



Central Employment
Bureau for Women &
Students' Careers Assoc

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*Central Employment Bureau
for Women and
Students' Careers Association*

Incorporated

(An Association not for Profit)

54 Russell Square, W.C.1

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54 RUSSELL SQUARE



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(Founder)



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THE VISCOUNTESS BRYCE
(President)

"The benefit to be expected from giving to women the free use of their faculties by leaving them the free choice of their employment and opening to them the same field of occupation as to other human beings, would be that of doubling the mass of mental faculties available for the higher service of humanity."

—JOHN STUART MILL

EVERY day tens of thousands of parents all over the country are faced with the question, "What shall we do with our daughters?" Two or three decades ago the answer was comparatively easy. To parents in what might be called—for lack of a better name—the professional or middle classes, the question hardly presented itself as a problem at all. Marriage was very nearly a foregone conclusion. Failing that, daughters remained at home or with relations, interested themselves in a variety of useful works, and generally reached a dignified spinsterhood untroubled by financial cares. For, even were the bread-winner taken away, there was usually sufficient money left to provide for the comfort of the family; if not, obliging relations were nearly always ready to help. The women of this class were neither expected to work nor trained to do so.

But to-day all that has changed. The War hastened on a steady transfer of money from one class to another. And to-day the question is generally not *whether* women should work, but rather *how* they should work.

This is the situation which the Central Employment Bureau for Women is designed to meet; it is in these circumstances that it claims the sympathetic interest of all thoughtful people.

It is not a question of women wilfully competing with men in an overcrowded market. Thousands of women to-

day simply have to work, whether they like it or not. Heavy taxation and reduced purchasing power of money affect the situation in two distinct ways. They advance the age at which women may hope to marry, owing to the longer time required nowadays before a young man earns enough to support a wife; and they make it impossible for many fathers, perhaps struggling to educate younger children, to keep their elder daughters at home in idleness.

One other aspect of the question must be considered. Not only does the heavy taxation during a man's lifetime make it difficult for him to accumulate capital for the maintenance of his dependants after his decease; but it also reduces the yield of investments so substantially that only in a few cases can a widow or daughter hope to be adequately maintained out of the deceased bread-winner's estate.

In such circumstances the question of "What to do with our daughters?" is one to which thousands of parents must necessarily give the most serious attention.

These conditions are not altogether new, but they have been increasing in severity for two or three decades, and were brought to a head by the War. Twenty-seven years ago far-seeing minds were already directed to a problem that was even then, for thoughtful people, beginning to assume serious form. The crucial need of some centre possessing the experience necessary to advise women regarding suitable training and appropriate careers was emphasised by Sir Walter Besant in an address to what was then the National Union of Women Workers (now the National Council of Women). His suggestions were energetically taken up by Mrs. Creighton, its President, Miss Margaret Bateson (now Mrs. Heitland) and their fellow-workers, and the foundations of the Central Employment Bureau for Women were laid.

Research

INVESTIGATION and Research Work were begun in 1898. Since that date accurate information has been obtained regarding openings and prospects for educated women in very many different professions and occupations; training courses at Schools and Colleges have been examined to ascertain the most efficient; an Appointments Department, closely in touch with the leading professional associations, has been set up; a Vocational Library has been established; many valuable records have been printed and circulated, including the well-known Manual "Careers" (now in its sixth edition) and the Journal "Women's Employment." As a latest development, Vocational Tests are carried out at the Bureau in co-operation with the National Institute of Industrial Psychology.

Thus the Bureau is equipped to-day, as the result of twenty-seven years of costly and diligent research and enquiry, to give to parents, women or girls, the most unprejudiced advice and assistance regarding a suitable career to be adopted, how to proceed with training, and where to obtain remunerative work when qualified.

Even were the services of the Bureau—all placed at the disposal of applicants for a nominal fee—limited to this advice and assistance, its value would be very considerable. Thousands of women every year, for one reason or another, have to enter the labour market knowing nothing of its conditions, what careers are profitable, what mere "blind alleys"; they do not know if a particular occupation is over-stocked, or another flowing with opportunity; they have only a vague idea as to how to set about training, and they risk losing hard-saved money by taking "courses" without competent advice.

Loan Fund

BUT the services of the Bureau stretch far beyond advice. Many years ago it was realised that even the best advice was useless to a woman who needs to earn her living unless she has sufficient money to pay for training or to maintain herself during the training period. Great numbers of gently-nurtured women, through death or disablement of husband or father, loss of fortune or other contingency, are suddenly thrown into the position of having to earn for themselves and often for dependants as well, without financial resources of any kind.

This is where the Loan Fund of the Bureau, perhaps the most valuable of all its activities, is able to render assistance of a very practical kind. By advancing sums of money varying from a few pounds to a few hundreds, the Loan Fund has been able, in the fifteen years of its existence, to assist many women without means to train for professional work (the teaching, medical and nursing professions, law, music, secretarial work, domestic science, and so on) as well as to help them defray expenses incidental to taking up a post at home or abroad, or to start in a business or enterprise of their own. Loans have been granted to cover the cost of training, or to supplement University Scholarships—this timely help often making all the difference between taking up a scholarship or its forced abandonment.

The Fund was started in 1910 with a capital of £500, subscribed by a few friends. This has gradually been increased to £5,000. Because of the steady repayment made by borrowers, it has been possible to lend over £14,000. No interest has been charged, the loans have been repaid out of earnings, and only 2 per cent. of those assisted by the Fund have failed to complete their training or to repay their loans.

Who will calculate the whole volume of benefits that have flowed from these loans? Not only to the recipients themselves, thus given a chance to train for a career in which they are interested, thus saved the heart-breaking prospect of growing old in some unskilled and underpaid "blind-alley" occupation without an opportunity of saving for their old age; but also to their dependants—young children, perhaps, or disabled husbands, or aged parents—whom they have been enabled to help in a way they could otherwise never have dreamed.

The following cases, chosen at random from the Loan Fund records, are typical of hundreds:—

Miss A., the daughter of a retired Schoolmaster, obtained a Scholarship for a University, but could not afford to take this up without supplementary help. A loan of £50 was granted. Miss A. took her degree in 1918, and accepted a teaching appointment in a County Secondary School. Within two years the loan was repaid, and in 1922 Miss A. obtained her M.A. degree (London) and a Research Fellowship at one of the Universities.

Miss B. Her father, a Solicitor, broke down in health and could not afford to let his daughter continue her training in Accountancy. A loan of £15 15s. 0d. was made. Miss B. has had a successful career, easily repaid her loan and was able to help younger members of the family. She is now earning £300 a year.

Miss C., the daughter of a doctor, borrowed £250 towards the expenses of her medical training. She was a brilliant student and obtained an appointment as soon as she was qualified.

Miss D. Owing to ill-health, her father had to give up business. Miss D. was given a loan of £50 to supplement a grant and scholarship from the Board of Education for training as a teacher. She obtained the headship of a country school and is the mainstay of her parents, for whom she has made a home. Her brother was killed in the War.

Two sisters, aged 49 and 44, daughters of a Clergyman, were left with small means at their father's death, and it was necessary for them to supplement their incomes by some form of home work, as the younger sister was delicate. As the elder sister was a good cook, they were advised to start a cake and sweet-making business in their own home. A loan of £14 was made for the purchase of certain cookery utensils and material. The venture was a success.

Miss G. Her father was an Underwriter. He died young leaving a widow and two children unprovided for. The mother obtained a post as a Secretary and applied to the Bureau for advice regarding training for her elder daughter. As the girl was undoubtedly musical, a loan of £50 was made for training as a teacher of music. Miss G. subsequently obtained a good post in a school and easily repaid her loan. After a year she added to her qualifications by taking the L.R.A.M. degree.

Students' Careers Association

BUT even the departments of the Bureau known as The Training and Vocational Information Department, The Loan Fund and The Appointments Department, do not exhaust the work it is doing on behalf of all women.

In this, as in other matters, an ounce of prevention is better—if less spectacular—than a ton of cure. And on this principle the work of The Students' Careers Association is carried on. This co-operates with the Teaching Profession in impressing upon parents and pupils the wisdom of acquiring a thorough general education before commencing any professional training; and in stressing the importance of undergoing definite training for some skilled occupation as a safeguard for the future, whether at the moment the necessity of earning a living is present or not.

The running expenses of the Bureau, which became an Incorporated Society in 1923 through the generosity of

Mr. A. D. Besant, a nephew of the founder, are far greater than the general public realises. The giving of sound advice is as much a question of money as of experience. Continuous research and investigation are necessary; employment conditions change quickly, and advisers must be always on the alert to detect new openings and the decline of occupations; training institutions must be investigated frequently, and often their real value can be ascertained only by personal visits. All this means a great expenditure of time and money.

Fees paid by individuals may defray the actual cost of the time devoted to them, but they cannot cover the general expenditure in collecting and distributing information. Money is urgently needed for the expenses of investigation; even more is it needed for the invaluable work of the Loan Fund. Heavy burdens are falling on the professional and middle classes, and an increasing number of parents look to the Loan Fund to help them in their task of equipping their daughters for work in which they may become self-supporting.

With its present resources the Bureau cannot hope to deal adequately with the increasing volume of work which is being thrust upon it. The Committee has therefore decided to appeal to the public for the means of extending its benefits far beyond their present range.

Parents who visualise what it would mean to *their* daughters to be left without training or capital in a crowded labour market; employers of clerical labour who prefer to have educated women in their employ, provided they be thoroughly *au fait* with their work; all who realise how much the wheels of industry and commerce owe to the patient work of many thousands of women and girls—it is to these, as well as to the charitably-minded of all creeds, that the Bureau appeals for support.

There are few people who, if directly appealed to, would refuse to help a young woman suddenly thrown on her own resources, a widow left with young children to support, a young student anxious to earn her living and relieve a hard-pressed family of the burden of her upkeep. Frequently young workers have to support, either partially or entirely, relations who through delicacy or age are unable to earn for themselves. But only in few cases can individuals directly undertake the financial liabilities involved in such help. The existence of the Bureau provides sympathetic people with an opportunity of doing by co-operation what would be beyond their individual powers, and it is to these that the Committee appeals.

It is surely worth while, even in these days when so much money is required from the public for charitable purposes, to consider the claims of an institution which yearly helps thousands of educated women to become useful and independent members of society—giving to the whole community, instead of liabilities, valuable assets.

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To *The Viscountess Bryce*

President

Central Employment Bureau

54 Russell Square, W.C.1

Madam,

In response to your Appeal I have much pleasure in enclosing Cheque for £
as a donation to the Funds.

Name
(Please give correct title)

Address

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