.

The circulars recently issued by the Ministry of Health and Board of Education give sound and wise advice. For example, local authorities at this time of crisis, should through their finance or other appropriate committee, or through such special committees, not necessarily wholly composed of members of the authority, subject immediately to careful and detailed scrutiny, the whole field of their expenditure, whether full value is being obtained for money spent, what saving can be made in the administrative machine in all branches, whether development of any service can safely and properly be slowed down till better times.

Further, there is the following important suggestion, that in making their survey local authorities should pay special regard, amongst other things, to such questions as to whether a service is likely or not likely to be remunerative at once or in the near future, whether it is required on *urgent grounds of public health* or on other grounds of *similar public urgency*, whether it is justifiable on the ground of the contribution it makes to the provision of employment for local workers, thereby avoiding the throwing of charges on national or local funds. The propriety of a rationing the spending committee of local authority merits careful consideration.

Many local authorities are already arranging schemes on these lines.

In view of the near approach of the Metropolitan Borough elections and Town Council elections in all parts of the country, we commend the suggestions given in these circulars, to the careful consideration not only of all women coming forward as candidates—but of all women local government electors on whom rests the responsibility equally with men of realizing that if national retrenchment is to be of real practical value it must include *wise expenditure* and sane economy on the part of all local authorities.

(Continued from next column.)

Yet the wonderful progress of the brave little band of enlightened Indian women is undoubtedly due to the inspiration and encouragement of British influence. Even Mr. Gandhi's hated rivals, the Christian missionaries, are hastening India's spiritual resurgence by their moral, mental and physical uplifting of the outcasts—those other victims of Brahminical autocracy!

Granted that the Sarda Act against child marriage was initiated by Indians, how was it that they based it on "complaint"? Did they not know that very few Hindus would have the courage to "complain" against the immemorial custom? Was the Act intended to be abortive?

IRENE FISHER.

49 Haverstock Hill, N.W. 3.

[We see no inconsistency in Mr. Gandhi's remark. He was himself pointing out the inconsistency in denying remarriage to a widow while permitting a widower to remarry as often as he pleases but to defy all considerations of health and humanity in his choice of a bride.—Ed.]

## COMING EVENTS.

## B.B.C.

Tuesdays, 10.35. Ann Pope. "Old English Dishes."

## ELECTRICAL ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN.

27th October, 3 p.m. 15 Savoy Street, Strand. Mrs. P. Chalmers: "By Air to Baghdad, Babylon, and Ur." Chair: Lady Moir.

## GUILDHOUSE W.C.A.

5th October, 3 p.m. The Guildhouse. Captain MacCunn: "Our Duty to Animals."

## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

20th October, 4.30 p.m. 50 Porchester Terrace, W. 2 (by permission of the Hon. Mrs. Franklin). Reception to Dame Edith Lytton, who will speak on the League's work at Geneva. Tea. Tickets (4s. 6d.) from 4 Great Smith Street, or at door.

## Acton W.C.A.

2nd October, 8 p.m. Y.W.C.A., East Acton Lane, W. 3. Madame Rieder: "Mexico."

## Edinburgh W.C.A.

28th October, 8 p.m. Gartshore Hall, 116 George Street. Ernest Brown, M.P.: "Taking the Strain off Parliament."

## Stepney Townswomen's Guild.

7th October, 2.30 p.m. Beaumont Hall, Beaumont Square, E. 1. Mrs. A. Benjamin: "Punishment in Education." Bulb-growing demonstration. Discussion.

## OPEN DOOR COUNCIL.

8th October, 7 p.m. Pinoli's Restaurant, Wardour Street. Mrs. C. Macmillan and Miss Le Seuer: "The O.D.I. Summer School and Conference, Stockholm." Chair: Mrs. Abbott.

## WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

15th October, 10.30-2.30. Caxton Hall, S.W. 1. Conference on Women and the I.L.O. Chair: Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence.

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Offices: 4 Great Smith Street, S.W.1. Telephone: Victoria 6188.

## Objects.

To enable women as citizens to make their best contribution towards the common good, and to obtain all such reforms as are necessary to secure a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women.

To serve as a common meeting ground for all women, irrespective of creed and party, for educational and social intercourse.

## EDITORIAL.

This is the Rally number, and when they receive it, members will be starting on their long ride to Paignton, where every possible arrangement has been made by Mrs. Grey for their reception. Over 120 members are coming to the Rally, and we shall have an opportunity of making many new friends and gaining fresh inspiration in our Guild work.

## Change!

Our readers will be interested in the announcement that THE WOMAN'S LEADER will be published in the future under new conditions. It will become a monthly paper, and therefore there will be no special Guild Supplement, for the whole paper should be of interest to Guild as well as other readers and will include reports of a certain number of Guilds each month. From time to time we have received suggestions for improving the paper, which we shall endeavour to incorporate in the new edition. We hope to continue to include articles which have been of special interest in the past, such as: News from Westminster, Local Government News, Book Reviews, etc. We propose to include also a page for the "Women at Home," Current Events, and other new features. The paper will retain its familiar green cover, but will be in a smaller size.

## Advertisements.

We are most anxious to start this new edition on a sound financial basis, and our readers can assist us to do this by using and recommending it as an advertising medium. We shall continue to include small advertisements at low rates, which members can use for exchange and sale, and we also propose to make a feature of larger advertisements. We shall be grateful if any reader will put us in touch with any suitable firm. THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE NEW EDITION WILL APPEAR ON 1ST NOVEMBER.

## THE DISARMAMENT CAMPAIGN.

In spite of the great unrest caused by the critical financial crisis and the meeting of the Round Table Conference in London the summer months have seen no change in the campaign to collect signatures to the International Declaration for World Disarmament. More than 1,331,942 British people have signed and the enthusiasm becomes even greater with the approaching World Disarmament Conference at Geneva next February. The Declaration has been taken to the seaside and to the village green. Thousands of signatures have been obtained at meetings on the sands and from holders of beach huts. In country towns and villagers messengers of peace have advocated their cause and there has been a great gathering in of signatures. At the Welsh Eisteddford, Bangor, 2,000 signatures were secured. In London and elsewhere house-to-house canvassing and open-air meetings have yielded great results. And now, while carrying through their summer plans, Joint Disarmament Councils are preparing their autumn campaigns, in which feature united services, public meetings, processions, signature stalls in churches, shops, business houses, market squares, and so on. Many cinemas where war films are being shown are proving good soil for signatures.

## WOMEN POLICE IN EGYPT.

We reported some time ago that the Cairo police authorities were contemplating the addition of women to the force. Two trained Englishwomen have now been selected: Miss Helen Hoskyn and Miss B. de Vitre. Both have seen service in England. We offer them hearty congratulations on their selection for this very significant pioneer enterprise, and our best wishes go with them when they embark on their difficult but enthrallingly interesting job.

## THE PERIL IN THE AIR.

THE GROWING DEMAND FOR SMOKE ABATEMENT.

By ARNOLD MARSH, M.Sc.Tech. (General Secretary, National Smoke Abatement Society).

The housewives of this country should be the most insistent advocates of smoke abatement, for this great evil affects them perhaps more than it does any other section of the community, and they will benefit most from the cleansing of the air for which we are working. They too are largely responsible for the most harmful kind of smoke produced—that from the domestic fire, which contains a very high proportion of injurious tar. While raw coal can, with care, be burnt smokelessly in industrial furnaces, it is impossible to do this in the household fire, even though some of the smoke may be prevented if the fire is replenished intelligently. The smoke consists of carbon, tarry matter, ash and acids, and is a most obnoxious and poisonous mixture. And nine million tons of it escape into our atmosphere every year, to come to rest at last on our buildings, gardens, curtains, food, clothes—and in our throats and lungs!

There are many indictments against smoke—how it ruins the buildings and destroys all the beauty of our towns; how it withers trees and plants, and poisons the soil; how it is the cause of an immense economic loss, the righting of which would be a great help to the coal industry—all of which are most important, but which space will not permit being developed here. But the greatest charge of all is that smoke is one of the most serious menaces to health that there is to-day. Legislation and control have rightly ensured that the food we eat and the water we drink shall be clean and pure, and yet how little thought is given to the condition of the air we breathe—even though we consume daily *seven* times the weight of air as of food and water!

The dirt and poison in the air affects town dwellers in two distinct ways. Firstly, by the continued inhalation of soot, tar, and acids, our lungs become blackened and corroded. This leads to catarrh; the mucous lining becomes rough and thickened and the tissues lose their elasticity. Bronchitis, pneumonia, and other respiratory complaints are made easier to develop, and because the lungs cannot supply the oxygen required by the heart as efficiently as they should, the heart has to work harder until, in many cases, it collapses from fatigue—heart failure. Then secondly, the smoke hanging perpetually over our towns acts as a screen against the sun, cutting off perhaps up to one-half of the available light, including the valuable ultra-violet light. Resistance to disease—especially tuberculosis—is lowered, and the absence of sunlight is one of the two main causes of the disfiguring disease of rickets, which on the continent is known as "the English disease"—a just and shameful commentary upon our filthy air. In girls malformation of bones due to rickets may have its most dangerous consequences in later life, during childbirth.

It is the endless invasion of our homes by the smoke dirt that necessitates much of the dreary cleaning and washing which every housewife has to face. Not only is she sentenced to a conviction of hard labour for life, but she has to pay heavily for it as well! It is estimated that the smoke costs every home in the country, on the average, at least £10 a year. The cleaner and brighter the home is kept the higher is this senseless, useless tax.

Is it not time that a more determined effort was made to overcome this nuisance which concerns so intimately every one of us? Economically, aesthetically, physically, and mentally, we suffer from it to an extent greater than from any other general nuisance, and yet it continues, year in and year out, tolerated with an apathy so amazing that it could scarcely be comprehended by a truly civilized community. Like many other evils, it will be conquered as soon as the people wish to conquer it. To do that requires an intensive campaign of education and propaganda, undertaken by pioneers to make the people "smoke conscious."

In such an important work as this, which concerns them so closely, the many valuable women's organizations should surely play a prominent part. The National Smoke Abatement Society, which is the one voluntary association existing to fight the smoke evil, is anxious to co-operate with them, and, in turn, seeks to have their support. With virile and determined allies the smoke abatement movement must progress, and the cleansing of our skies will be no idle dream.

## WOMEN ON COUNCILS.

The work of a woman councillor is anything but monotonous, particularly if she lays herself out—as she should, I think—to act as a link between the electorate and the Council. It is generally recognized now, that as Local Authorities have to deal with the domestic policy of the country, women who have the intimate knowledge and experience of the carrying-out of that policy in the homes, should be well represented on the Council.

The work of a Local Authority is carried on by the various committees with expert advice from the permanent officials concerned. These committees include Finance, Housing, Town Planning, Public Health (in which Child Welfare is included), Library, Allotments and Open Spaces, Highways, etc. and each councillor has a chance of serving on three or four of these. In addition the Council appoints representatives on outside bodies, such as School Managers' Committees, Joint Hospital Boards, Guardians' Committees, etc. It can be readily understood that the committee work is of absorbing interest notwithstanding the sad fact that often projects that have with difficulty withstood the heavy scars of committee life, may be thrown out in Council and the hard work apparently wasted.

Perhaps the Committees that have the greatest interest to the average woman who takes up public work, and where she can be most useful, are Public Health (including Child Welfare), Housing, Library, and Open Spaces. To the writer, the Housing Committee has always had the paramount appeal. A woman, with her intimate experience of home management, does not need to be endowed with much imagination in order to realize the difficulties under which the victims of a housing shortage are existing and, when there is imagination coupled with a realization of the many difficulties of home-life under good conditions, the desire to help the applicants—many of whom are making a brave struggle to bring up children under conditions that would be unpleasant for animals—becomes almost a passion, and brings much heart-breaking on account of the impossibility of assisting all those who are in need. In conclusion, I would point out that breadth of vision, entire obliteration of personal feelings, a tough integument, and withal a keen sense of humour, are the chief essentials in the make-up of a woman councillor.

D. M. PORTER.

(Continued from next column.)

lust; and a whole host of other amusing and instructive conversations; but these must await the inspiration to write a book!

This article has only dealt with the bright, amusing aspect of the work. To write about the other would seem to betray confidences that are precious to remember. Suffice it to say that in this, as in everything else, there is a dark side, and the girl whose work means something more than just a job will inevitably have to experience some of the pain of life. Perhaps, when grim days come, it will help her to remember that, grave or gay—

"All experience is an arch wherethro'  
Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades  
For ever and for ever as we move."

## This Month's Competition.

This month we offer a Prize for  
the BEST ACCOUNT on a  
postcard of the Townswomen's  
GUILD RALLY.

Prize: NEXT YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION  
TO THE WOMAN'S LEADER.

The name and address (or pseudonym) and Guild of a competitor must be clearly given on the postcard. Entries should be addressed to c/o the Competition Editor, The Woman's Leader, 4 Great Smith Street, S.W. 1, and must reach the office not later than Wednesday, 14th October. The Editor's decision is final.

## THE HUMOURS OF CANVASSING.

By NORAH CASE.

The whole art of canvassing lies in being able to enter into the joys and sorrows of other people's lives, and the inexperienced worker who, as soon as the door is opened, embarks on her plea for a subscription would merely be inviting it to be slammed in her face.

If she happens to be working in Wales, life will be especially mirthful, for the Celt is blessed with a natural gaiety and subtlety of wit denied to his Saxon neighbour, and his hospitality is unbounded. I shall never forget the January day spent in a mining village high up in the hills, where the snow was inches deep and piling up every moment, driven by an Arctic wind. Canvassing would have been grim and freezing work if every few yards I had not been coaxed in to a warm fireside, there to discuss the political situation over onion soup, tea, cocoa, ovaltine, coffee, or boiling milk, all of which I sampled during the day (to my sorrow during the night!). Later on, there was more tea in a farmhouse parlour, with delicious Welsh cakes, and the journey back by train was beautifully enlivened by the songs of miners relaxing after the day's work.

When canvassing long rows of miners' cottages a street-corner speech is sometimes inevitable, but this is not in the least terrifying, since it is usually the spontaneous elaboration of a doorstep discussion, induced by her neighbours' support of an abnormally argumentative housewife. It is *premeditation* that kills!

East Anglia provided a never-to-be-forgotten thrill. Candidates were tenderly nursing their constituencies at that time, and all the party organizations were hard at work preparing for the coming Dissolution. I was told off to canvass a scattered area of wild heath and moorland, where even a bicycle would have been useless. "Shanks' pony must be the order of the day," said the heartless agent, who probably had never walked a mile in his life, but even my zeal for the Cause and that of our candidate (who shall be called Mr. Smith) failed to induce me to accept this mode of transport. After a long search I was successful in finding a meek baker's nag, which could be hired for sixpence an hour. I had not ridden for about ten years, and was never much of a horsewoman, but reflected that years of toil would have eliminated any "kick" that the pony might have had in early youth. We trotted off decorously enough, but at the cross-roads on the village green he began to exhibit a painful independence of character, and although I could not but admire his courage, it was with difficulty that I maintained my seat at a series of violent bucks. Ghastly sawings of his iron mouth and the hearty application of a hazel wand to his hind-quarters seemed necessary to force him in the right direction, but even this failed to turn him from his objective, and to my horror he walked straight into the village pond. Here, after drinking his fill, he stood doddering beneath me, apparently lost in contemplation as to how best to rid himself of this burden more loathsome than loaves. At this juncture three aged opponents sitting on the village green threw their caps into the air and shouted ironically, "Vote for Smith," and to make matters worse a couple of ganders, fearing for their young ones, began to swim rapidly in our direction, their necks cruelly outstretched. I closed my eyes in an agony of indecision as to whether it would be better to wait and be pecked to death by the angry birds, or to risk my life in an endeavour to wade to the bank. Happily the choice had not to be made, for my meditations were abruptly terminated by the pony's sudden realization of his danger. Turning round with awful swiftness, he staggered out of the pond, and broke into a mad gallop which forced me to abandon the last vestige of dignity and cling to his mane for about 2 miles.

Canvassing in London is most varied and interesting. One day a Jewish wholesale furrier, after listening to my dissertation, offered me a job as traveller for his firm! Unhappily he was fondling a piece of synthetic sable and this contributed in no small measure to my refusal of his offer to enter the commercial world.

It would take columns, or even volumes, to describe all my amusing experiences. Had space permitted I would like to have described an experience with a religious maniac; an argument with an atheist butcher; a discussion with an undertaker on the drawbacks of the increasing popularity of cremation; the habits of stray cats as observed by a cats' meat man; a talk with a tramp—who was begging at the same door—on wander-

(Continued in previous column.)

## NEWS FROM GUILDS.

## ALVASTON TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

Neither rain nor holiday attractions prevented the members of the Alvaston Townswomen's Guild from attending the June meeting, when they were particularly fortunate in having with them their organizer, Mrs. Fulloway, and their President, Mrs. Henderson. The talk at this meeting was on "The Empire," and was given by the secretary of the borough branch of the League of Nations Union. A demonstration on embroidery and competition for the best voile frock concluded the meeting.

## BERMONDSEY TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

The Bermondsey Guild had an excellent cookery demonstration by the United Dairies at their July meeting. A prize—a rolling-pin—was offered for the best drop scones. This was followed by an address on "Dustbins" which was greatly appreciated and provoked a lively discussion. In September the members had a most successful expedition to Hove, and were invited to tea by the Hove Townswomen's Guild, who gave them a warm welcome and bounteous fare—there are reports of tables groaning, gorgeous iced cakes, sausage rolls, sandwiches, etc. It is to be regretted that the Bermondsey Guild is unable to send a delegate to the Rally at Paignton.

## CHELTENHAM TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

The Cheltenham Townswomen's Guild has held an interesting session. It has had speakers on various social subjects, such as Poor Law Work, the Mentally Defective Child, and the Education of the Young. There has been a competition at each meeting, and a whist drive which added to the Guild's funds.

## CHRISTCHURCH TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

At their meeting held in September the Christchurch Townswomen's Guild discussed some of the most interesting questions of the day in an impromptu debate. The first subject—That defence is the best means of maintaining peace—aroused a lively discussion, the majority of the members being wholeheartedly in favour of the motion. Maternal feelings were roused by the second motion—That corporal punishment should be administered in schools—and the voting was against it. The members were in favour of the next two motions—That divorce cases should be heard "in camera", and That the opening of cinemas on Sundays should be allowed.

## CIPPENHAM TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

The Cippenham Townswomen's Guild inaugurated the season by holding a dance which was a great success, being well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. At the September meeting, Mrs. Wylie gave a talk on the Women of India, a fitting subject in view of the prominence of Indian questions at this time. This was followed by a sweet-making demonstration, and the winter programme was drawn up. It was decided to start a dramatic society and a glove-making class, and to hold weekly meetings to make articles for a Christmas bazaar.

## HARROW TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

At its meeting on 15th September the Harrow Guild had a dress-cutting demonstration by one of Messrs. Weldon's experts. This was followed by a talk on Birth Control by Mrs. How-Martyn, which, not unnaturally, aroused controversy as well as interest. As a consequence, the Guild approached the Medical Officer of Health for the district in an endeavour to ensure that information be given in some cases where it is really imperative. A good deal of interest in the local health services has been aroused. This Guild is growing at a rapid rate.

## HASSOCKS TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

The Hassocks Townswomen's Guild were so fascinated by Miss Kenward's demonstration of rug-making at their last meeting, that they have decided to start a rug-making class for the winter. This Guild takes a keen interest in the British Empire Cancer Campaign, and an address will be given on it by Dr. L. A. Parry at the October meeting. The Guild has appointed a representative, Mrs. Trusler, to be responsible for the special work of the Empire Campaign in that district.

## MOULESCOOMB TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

An instructive lecture on "Homes Inside and Out" was given by Mrs. K. Earp at the meeting of the Moulescoomb Guild in September. Various competitions followed; one was to produce the best dinner for two people at the maximum cost of 1s.; another, a potato-growing competition. One member had grown as many as 5½ lb. from one seed potato.

## MUDEFORD TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

The September meeting of the Mundeford Guild was of a practical nature. There was a dressmaking demonstration in which the members were shown how to make a child's frock for 1s. 5½d., and an exhibition of some beautiful embroidery. The potato-growing

competition produced 2½ cwt. for the hospital, and the last competition for "the Five Best Things for a Medicine Chest" proved very instructive. The Chairman announced the resignation of the hon. secretary, Mrs. Fellowes, to whom a vote of thanks was passed.

## PRESTON (DEVON) TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

The Preston Guild is to be congratulated on the encouraging report it was able to make at the celebrations of its first birthday, which were held in September. Throughout the year the Guild has made steady progress, the number of its members increasing from 45 to 70, and a happy spirit prevailing at its meetings. Paignton has already become a centre of the movement, for a district Guild conference was held there a few months ago, and the big rally is to take place there in October.

## RICHMOND (SURREY) TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

The Richmond Townswomen's Guild has been active this autumn. Mrs. Bustard spoke at their meeting on the value of women police, especially in dealing with female delinquents. After the meeting a small sale of articles brought in a satisfactory sum which has been devoted to the Guild funds. The members much enjoyed the party which was given in August at the house of Mrs. Banner (the President) and in September a motor outing was arranged on one of the rare fine days vouchsafed to us, and was consequently a great success.

## SOUTHAMPTON TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

A talk on the work of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was given by Miss Blackie at the September meeting of the Southampton Guild. She said that the Society is doing invaluable work, and claims to have reduced the cases of ill-treatment to children from 50 per cent to 7 per cent. This address was followed by a competition and a demonstration in making and icing a Christmas cake.

## STOURBRIDGE TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

This Guild has been in existence for the last eighteen months, and has now over a hundred members. Various whist drives, an American tea, and a garden party have been organized, and from the profits made £50 was given to the Carnival Fund for the Corbett Hospital.

## WICK TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

The September meeting of the Wick Townswomen's Guild was largely attended. A prize was given for the best sponge sandwich, and the members were keenly interested by a demonstration on icing a cake. Music and an exhibition of holiday snapshots formed the social part of the programme. A resolution was passed congratulating Sir Archibald Sinclair on his appointment as Secretary of State for Scotland, and the evening concluded with a short talk by the President, Mrs. Robertson, on "The Present Crisis."

## WIGAN TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD.

At the September meeting of the Wigan Townswomen's Guild, Mrs. W. H. Tyrer, who was acting as Chairman, gave an eloquent address on the Society's aims. A Guild member, Mrs. Richardson, gave a skilful demonstration in making paper articles, e.g. hats, pockettes, and nightdress-cases, which were much appreciated by the members.

## COUNTY FEDERATION OF TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILDS.

## A DRAFT AGENDA.

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the last meeting.
3. Business arising out of minutes.
4. Reports from each Guild.
5. Financial statement.
6. Suggestions:—
  - (a) New speakers.
  - (b) New competitions, etc., for social half-hour.
7. Formation of new Guilds.
8. Possible Federation activities:—
  - Singing.
  - Drama.
  - Handicrafts.
  - Bulbs.
  - Federation outing, etc.
9. Headquarters news.
10. Other business, if any.
11. Date, time, and place of next meeting.

The Chairman and secretary of the Federation should be elected at the first Federation meeting in each year. The Federation representative on the Headquarters Organization Committee should also be elected at this meeting.