

WOMEN'S SERVICE
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THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

The Prime Minister and Equal Franchise.

In our leading article this week we give a short account of our impressions of the Prime Minister's great speech in the Albert Hall on Friday, 27th May. The speech, in our view, made it abundantly clear that the Government is extremely serious in its intention to see through legislation which will give Equal Franchise from the age of 21, although some of our contemporaries have seized on Mr. Baldwin's statement that "the body of opinion in support of the equalization of the franchise at the age of 25 will have full opportunity of expressing itself in the course of the debate in Parliament," as an indication that there will be a free vote on the point. His emphatic statement, however, that this is not practical politics, seems to us sufficient evidence that the Government does not intend to be overruled by any section of its supporters. Mr. Baldwin gave as the Cabinet's opinion that the Conservative Party has nothing to fear from the extension of the female franchise. It is interesting that a similar opinion has been attributed to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, while the enthusiasm for Equal Franchise shown by the women Liberals, points perhaps to a similar claim on their part. We propose next week to publish extracts from Mr. Baldwin's speech.

Parliamentary Plans for the Autumn Session.

Although at the time of going to press the Cabinet meeting to review the present state of Parliamentary business has not been held, the political correspondent of *The Times* states that it is anticipated that it will be impossible for the work planned for this session to be completed by July, so that the few weeks during which Parliament reassembles in the autumn will have to be devoted to completing this year's tasks, and not, as was originally hoped, to starting the new session. It is expected, therefore, that Parliament will rise on Friday, 29th July, and that the work of the session be resumed during the early days of November. This state of affairs is much to be regretted from the point of view of legislation in which women's organizations are interested. It means inevitably that legislation dealing with Franchise, Suffrage, Poor Law, Unemployment Insurance, Factories, and Health Insurance will all be crammed into next year. Next June also will therefore probably find us with no

Suffrage Bill on the Statute Book. Whereas an Unemployment Insurance Bill will probably be introduced for purposes of discussion this autumn, it is conceivable that legislation dealing with health insurance may be squeezed out even next session.

Trade Disputes Bill—Women Civil Servants.

During the debate on Clause 5 of this Bill, dealing with the regulations as to organizations of which established Civil Servants may be members, Mr. Pethick-Lawrence put a point to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was in charge of the clause, which has been raised before in these columns. He pointed out that certain organizations of women Civil Servants are affiliated to the National Council of Women and the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, and further stated: "It is quite true that these are not party political organizations, but they are political organizations. Their objects are to obtain alterations in the law. This National Society for Equal Citizenship is desirous of obtaining votes for women. . . . Beyond mere enfranchisement, there are other matters of political equality as between men and women which this society is seeking to promote. Therefore quite clearly this is a political organization, though not a political party organization. I think the same is true of the National Council of Women which, meeting yearly, carries resolutions seeking by various means to carry out political objects. I want to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer this question: Does this Clause prohibit the affiliation of a body of women Civil Servants to these two political organizations, because it is a matter on which many Civil Servants feel very keenly, and they would like to know the answer." Mr. Churchill's answer was unsatisfactory. He replied that these questions must be dealt with on their merits, and whether the clause applies or not to such bodies depends on whether they have political objects or party objects, or whether these political aspects play such a small part in their organization as to be negligible. He gave no answer to Mr. Pethick-Lawrence's further suggestion that a distinction should be made in the clause between party political and other political organizations. We hope that something of this kind may be possible in the report stage of the Bill.

Intolerance.

The Birmingham Girl Guides have recently been the scene of a hot controversy precipitated by the action of one of their officers, Miss Hilsden, in resigning because the County Commissioner happens at the same time to be a member of the committee of the Birmingham Birth Control Clinic. Miss Hilsden has expressed the opinion that "no officer should engage in anything so controversial as birth control". She asserts that she wants to see the Guide movement kept absolutely free from anything controversial, "and that she herself just feels that she has touched pitch, and is only too thankful to be clear of it." It is, to us, quite a new view that officers in the Girl Guides are precluded from undertaking any controversial work they may choose, whether as members of Churches, political parties, birth control clinics, or anti-birth control societies, and fortunately for the recruitment of this admirable and flourishing movement the view expressed by Miss Hilsden is not generally shared. To use the Girl Guide movement for the propagation of controversial views is, however, another matter. There is of course no suggestion

'Keep fit on
cocoa'

BOURNVILLE
SEE THE "Cadbury" ON EVERY PIECE
OF CHOCOLATE

Write
Cadbury, Bournville
about Gift Scheme

that Lady Brooks has done this. But Miss Hilsden apparently has—having addressed her company on sex matters in opposition to the views held by Lady Brooks in her private capacity. Meanwhile there is another reflection which Miss Hilsden's action conjures up: the habitual attitude of moral superiority, not to say downright rudeness adopted by the opponents of birth control towards those who advocate it for certain persons under certain conditions. As Canon Badger says in a recent letter to the *Birmingham Post*, the Birmingham Clinic is supported by some of the city's most highly respected citizens, and those who refuse to protest against its existence are as anxious as those who do, to raise the standard of morality. In a sister city, equally devoted citizens who are connected with a birth control clinic have been described by a high dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church as followers of Moloch and compared by him to moral perverts who indecently assault little girls. There are times when such rudeness evolves an element of unconscious humour which adds to the gaiety of public life. But on the whole it is a deplorable feature of serious controversy.

Oxford and Cambridge.

Oxford has opened her professorships and readerships to women, Cambridge her University scholarships and other prizes. That is excellent, and all that we have to do is to be chosen for the one and win the other. As far as the Cambridge prizes go, if the students of Girton and Newnham are at a disadvantage, it will be because of the deliberate policy of those colleges. They have still a preference, though by now perhaps it is a slightly wishful one, for the atmosphere of a nice boarding school. They discourage discursive adventures among thoughts, and keep their girls too much in mental grooves, running to death the conscientious diligence common among girls, not making a full use of the resources of the University, and generally clipping and trimming away at the edges of wings. The Oxford professorships are a different matter. Complaints have been made that the women who have lectured up to now have been good enough scholars, but not good enough lecturers. That may or may not be true. But it probably is true that a first-rate lecturer is also a bit of a "character", someone with great personality to start with, who has been allowed to develop along his own lines in peace. These conditions are seldom granted to women. From infancy they are taught to keep their personalities in hand, and this, so far, has been particularly true of the more scholarly types. People do not like women to be obstinate, or crusty, or razor-tongued, or very untidy, or extremely absent-minded, or to have any other ways and habits which mean that all who come near them must alter their own habits and ways. College dons no more than other men like these things in women. In fact we want an invisible as well as a juridical equality of treatment before we can fairly be asked to show equality of work.

Renewed Efforts for Women Police.

The question of women police was again raised in the Hull Watch Committee last week by the receipt of a letter from Mrs. A. Watson asking that a deputation representing the various interests concerned might be received by the Committee. The Chairman suggested that the deputation should not be received pending the presentation of a report on the subject of Women Police by the Chief Constable—but that a statement of its case should be circulated and considered side by side with the Chief Constable's report. This suggestion was adopted—to the great regret of Alderman Askew, a strong advocate of women police, who arrived from another committee after it was taken and was very naturally annoyed to find that an item placed last on the agenda had been taken first.

A Woman Police Doctor.

Last week the Manchester Watch Committee made a new departure in deciding to appoint a woman doctor to a position in the City Police Force. It will be her business to deal with all women who come into contact with the police, and of course with all cases of child assault. In contemplating an appointment of this kind one is overwhelmed with the question: Why wasn't it done before? Still, a beginning must be made, and we congratulate the Chief Constable of Manchester on having made it. The decision must incidentally be a considerable cause of satisfaction to the one woman member of the Manchester Watch Committee: Councillor Annie Lee.

Neither Jew nor Greek. . . .

The Rev. Dr. Drummond speaking at the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland in Edinburgh last week

referred to the recent exclusion of coloured men from certain dance halls in the city as the blot which had been put upon Edinburgh by the "abominable introduction of a colour ban". Those responsible, he says, are guilty of the grossest treachery against the British Empire, and are doing something utterly alien to the spirit of Christ. A similar attitude towards the "colour ban" was adopted by speakers at the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. It is an attitude with which we entirely sympathize. Of course these insulting and illogical penalizations of classes or races are wholly alien to the spirit of Christianity. But we should like to know whether the members of these two enlightened Assemblies apply to the accident of sex the same fair and unprejudiced judgment which they apply to the accident of colour. And if not, why not?

Progress in India.

Mrs. Annie Besant contributes to *The Times* of 27th May an interesting letter on the progress of women in India. She reminds her readers that the Reform Bill of 1919 without giving Indian women the suffrage, left it for the men in each Province to grant it to the women at their pleasure. All the Provinces except one have since conceded complete political equality. The Indian State of Travancore has gone further and appointed a woman member of its Legislative Council as Minister of Health. At a meeting recently held in her honour in Madras, another Indian woman, Deputy President of the Legislative Council of Madras, presided, and among the speakers were Indian women holding the offices of district board member, University senator, gaol visitor, and athlete. Mrs. Besant refers to "the very rapid assumption by women of their ancient position".

The Reform of the Poor Law.

We are particularly fortunate in having Miss Fulford as a contributor to our series of articles on the Poor Law, because of her unique experience. Miss Fulford is Vice-Chairman of the Fulham Board of Guardians, Chairman of the Hospital, Children, and Relief Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Board, and Chairman of the Education Committee of the West London Poor Law Schools. Our readers will remember that she was appointed by the Ministry of Health to the West Ham Advisory Committee.

Questions in Parliament.

10th May, 1927.

SEXUAL OFFENCES AGAINST YOUNG PERSONS.—*Viscountess Astor* asked the Home Secretary what action it is proposed to take to give effect to the recommendations of the two Departmental Committees appointed to study the questions of sexual offences against young persons and the treatment of young offenders.

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks: The more important recommendations in these two Reports could not be carried into effect without legislation. The second Report, which covers a very wide field, was only presented to me at the end of March, and I am not yet in a position to make any definite statement.

27th May, 1927.

NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE (Royal Commission's Recommendations).—*Mr. Cooper* asked the Minister of Health what action he has taken with reference to the recommendations contained in the Report of the Royal Commission on National Health Insurance; and what further steps it is intended to take in the matter?

Mr. Chamberlain: In accordance with the undertaking which I gave, I have submitted the recommendations of the Royal Commission on National Health Insurance to the Consultative Council on Approved Societies' Work. Five meetings have already been devoted to the consideration of the several recommendations, and the views of the Council thereon have been communicated to me. A few recommendations still remain to be considered, and will come before the Council at an early date. An amending Bill will then be prepared, but I fear that there is little likelihood of its introduction during the present Session.

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 women'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.

MR. BALDWIN AT THE ALBERT HALL.

It is a great day for the cause of women's suffrage when a Conservative Prime Minister, speaking to an audience in the Albert Hall, makes an extension of the woman's vote the chief point in his speech. It is a great day, and a day long in coming. Mr. Baldwin himself reminded the women unionists whom he was addressing that it is already forty-seven years since one of his predecessors proposed to do something to help women. Now it has often been estimated that fifty years is the average time which it takes the English nation to move from the realization that a reform is just (or necessary) to the carrying out of that reform. In 1880 Disraeli realized that the change would come. In 1918 the principle was conceded. Sex was no longer to be a disqualification. In 1922 Mr. Bonar Law had said: "I have been a consistent supporter of women's franchise, and even at the time that the Franchise Bill of 1918 was passed I felt that the discrimination in age between men and women should not be permanent. I think so still." All this Mr. Baldwin pointed out, adding that he himself, in consonance with his belief that the Conservative Party, of all others, has nothing to fear from the broadening of the basis of representation, had pledged the party at the 1924 election to the giving of the vote to women on the same terms as men. Those who wished to object should have objected then; it was now too late. . . . After that, and when so much time having been allowed them in which to prepare their minds, their leader might not unreasonably have hoped for acquiescence, if not a welcome, from his hearers. He did not get it. The highest point of enthusiasm reached during the meeting was shown when, in answer to his remark that there might be a certain demand in the country for votes for both sexes at the age of twenty-five, some voices at the back of the hall shouted "There is, there is." Mr. Baldwin seemed slightly surprised, but addressed himself again to the point, and, if he was persuasive, was also firm. While he told the dissentients that they would have a full opportunity of arguing their position in the House, he made his personal position clear. In his view a woman who could sit on a jury, argue a case in the law courts, grant a death certificate, or decide on a question of life and death with regard to an operation, could not be considered unfit to vote. Nor did he regard it as practical politics, in a democratic country, to take away a franchise centuries old from men who were accustomed to exercise it. These points, sincerely put, met with a growing volume of applause, but it was a curious sight for old feminists to see

Mrs. Pankhurst facing, in that place, an audience of women the majority of whom were opposed to an extension of women's franchise. She, in her subsequent speech, hardly touched upon the point, merely asking her hearers to leave off bothering about this age or that age and trust their Prime Minister. Here perhaps she lost an opportunity. The case for votes at twenty-one for women especially is thoroughly arguable. For one thing, half the women in industry are under twenty-three. The great majority of those who come within the scope of all our modern industrial legislation, of those unfairly restricted by the various enactments against women, must vote before they are twenty-five if they are to vote while these questions still concern them. Most of the special legislation on so-called women's questions—marriage, maternity, infant mortality and welfare, birth control, social morality, the earliest, and in some ways the most important, stages of education, come to bear on the bulk of women long before they are twenty-five, and have comparatively speaking ceased to affect them personally by the time they reach the age of thirty. And as long as statistics of infant mortality show that the best age for a mother to bear her first child is from twenty to twenty-two, it would not be wise, even if it were possible, to alter this. Now few thinking persons will maintain that the only people who should decide on our laws are those who are to experience their effect, but, on the other hand, it seems hardly desirable to shut out from such decisions very nearly the whole of the class whose welfare is at issue. We suggest to those who do not agree with us that they should not shrink from this logical application of democracy, but realizing that if the young womanhood and manhood of the nation is indeed unfit, it is we who are to blame for it who have brought them up, should face their responsibilities and set about turning the event to the great uses of which it is capable. We will only add that we are profoundly grateful to Mr. Baldwin, both for what we believe to be his wisdom in taking this step, and for the courage and loyalty with which he is abiding by it. In our opinion these new voters are unlikely to have any marked influence on the issue of the next election. In any case, that is neither here nor there. What we are thankful for and shall always remember with gratitude is that the status of citizenship is to be conferred on the young workers and mothers who are confronting some of the most arduous, difficult, and even dangerous problems of a woman's life.

THE WILL OF GOD?

By K. D. COURTNEY.

"If it be the will of God that I live for the year," said the old lady, "all may yet be well for me." She was standing at the door of her cottage—a new cottage in a village of new cottages all uniform, and set in neat uninspiring rows—and we stopped to talk to her hoping to learn something of how the Exchange of Populations looks to the aged. She had spent all her life in Bulgaria on the shores of the Black Sea, in an ancient Byzantine settlement, where her Greek forbears had lived for generations, and where tradition lingers in the narrow little streets and in the ruins of no less than forty churches. Her family had been prosperous; they were fisher-folk or vine-growers, but fate decreed that she was to leave the sea and the vineyards and the ancient little town and end her days in a new cottage in a new village on the plains of Greek Macedonia, where cultivation of the vine must be begun anew, and where no yield and consequently no prosperity could be looked for for two years. The little town from which she came, on the other hand, is now occupied by peasants who had never seen the sea, know nothing of the highly specialized culture of the vine, and long for wide corn lands where they can plough and sow.

"If it is the will of God." . . . "If God sends rain." . . . "If God grants us health." . . . say the peasants, and endure their lot with astonishing patience. But we of the West, less apt to be resigned, more critical of fate, discern little of the will of God in the exchange of populations, viewing it rather as one of the more senseless manifestations of the perverse will of man.

The "Exchange of Populations"—on paper it sounds rather a neat arrangement. For what can be done about the hopeless mix up of races in the Balkans? Here are Greeks in Bulgaria; Bulgarians in Greece; Greeks in Turkey; Turks in Greece; they cannot get on with each other, are always persecuting and

murdering each other, even to the point of creating "incidents" which disturb the peace of Europe. Very well; let them be sorted out behind the frontiers which the wisdom of Peace Treaties has decreed shall separate "Bulgaria," "Greece," "Turkey." Let Bulgarians who are not comfortable in Greece, go to Bulgaria; let Greeks with a grievance in Bulgaria migrate to Greece; let an International Commission, under the League of Nations, supervise this voluntary exchange, and liquidate the property concerned, and at last a step will have been taken towards tidying the Balkan Peninsula into States, each inhabited by a homogeneous population speaking the same language, and owing the same allegiances. So it was decided by the Powers when the Treaty of Neuilly was signed with Bulgaria in 1919, and under the convention set up by that Treaty the so-called voluntary exchange of populations between Greece and Bulgaria has been effected.

Had the exchange been voluntary in anything but name, had it been carried out by slow degrees, had there been sufficient organization in each country to see that the migrants were established so that they could make a living, there might have been something to be said for it. But in the light of actual facts little more can be said for it than that it is a better alternative than war.

It is seldom that a peasant really wishes to leave his home and the fields that he and his fathers have tilled, and journey into the unknown. Few, indeed, of the exchanged families will tell you that they left their villages of their own accord. They left because they were compelled either directly by the use or the threat of force, or indirectly because life was made impossible for them. In many cases their departure was a flight, and they arrived as destitute as any other refugees. This involuntary

migration has been the fate of thousands of peasant families; often leaving their animals and their tools behind them, they have travelled in incredible discomfort, crowded in cattle-trucks or on cargo boats, and have arrived at their destination to find themselves homeless, landless, and workless—forced to crowd into what shelter they could find until a hard-pressed government could help them to fresh homes and fields. Small wonder that vine and tobacco growers find themselves on the seashore, while fisher-folk who have never handled a plough are set down in the midst of arable land. The exchange of populations is indeed a painful study in human suffering and economic waste. The situation would have been desperate but for the help provided by the League of Nations loans. In Greece the Refugee Settlement Commission which administers the loan has made wonderful progress in settling on the land both the refugees from Asia Minor and the exchanged populations from Bulgaria and Turkey. Its history is a romantic record of difficulties overcome and miracles accomplished. In Bulgaria the loan was granted later, and the establishment of the refugees will not be completed for some time.

Will it then be possible to say that the Exchange of Populations has achieved its object, and that Greeks and Bulgarians are happily sorted out into their respective countries? That depends. At the best, few of the refugees are as well off as they were in the villages they have left, while many are living in the direst poverty. They naturally look back with longing to their old homes, and agitators are not wanting to encourage them to dream of a war of revanche. The Macedonian question is still an open sore. While there is a burning sense of injustice, while there is bitter gnawing poverty, while there is an intense racial hatred, peace and contentment cannot be looked for in the Balkans, be the populations exchanged never so often. There is nothing for it but the substitution of co-operation for conflict, the gradual assuagement of bitterness and the ultimate establishment of some sort of federation between the states whose populations and indeed whose fate is so inextricably interwoven.

POOR LAW REFORM.

By C. FULFORD.

The co-ordinating principle of our English Poor Laws lies in the acceptance of public responsibility for the poor and their entire history consists in the application of this principle. The question of new methods of discharging this responsibility is urgently before us to-day, and cannot be shirked; we must face the situation or else we are failing in our duty as citizens.

Before condemning, discarding, or exchanging the present system of Poor Law administration it should be examined carefully and the alternative be considered, bearing in mind the quality and the quantity of the work to be done.

The present machinery consists of 625 Boards of Guardians directly elected by the ratepayers and there are at present 2,330 women serving on them. The increase in the volume of the work of the Guardians since pre-war days is shown by the following figures. The total expenditure under the Poor Law for England and Wales in 1914 was £11,721,000; for 1925-6 it was £39,500,000. The average number relieved per 10,000 of the population for 1910-14 was 195, the figure for November, 1926 was 559. (These figures include both indoor and out-door poor.) It may be noted that this increase took place long after the recommendations of 1909 and 1917 to transfer the work of the Guardians to other authorities were made, and that no subsequent inquiry has been held as to the desirability for it under changed conditions.

The essence of the work of Guardians is that it is individual, human, and personal, and consequently the greater the capacity of the administrators to fill these needs, the greater service can be rendered to the individual and to the community. Herein lies the difference between the work of Guardians and much of the work done by other public bodies, making the system of secondary importance to the administrators. In addition to all the needs of destitute humanity from birth to death, in sickness and health, in youth and age, and in moral and economic disaster that existed pre-war for the Guardians to relieve, the post-war years have also brought the problem of the able-bodied unemployed in great numbers.

However much we may progress socially, it is to be feared that the weaknesses of humanity, the tragedies and misfortunes of life will continue to provide some material for similar services, and we must therefore see to it that what comes is a change for

the better. The lives and happiness of great numbers of our fellows are involved, many of them being a helpless legacy in the hands of the administrators.

The reform proposals have not been prepared, the Minister says, on the ground that the manner in which Guardians have generally carried out their duties is unsatisfactory. On the contrary he places on record that the quality of the services rendered has been fully appreciated by successive Ministers of Health and he endorses their commendations.

Will the reform proposals bring better care for the poor, more economical administration, progress towards solution of any of the underlying problems? Are these unreasonable tests to apply? The objects set out by the Minister of Health are the co-ordination of all forms of public assistance, and of the provision made for the prevention and treatment of ill-health, decentralization of responsibility at present falling on the Minister, simplification of financial relations between the Ministry of Health and the Local Authorities, and the correction of certain anomalies of historic origin. The method by which he seeks to attain these ends is by the abolition of Boards of Guardians and the transfer of their work to the already over-worked and over-burdened County Councils and to the County Borough Councils, who will in turn delegate part of their duties to other local authorities. Reference has been made above to the number of women serving on Boards of Guardians, and it should be remembered that there are only 111 women serving on County Councils, and that seventeen out of the total of sixty-two have no women members.

It is arguable whether the Minister will attain his objects by the method suggested, but let us consider the reform proposals now before us for London, which will no doubt determine policy for the country. They may be read in detail in the frank report of the special committee on the Poor Law which was presented to the L.C.C. in November last. The report shows that the L.C.C. propose to hand over out-relief, which they describe as the most onerous piece of work to be transferred to them, to the Borough Councils. Now in 1926, £3,120,278 was spent in out-relief in London, the figure for the year ended March, 1921, being £639,903. Two-thirds of the expenditure on out-door relief in London in 1926 was spent in seven out of the twenty-five Metropolitan Unions. Their names, and the Borough Councils of these areas, are familiar to all. The L.C.C. report recalling the statutory right of the destitute to relief and suggesting the delegation of home assistance to the Borough Councils says "no effective control could therefore be exercised in regard to persons relieved" and goes on to say "we have therefore arrived at the conclusion that control by the Council could not extend much beyond laying down general principles and lines of policy." The report also mentioning the supersessory powers now vested in the Minister of Health and stating that they should be conferred on the Council, says "whether in practice the existence of such powers would provide an effective remedy in cases of this kind is problematical." So much for economy under the proposals! The report says little of how the sick, the aged, and the children at present receiving institutional relief in the 200 institutions containing over 100,000 beds now administered by Metropolitan Guardians and by the Metropolitan Asylums Board are to be cared for under the proposals, but a system of a central public assistance committee, assisted by persons nominated, appointed, or co-opted to sub-committees for both indoor and out-door relief is foreshadowed. Removal of executive powers from administrators, centralized control, loss of responsibility and of status has been known to have adverse effects on the quality of the supply in other instances, and is to be feared in this connection where so much depends on the personal factor.

Even more frank than the report of the L.C.C. are the recently uttered words of their Chairman, Sir George Hume, who said that he foresaw a vision of the County Council not only being swamped with work to which they had not been accustomed but with work which would alter the centre of gravity of the duties of that body.

And finally as to the underlying problems. Will not the centralization and bureaucratic control which, it is to be feared, must ensue, bring about a static condition of affairs, a reduction of human care and of the effort made towards their solution? At such a moment when considering whether real reform is before us or only a change of machinery involving no reform, we should do well to remember the words of John Stuart Mill, "All the great sources of human suffering are in a great degree, many of them entirely, conquerable by human care and effort."

EQUAL FRANCHISE.

—THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

"The long controversy as to woman suffrage was settled in principle in 1918 by the consent of all parties. But the franchise granted then was hedged about with arbitrary and illogical restrictions which bore the stamp of impermanence and which such a sagacious Unionist leader as Mr. Bonar Law recognized from the first, and could not long be maintained. It has been reasonably argued that it would be wiser were the minimum age for voters of both sexes fixed at 25. But having evidently decided that this is impracticable and *having rightly pledged themselves to equal political rights for men and women, the Government had no other course open to them than the one they have decided to adopt* (the italics are ours). . . . We ourselves have no fear of any direful results from the extension of the women electorate." This extract from the pages of the *West of Scotland Unionist* indicates the extent to which wiser counsels are spreading in Conservative circles.

EQUAL FRANCHISE IN THE CONSTITUENCIES.

Resolutions on Equal Franchise at the age of 21 were passed at annual meetings of the Women Citizens' Association at Wimbledon and Hendon, both of which were addressed by Mrs. Hubback.

At the annual meeting of the Exeter and district Society for Equal Citizenship Sir Robert Newman spoke of the Married Women (Employment) Bill and of the prospects for Equal Franchise at 21, next session.

THE WESTBURY BY-ELECTION.

Equal Franchise will be brought into the forefront at this by-election. A meeting has been organized by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, which will be addressed by all three candidates. A by-election is a unique occasion for the education both of the candidates and of the electorate.

A MOCK PARLIAMENT AND EQUAL FRANCHISE.

Lord Wolmer, Unionist M.P. for Aldershot, acted as speaker at a debate organized by the Divisional Central Council of the Junior Imperial League last week, when a motion in favour of votes for women at 21 was carried. An admirable speech by Miss N. Tyler turned the scale in the right direction. Lord Wolmer stated that he was much interested in the debate and its results, though he himself is not in favour of the age of 21. Such debates in societies composed mainly of young people of both sexes are becoming popular all over the country, and there is a steady demand for suitable literature, but comparatively few have the opportunity of influencing the opinion of a member of the Government.

[We are anxious in this column to give some indication of the progress of public opinion on the subject of equal franchise, and will welcome *short* paragraphs of special interest.—Ed.]

SHOULD THE COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS BE ELECTED BY PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION?

At an "At Home" given by Lady Courtney at 15 Cheyne Walk on 23rd May, this subject was discussed, the discussion being opened by the Norwegian Minister. The Norwegian Government are supporting the scheme of the Single Transferable Vote, and His Excellency pointed out that this system would do away to a great extent with the intrigues and "vote-broking" that are often a disquieting feature of League elections. Very briefly, the result of the system would be that each member-state of the League would have *only one* effective vote, and that presumably would be used up in supporting the claims of its own particular representative, and could not be available for further bargaining. In the Memorandum submitted by the Norwegian Government to the Secretariat of the League of Nations it is stated that "under the present conditions private conversations, underhand arrangements, and agreements more or less binding interfere in the preparation of the election . . . the Norwegian Government are of opinion that this method is neither desirable, nor safe, nor entirely dignified." It seems, on the face of it, as if the single transferable vote if adopted might put a stop to the worst features of these elections.

THE VOTING AGE FOR WOMEN.

The following reply to a recent question in the House of Commons will be of special interest to our readers at the present time. It will be seen that Great Britain compares very badly with other countries. Sir Evelyn Cecil asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can obtain information in what countries having Parliamentary Government the age for qualification as a voter exceeds 21; what is the qualifying age in each of these countries respectively; and whether, in each case, both sexes are included or what differences are drawn between them? *The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Locker-Lampson)*: As the reply is rather long, and is best presented in tabular form, I will, with my right hon. Friend's permission, circulate it in the Official Report. Following is the reply:—

		Lower Chamber.
Argentine Republic.		
Men	18	
Women	No franchise.	
Austria.		
Men and women	20	
*Belgium.		
Men and women (see footnote)	21	
Czecho-Slovakia.		
Men	21	
Women	26	
Denmark.		
Men and women	25	
Finland.		
Men and women	24	
France.		
Men	21	
Women	No franchise.	
Germany.		
Men and women	20	
Greece.		
Men	21	
Women	No franchise.	
Italy.		
Men	21	
Women	No franchise.	
Japan.		
Men	25	
Women	No franchise.	
Netherlands.		
Men and women	25	
Norway.		
Men and women	23	
Poland.		
Men and women	21	
Portugal.		
Men	21	
Women	No franchise.	
Rumania.		
Men	21	
Women	No franchise.	
Serb-Croat Slovene State.		
Men	21	
Women	No franchise.	
Spain	Parliamentary institutions at present in abeyance.	
Sweden.		
Men and women	23	
Switzerland.		
Men	20	
Women	No franchise.	
U.S.A.		
Men and women	21	

* In Belgium only the following women may vote in parliamentary elections:—

- (1) Widows, not re-married, of soldiers killed in the Great War; widows of Belgian citizens killed by the enemy during the War, or failing them, their mothers, if the latter are widows.
- (2) Widowed mothers of bachelor soldiers killed in the War.
- (3) Women condemned to imprisonment or subject to preventative detention for political reasons during the enemy occupation of Belgium.

MORE WOMEN FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Sutton Coldfield Town Council has elected its first woman member, Mrs. George Huggins having been returned unopposed. In Yorkshire Lady Mabel Smith has been appointed an Alderman of the West Riding County Council. She is the second woman Alderman to be appointed, Miss Hermione Unwin of Leeds having served in that capacity for some years.

WOMEN'S PIONEER HOUSING LTD.

If nothing succeeds like success Women's Pioneer Housing Ltd. should have a heavy post-bag during the next few weeks. Their dinner was a success, their speeches were a success, and so was their financial statement. This company, as our readers know, supplies excellent flats for professional women at from £25 per room per year, in such areas as Kensington and Sloane Square, and it has never failed to pay a dividend of six per cent. This speaks for itself, but at the dinner Sir Josiah Stamp also spoke for it. His speech—surely one of the most interesting after-dinner speeches ever made—was largely concerned with an analysis of the manner in which the capital available in the money-market is allocated between the various enterprises which are looking for capital. In his view the agents responsible for recommending investments take too stereotyped a view of their duties. They prefer to handle large propositions of a sort which they have handled before, and will not put themselves to the trouble of inquiring about smaller, less well-advertised concerns. The result of this is that foreign and colonial loans, or debenture issues by big corporations tend to mop up all the capital available, though in the interests of human happiness and well-being it might have been better to have distributed that money among a number of sound businesses which were attempting to supply something needed in the country at home. At the present moment, in Sir Josiah's opinion, our national savings are £200,000,000 short, whereas our population is increasing. He therefore advises us to invest in Women's Pioneer Housing stock because this would (a) increase the volume of savings, (b) direct capital to one of the channels where it could provide a desperately needed commodity, (c) effect still another form of saving in that the large houses converted by the company were saved from becoming obsolescent through the change in our habits of life, (d) help to preserve neighbourhoods from being depressed by the falling into disrepair and semi-decay of these same large houses. . . . We have only space to add that the company are about to issue a special loan stock at 5 per cent for small investors which can be taken up £1 at a time. Now one is required to hold oneself or to have held for one by others a small amount of the company's stock before one can become a tenant, and we suggest to relations that no better birthday presents than a series of such £1 shares could be imagined for children who are likely one day to become professional women

SAYINGS OF NOTE AT THE DINNER OF WOMEN'S PIONEER HOUSING LTD.

"After all even a married woman is a woman."—Mrs. Ralph Durand.

"A manufacturer, if there be no demand for his product, can create a demand by advertisement, but demand is almost inarticulate and can seldom create supply."—Sir Josiah Stamp.

"Every professional woman's flat should have a back-way out."—Dr. Helen Boyle.

"Food, if properly handled, pays hand over fist."—Miss Muncaster.

"I find I like working at any one thing for about five years."—Mrs. Wilson [who at the end of one five years will have built 1,000 good houses and sold them for £400 apiece].

MISS LILIAN HOVEY.

A correspondent writes: Miss Lilian Hovey, one of a gifted family of sisters distinguished by their outstanding talent and public spirit died in Sheffield after a brief illness last week. She was a medallist of the Royal Academy of Music and taught elocution and singing, besides being herself an educationalist and singer of ability. But she found time for many other interests, travel, politics, social and religious work. She was associated with both the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies and the National Union of Women Workers, and during the war she took an active part in the patrol movement. During the coal strike of 1920, she organized open air concerts attended by thousands of men. Miss Hovey was a loyal Wesleyan, and like her father before her was appointed a local Wesleyan preacher. Her loss will be keenly felt in her native city.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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Parliamentary and General Secretary: Mrs. HUBBACK.

Offices: 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.
Telephone: Victoria 6188.

PRIME MINISTER AND EQUAL FRANCHISE.

Owing to the courtesy of the Women's Unionist Organization the Officers were enabled to attend the meeting at the Albert Hall on 27th May, at which Mr. Baldwin gave an address to the Women's Unionist Organization largely on Equal Franchise. We felt it indeed to be a historic occasion (not without its humour) to be present, when the Prime Minister was making a good old fighting suffrage speech to the women of his party. Women of all parties must feel a sense of gratitude to the Prime Minister for his fine defence of our cause.

WESTBURY BY-ELECTION AND EQUAL FRANCHISE.

We are organizing an active campaign in connection with the Westbury By-election. Miss Auld is in charge and would be glad to have offers of help from voluntary workers who live in the neighbourhood. A meeting of the three candidates has been arranged in Trowbridge for Friday, 3rd June, when Mrs. Blanco White will be in the chair.

GARDEN PARTY.—OUR DISTINGUISHED GUESTS.

Aubrey House, Kensington, Monday, 27th June, at 4 p.m.
The President and the Executive Committee propose to have a garden party on Monday, 27th June, in order to bring suffragists together once again at this critical but hopeful period in the suffrage movement. It is always a great, though perhaps infrequent, pleasure to praise the powers that be, and the presence of Mrs. Baldwin as a guest of honour on this occasion will give Suffragists an opportunity of thanking the Prime Minister through her for the stand he has taken, as well as for her own advocacy of our cause. The Misses Alexander, of Aubrey House, Kensington, have kindly promised to lend their lovely house and garden for the occasion. Among the guests of honour, besides Mrs. Baldwin, will be Dame Millicent Fawcett, Dame Rachel Crowdy, and Miss Agnes Garrett. Tickets, price 2s. 6d., including tea, may be obtained on application to Headquarters.

THE EXCHEQUER.

The revised appeal for the Guarantee Fund has now been issued with a special appeal for the Equal Franchise 1927-28 Campaign. Names of contributors will be printed from time to time in this column, and the complete list will be printed and circulated when the appeal closes. The Treasurer will be grateful for suggestions of names of those interested in Equal Franchise or the special aspects of our Programme. If the amount required is to be raised everyone must help to the full extent of their interest in the cause and their ability to do so. It must not be forgotten that the scale of our efforts for Equal Franchise must be determined by the result of the appeal.

PERSONAL.

We congratulate Mrs. Hubback on her appointment as President of the Hendon Woman Citizens' Association. Mrs. Hubback celebrated her inauguration to this office by a speech on the topic of the moment, Equal Franchise, and a resolution of thanks to the Prime Minister was passed.

THE MALVERN SUMMER SCHOOL.

The Malvern Society is to be congratulated on its excellent Press, including a very good photograph which we wish we could reproduce in these columns.

WHITSUN HOLIDAYS.

The Office will be closed from 5.30 p.m. on Friday, 3rd June, to Tuesday morning, 7th June.

CROSBY HALL.

A CLUB AND HALL OF RESIDENCE now open for WOMEN GRADUATES OF ALL NATIONALITIES.
For further particulars apply to—
THE WARDEN, CROSBY HALL, CHEYNE WALK, S.W. 3.

NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

CARDIFF W.C.A.

Much entertainment as well as instruction in legal proceedings was afforded by the "Mock Trial" held by members of the Cardiff W.C.A. on 25th May. The issue was the damage caused by a mischievous monkey, the owner of which refused to pay the amount claimed by the plaintiff as compensation. The principal parts were taken by the following: Judge, Mrs. Cecil Brown; Counsel for the Plaintiff, Professor Olive Wheeler, D.Sc., and Mrs. Max Ede, B.A.; Counsel for the Defendant, Miss Barke, M.A., and Mrs. Victor Jones; Plaintiff, Mrs. Tattersall, B.Sc.; Defendant, Miss Bronwen Davies. The clever acting of these and of the other witnesses was much appreciated by a large audience.

NEWPORT (MON.) W.C.A.

Women Police.

The work in Newport in connection with the appointment of Women Police culminated at the May Town Council meeting, when Councillor Mrs. Lewcock proposed that the Watch Committee should be asked to include two policewomen in the new appointments that it is understood are about to be made. Mrs. Lewcock pointed out that a Government Commission in 1924 recommended the appointment of policewomen, and that recommendation had been followed by two circulars from the present Home Office and stressed the duties that could be carried out better by women. Councillor Brinsmead Williams seconded and it was supported by Councillor Mrs. Hart and Councillors Dr. McGinn and Griffiths. After a long discussion it was ultimately carried by 14 votes to 13. We are now anxiously awaiting the result of the next Watch Committee and trusting to their sense of justice and fair play. Resolutions from a large number of societies including the Salvation Army, Central Welfare Society, Women's Co-operative Guild, and British Legion and Church Guilds were sent to the Watch Committee and the Town Council to support the notice of motion.

PRESTON W.C.A.

The annual meeting of the Preston Women Citizens' Association was held in the Orient Café on 23rd May. Mrs. James Todd, B.A., J.P., who presided, drew attention to the tribute recently paid to the association in connection with the formation of the Preston District Nursing Association. It was stated that the record of the year's work was very encouraging. Mention was made of the enthusiasm shown in the Peacemakers' Pilgrimage last summer, which was initiated by the Executive Committee; and the effort made to focus public opinion on the Coal Report. The meetings during the winter covered a wide range of subjects, and the speakers had been most interesting. The Local Government section had been revived, and through their efforts the local authorities had decided to effect much-needed improvement in one district in the town. The financial report was very satisfactory. Mrs. Platt and Miss Garratt were elected joint hon. secretaries; and Mrs. Bond was re-appointed to the office of hon. treasurer. The members of the Executive and Local Government Committee were thanked for their past services; and vacancies on the committees were filled by the election of Mrs. Hodgson and Miss Mawdesley. Nominations from affiliated societies were approved.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DIVORCE JURISDICTION (OVERSEAS DOMICILE).

MADAM,—With the text of Mr. William's Bill before me I find that "foreign husbands" as stated in your issue of the 20th May is a mistake. Clause I of the Bill reads "Where the Parties of the Marriage are British subjects domiciled elsewhere than in Great Britain." I think the text of the Bill should be printed by you as the mistake mentioned above may raise false hopes in the minds of the women married to foreigners. I am surprised that the women's organizations are supporting what is obviously a measure in the interest of wealthy men.

M. L. SEATON TREDMAN,
Hon. Secretary,

55 Chancery Lane,
London, W.C. 2.
Divorce Law Reform Union.

[We are grateful to our correspondent for pointing out an inaccurate description.—ED.]

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DR. HELEN HANSON'S LETTERS.

MADAM,—Some journal letters written from Salonica, Serbia, and Constantinople by the late Dr. Helen Hanson have been lost sight of, and Dr. Hanson's family would be glad to hear if they are in the possession of any of your readers. They know that Dr. Hanson intended to have them typed, but they seem to have disappeared.

I shall be grateful for any information sent to me at the office of the League of the Church Militant, Church House, Dean's Yard, Westminster, as the letters are needed for the Memoir that is being prepared.

E. LOUIE ACRES (Mrs. MARSTON ACRES).

THE MEMORANDUM ON FORCED LABOUR.

MADAM,—With reference to the Memorandum on Forced Labour, published in your last issue, I much regret that owing to a mistake in the office, the draft prepared for discussion was sent to you instead of the completed memorandum. The paragraph, line 5, beginning "This Council" down to "slavery" should have been in inverted commas. It is a quotation from the minutes of the meeting of the Council of the League of Nations, and explains why the memorandum was prepared. There are substantial alterations in the recommendations made. In line 20 "free contract labour" should read "free labour" contract labour often being far from free. After stating that forced labour should only be employed for necessary public work, the memorandum asked for a definition to be included in the convention of what is meant by "necessary public work", this term having been unduly stretched in some cases. We also asked that all regulations concerning forced labour should be published, and circulated in the local native language, and that natives should not be employed for portage when other means of transport could be made available. The last paragraph dealing with taxation was entirely omitted. There were other less important changes which space forbids me to mention.

The societies represented on the Council of Women which was appointed to study this question and draw up the memorandum were:—The British Commonwealth League, the Friends Peace Committee, the Women's National Liberal Federation, the National Council of Women, the National Union of Teachers, the League of Nations Union, the Union of Democratic Control, the League of the Church Militant, the Women's Freedom League, the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organizations, and the Women's International League. The Memorandum is being sent to the International Labour Office, where the expert committee appointed by the League of Nations is about to begin its sessions. It is hoped that the more progressive members will be supported by public opinion in this country.

E. UNWIN,

Hon. Sec. of Special Women's Council.

BIRTH CONTROL.

MADAM,—The extraordinary letter from A. J. Ellison, M.A., LL.B., in your current issue, calls for a reply. His universal condemnation must not be allowed to mislead your readers into thinking that it represents advanced medical opinion. The contrary is the case. When Mr. Ellison says that the wife getting information about birth control "would receive something harmful to her unborn children" he is stating that which is flatly untrue. The Medical Research Committee of the Society for Constructive Birth Control, composed of such distinguished medical practitioners as Sir James Barr, C.B.E., M.D., Harold Chapple, Esq., F.R.C.S. (the Surgeon of Guy's Hospital), the Hon. Sir John Cockburn, M.D., Sir Arbuthnot Lane, Bart., C.B., M.B., F.R.C.S., Sir Archdall Reid, M.B., F.R.S.E., W. H. Maxwell Telling, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P. (Professor of Medicine, Leeds University), Dr. Mather Thomson and Dr. E. B. Turner, together with many other distinguished medical men and women came to the unanimous conclusion that: "The methods of birth control in use at the Mothers' Clinic are harmless, and the best known at the present time."

I fear that A. J. Ellison has confused mediaeval theology with modern medicine.

MARIE C. STOPES,

President, Society for Constructive Birth Control and Racial Progress.

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London, W. 1.

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COMING EVENTS.

BLIND SOCIAL AID SOCIETY AND LITERARY UNION.

JUNE 15. 7.30 p.m. 12 Buckingham Street, Strand. Miss Beaumont on "Equal Franchise as the Key to Citizenship."

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

Westminster S.E.C. JUNE 14. 8 p.m. Caxton Hall. Miss Macadam on "Votes for Women." Chair: Mrs. Hoster.

Maidenhead S.E.C.

JUNE 15. 6 p.m. Abbotsleigh. Mrs. Ryland on "Equal Franchise."

SIX POINT GROUP.

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FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 5th June. 6.30, Maude Royden: "The Power of the Spirit: The Outlawry of War."

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