

WOMEN'S SERVICE
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THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Lord Cecil's Resignation.

In a speech of great dignity and illuminating precision, Lord Cecil explained last week to the House of Lords the reasons which led him to resign from the Cabinet. It appears that a long series of misgivings regarding the Government's practical devotion to the principle of disarmament culminated in the conviction that the lukewarmness of the Admiralty had been allowed to prejudice the successful outcome of the recent Three Power Conference on Naval Disarmament. The attitude which he opposed to this lukewarmness may be summed up in his plea: "Surely our nations, instead of counting up every ton and every gun in each other's fleets, should rather have regarded themselves as equal contributors to the joint force whose chief duty was the maintenance of the peace of the world." Between the resignation of Lord Cecil and last week's announcement of the Government's intention to curtail its programme of cruiser construction there appears to be no direct and obvious connection. We are tempted, however, to suggest that the resignation of a man of Lord Cecil's calibre and the public recital of the reasons which led him to take so momentous a step may have provided a healthy jolt to a Government which is, after all, honourably pledged to the cause of disarmament.

Cruisers.

It is astonishing, almost bewildering, that there should be anyone in England who objects to the Government's decision to build only one new cruiser instead of the three with which, apparently, we were threatened. We do not need three cruisers: we are so far ahead of all other navies that build as they may they cannot catch up. They would still have fewer ships of this class than we have even if we were to build no more at all. The one that we are to build is probably being proceeded with as a concession to the feelings that there is something immoral about doing nothing whatever, that a gap is unpleasant and each of these giant ships has a considerable effect upon employment. It has also a considerable effect upon expenditure, but in spite of this, and of the lack of definite occupation for this cruiser when she is built, people are still found to write letters to the Press complaining that if this sort of thing goes on we may "in two or three years" find ourselves to be in deadly peril, having lost, apparently, not only the habit of building but even the power of designing ships of war, so that we have to throw ships together anyhow, in a tearing hurry, risking the safety of our Empire. Well, if that is the worst bogey they can find for

us, we are undismayed. We are delighted that Mr. Churchill should have carried his point—if it be his point—and not at all afraid of the next three years. But one reflection does present itself. If two-thirds of a naval programme can be scrapped at a moment's notice, at the instance of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the relieved consent of the entire nation, upon what principle are we to conclude that our naval programmes are founded? If one cruiser will suffice, and we all know it, why was it ever proposed that we should be burdened with three?

Lady Iveagh, M.P.

The result of the Southend Election gives us a seventh woman M.P. Fate, in some directions, has been surprisingly kind to women. Under what more inauspicious circumstances could a woman enter Parliament than as deputy for a husband who has been raised to the Peerage from a "safe seat." Imagination pales before the kind of woman M.P. that might materialize from such conditions. And yet—fate has given us Lady Astor, individually herself, blazing feminist, political free lance, and now Lady Iveagh, a sturdy upholder of Equal Franchise and a woman who has achieved off her own bat and on her own initiative distinction and trust in the counsels of her party. We offer her our hearty congratulations.

Unemployment Insurance.

The debate on the Unemployment Insurance Bill, so far as it has gone, is not illuminating. It has been stated in the Press that the Government intend to increase the proposed benefit for young persons, and that some of the younger Conservatives will introduce a clause providing a substantial sum for the training which was recommended in the Blanesburgh report. But neither of these points have yet been reached. The Oppositions are at present attacking the Bill as premature, because its finance is based upon the assumption that we shall by 1929 have reached a more or less normal state in regard to unemployment (by which they seem to mean about 650,000 unemployed!), whereas in fact there is no reason to suppose that the present figure of a million will diminish rather than increase. They also quarrel with the Government's statement that the new rules will throw only 30,000 men out of benefit, questioning both the number and the official belief that the burden of the workers displaced will not be transferred to the rates. The arguments on both sides seemed inconclusive, as nobody is apparently in a position to produce evidence in support of his contentions. Two interesting statements were made. The Minister of Labour said that the proportion of insured persons who, after benefit has been disallowed, go to the Relieving Officer within a fortnight is only 13.5 per cent., and Mr. Griffiths informed the House that since 1921 40,000 of his own members have never been able to obtain a day's work in the steel trade.

Age of Marriage.

The *Essex Weekly News* for 4th November contains the report of a case in which a man of 22 was charged with the carnal knowledge of a girl of 13 who is now about to become a mother. The defendant pleaded guilty to the charge, and it was stated in court that he knew the girl's age at the time of the offence. It was also stated that he was anxious to marry her. He was sentenced to three days' imprisonment, which meant that he was discharged on the last day of the Assizes. This is the kind of case which provides an argument in some people's eyes against the raising of the age of marriage for girls in this country above the 12 years at which it stands at present. But nothing could be more unsatisfactory than the present state of things by which

a child of 13 can be defiled with impunity, while the view is apparently held that reparation is made because the man who has wronged her expresses himself as willing to make her his wife.

The Birth-rate and the Death-rate.

The birth-rate of England and Wales for the third quarter of 1927 touches a lower level than the birth-rate of any other third quarter, not excepting that reached during war years. In 1917 it touched the low level of 17.2 per 1,000, from which it subsequently rose to 24.2 in 1920; thereafter declining to 16.7 in 1927. The annual rate for 1926 was 17.8, and for the first three quarters of the present year, 17.2. Meanwhile the death-rate for the same third quarter touched the still lower level of 9.4 per 1,000, which is slightly in excess of the record low death-rate for the third quarter of 1926. An infant death-rate, however, of 50 per 1,000 births for the third quarter creates a second low level record for 1927. Taking these three third quarter rates together, we may conclude that an increase of the population has been secured with an increasing economy of human life and effort, by the excess of a low birth-rate over a still lower death-rate.

The Clergy and the Beaten Track.

Once again the problem of low clerical stipends has been under discussion at last week's meeting of the Church Assembly. Once again the hard lot of the married clergyman faced with dilapidation and pensions charges, calls for hospitality, an un-economic house, and higher price levels was surveyed and deplored. In view of it all the special Clergy Commission's report suggests a number of remedies. Given certain benefactions, it points out, all livings might be raised to the £350 standard. In the course of subsequent discussion, £500, £550, and £600 a year were mentioned as the inferior limit of a tolerable clerical income. For our own part, we are at a loss to understand the psychological factor which precluded the Commission and its critics from unanimously enumerating and accepting the proposition that whatever funds may be made available for the augmentation of clerical stipends should take the form of family allowances, for it is among the clerical families, and not among the celibate clergy, that the shoe pinches. Perhaps a kind of unimaginative conservatism confines the majority to a beaten track in spite of the fact that it leads invariably into a barren wilderness. Perhaps a minority, holding to the ideal of a celibate priesthood, reacts from any proposal which seeks to confer a definite economic status on clerical marriage and parenthood. But in our opinion, four considerations seem to mark out the Church as perhaps the ideal starting point for a large-scale experiment in the principle of Family Endowment. In the first place, a clerical income being in no sense an economic payment for value of work done, but rather the material equipment of a worker who is called upon to give the best that is in him, the argument that Family Endowment is unfair on the unmarried man giving identical service, bad at the best of times, loses what force it may have. In the second place the children of the clergy, reared in homes which offer the essentials of life without luxury or elaboration, and born of parents whose moral calibre is of a high standard, are among the most desirable stock from which to recruit the coming generation. In the third place the educational standards of the clergy are in general disproportionately high as compared with those other grades of the community in receipt of similar income levels; thus among the clergy the family constitutes a relatively heavy financial burden. In the fourth place, large sections of the clergy are precluded by conscience and ecclesiastical tradition from adopting methods which for other sections of the community make family limitation an easy response to economic stringency.

The Starving Miners.

Some two hundred miners reached London last Sunday, having for the most part marched from Wales to lay the case of their starving comrades—men, women, and children—before Londoners and before Parliament. They seemed a fine lot of men, dignified and courteous in manner, and bearing evident marks of hardship on many of their faces. The procession which escorted them in the falling rain to Trafalgar Square seemed to be almost wholly composed of members of the Labour Party. We would gladly have seen contingents from the other parties and from the churches. The care of the miners is above party. It is a national concern. The little lights from the miners' lamps twinkling in the gathering dusk on the plinth

at Trafalgar Square, the dense, orderly, but deeply moved crowd, brought home to the most thoughtless that here is something calling for the best thought, the swiftest action our great country can provide.

Traffic in Women and Children.

On 15th November, the League Committee of Experts for the study of the traffic in women and children, met privately in Geneva to consider the observations of the various Governments on the hitherto unpublished Part II of their Report on this nefarious traffic. Our readers will doubtless remember that Part I of the report dealing with the general results of the inquiry was published early in the year, while Part II, containing the details of cases brought to the notice of the Committee, was held over until the Governments concerned had been given the opportunity of examining the material and giving their opinions upon it. This has now been done, and we understand that the Committee is at present considering the question of what alterations may be necessary, in the light of such comments, before final publication.

Cambridge Undergraduates and Birth Control.

A Cambridge Union debate on the subject of birth control was the occasion last week of an unprecedented attendance of members and a pitch of interest which few major political issues can command. The high eminence of the two outside speakers for and against a resolution in favour of the dissemination of birth control knowledge doubtless contributed to the tension. Dr. Crichton-Miller spoke in favour, the Bishop of Hereford against. The key-note of Dr. Crichton-Miller's case was the proposition that "to regard the birth of a child as a piece of bad luck is an attitude towards the next generation which is so fundamentally immoral that it cannot be supported for one moment." The final division upheld his case by a majority of 512 to 315. The debate was confined by a special order to men students only, on the ground that the speakers might find themselves hampered by a mixed audience. We are inclined to think that such a restriction was unnecessary. The technical aspects of the question are clearly unsuitable for discussion before an audience of young unmarried people of either sex, mixed or unmixed. But the aspects which were on this occasion under consideration, the social, ethical, and economic aspects, are of equal interest to both men and women faced with the responsibilities of citizenship, and the guidance of Dr. Crichton-Miller and the Bishop of Hereford would assure the maintenance of an objective and reverend spirit with which embarrassment would be incompatible.

Northern Ireland prefers to Wait and See.

Mr. Joseph Devlin's Bill to extend the franchise in Northern Ireland to women over 21 was defeated in the Northern Parliament on 15th November. The Premier, moving its rejection, said that so important a matter as the franchise should be treated by a measure introduced by a responsible Government. "The British Government had announced its intention of bringing back the old simple British system of single member constituencies, and of altering the franchise to provide for women of 21, and the (North Irish) Government felt that it was only right to wait until they could introduce a measure dealing with both these matters." We hope he will be quick to follow when Britain gives her lead.

Sir Henry Wood and Women Orchestral Players.

In a speech of thanks for a presentation at the conclusion of the rehearsal for the Norwich Festival, Sir Henry Wood said that he was the first conductor in England to introduce women into an orchestra. He had never regretted it because women brought a spirit into an orchestra which it was impossible to get without them. They were, he considered, equally as good as men as players of the violin, viola, and 'cello. Many admirers of Sir Henry Wood have warmly appreciated his recognition of musical ability irrespective of sex, and his fine tribute to the special part which women can fill in his orchestra and to the merits of their playing is characteristic of the man. Imagine Sir Henry Wood inquiring whether a woman 'cellist or violinist is married or unmarried before she is accepted for his orchestra!

A Small Matter.

Last week a minor innovation was wrought in the social amenities of the House of Commons when women strangers appeared for the first time in the Strangers' smoking-room.

MOTHER INDIA.

In order that the speakers might feel themselves free to say what they thought necessary, as well as to avoid the dangers involved in highly condensed reports of speeches on a difficult subject, it was agreed that the Press should not be present at Monday's representative conference on *Mother India*, held under the auspices of the N.U.S.E.C. in the Caxton Hall. It is therefore not possible that any attributions or quotations from what was said should be given here. This is a pity, for the speakers from the platform, who included Lord Lytton, Lady Chelmsford, and Miss Lena Sorabji, were all people of weight, well-acquainted with India; their remarks were practical and unsensational, and a much larger audience wanted to listen to them than could be found places in the hall. It is possible, however, to convey the general impression made by nearly a dozen speeches, for as it turned out, among the men and women with experience of India there was no difference of opinion. They all seemed to feel a sincere liking and sympathy for the Hindu race—it was especially pleasant to listen to descriptions of the self-sacrifice, gentleness, grace, and spirituality which they recognized in Indian women. Yet there was general agreement that the statements made by Miss Mayo in her book were true, and that she had accurately diagnosed the root causes of the evils which horrify us all. The one valid criticism that can be brought against her is that she fails to mention the efforts being made by the people of India themselves to overcome these evils—the many Hindu societies, some entirely run by women, which are doing valuable work among the widows, or for infant welfare, or even for teaching and raising the untouchables. It is the existence of this effort, even though workers are few and confined to the native Christians and reformed Hindu sects and money desperately needed for their training, which makes it possible to hope that real reform will one day be brought about. Problems such as these, bound up with the most ancient customs, the strongest instincts and deepest religious feelings of a race, cannot be solved by governmental ordinances, nor by what is felt to be interference and imposition on the part of foreigners. They can only be dealt with as the result of a real change of

ONE ROYAL ROAD TO LEARNING.

By C. C. HARRIS.

The inherent educational force of the Women's Institutes is beginning to be recognized. When an organizer starts a Women's Institute she stresses the self-governing basic principles which underlie the simple constitution of the whole movement. She states that the Institutes, throughout England and Wales, themselves nominate and elect the National Federation of Women's Institutes Executive Committee and that the Institutes themselves through their delegates assembled at the Annual General Meeting, control and dictate the policy carried out by this committee, that the Institutes in counties have formed themselves into County Federations and that the Institutes in a county elect and control the Executive Committee of that county.

All this sounds beautiful and is difficult to comprehend aright. The organizer further explains that the simple rules which must be accepted by every Institute safeguard the rights of the members to govern their own Institutes. The significance of this pleasing and simple statement is only realized by slow degrees. The lesson of individual responsibility in arriving at decisions which are made by the whole Institute and of loyally helping to carry out the decisions, the lesson of respect for the opinions of others, the lesson of working and of playing wholeheartedly with other women are lessons learnt slowly and by experience. In the process of learning them the countrywoman of every degree is discovering her own value and the unexpectedly high value of her neighbours. The evolution of an Institute is interesting. Before the inaugural meeting there may be only three or four women who are anxious to have an Institute. The other women present may never have heard of an Institute and, even if they had, the idea of taking any steps towards the organization of a meeting would never have entered their heads. Life in the past has not bred initiative in the villagers. Leadership has been left to those whose social position with its accepted sense of responsibility made it seem right that no step towards progress should be taken by the village until the suggestion came from the tacitly acknowledged leaders.

The Women's Institute has arrived, a new factor in the development of the village. The lady of the manor has been elected

desire and belief among the people themselves. And the key to this is the education of the women. The women of India, though incredibly confined both in body and mind, are nevertheless the rulers of their homes. Against their opposition the new knowledge brought from Europe by many of their male relations pits itself in vain. The men concerned recognize this, and deplore it—in fact, one minor difficulty seems to be that the girls who do receive education are so eagerly sought in marriage that few remain to find careers as social workers. The completely uneducated mind, here as everywhere else, cannot be reasoned with, but can be shown. Examples, under their own eyes, of parents who educate their children instead of betrothing them, of women who practise the elements of sanitation, are immediately fruitful. The demand therefore that is made upon us in England is twofold—for money with which to train nurses, doctors, teachers, social workers, and for personal service. The Social Institute in Bombay, for instance, would welcome and direct the efforts of Englishwomen willing to embark upon such a life. Passing resolutions will do nothing, nor can we assuage our uneasiness by calling upon governments or societies. What is needed is personal sacrifice by individuals—a type of response that is unfashionable in days when organizations for satisfying social consciences stand round us like penny-in-the-slot machines. Two reflections must surely force themselves upon any woman who considers these facts—what amazing consequences have sprung, and will continue to spring, from the victories won for their sex a generation ago by a handful of English women, and what a debt we owe, and shall continue to owe, to our slightly despised, shabby, obscure, and glorious social workers. Their activities may not sound exciting, the societies they run may not be large, the weary visits they pay may be denounced or made the object of satire, but it is through these conduit-pipes that a stream of knowledge is enabled to reach the people, it is through their goodwill that goodwill is spread amongst us. That a great nation should envy us our district visitors, should desperately desire them, must be one of the strongest correctives to spiritual pride and intellectual snobbishness ever encountered at a public meeting.

President by the unanimous vote of the members of the new Institute. It may be agreed that the election was a foregone conclusion, but, even so, it is by the vote of the members she has been made President and in succeeding years she can only remain President if nominated and re-elected each year. The President learns another lesson in democratic government when she finds the committee elected by the Institute must consider all matters in connection with the work of the Institute but can carry out no important piece of work until proposals thereupon have been approved by the members of the Institute at their monthly meeting.

The President finds the Institute a liberal education. She learns her duty is to draw out the opinions of the members and not impose her own opinions even when she knows how easy such an imposition would be. She learns that equality of membership is a real thing. She learns that she has undertaken a big task in trying to make self-government effective in the Institute. In all this learning she is making herself efficient in committee work and in the conduct of public meetings and, unconsciously, is becoming a good speaker. An audience of village women is critical in a curious indefinite way. It makes no effort to affect interest in a speech which strikes no responsive chord but indulges in a wooden passivity. Sincerity, not oratory, wins the heart of a Women's Institute meeting and many a President has gained the prize. She had hoped the Institute would be a good thing for the village. She finds it a better thing for the President than she could have imagined. Her fellow officers and other members of committee have, generally for the first time, the opportunity to learn the responsibility of office and the correct methods of procedure in carrying out their duties. The educative value of these lessons is great. The members themselves, in the monthly meeting which must combine business, education, and recreation, have from the beginning the opportunity to control their own machinery of government. The programme for the monthly meetings must be approved beforehand. Each meeting begins with business. This part of the meeting demands from the chairman clarity, conciseness,

(Continued on next page.)

WOMEN HOUSE PAINTERS AND DECORATORS.

PROTEST MEETING.

A meeting was held in Room 13, Caxton Hall, on 17th November, under the auspices of the Open Door Council, Lady Rhondda being in the chair, to afford an opportunity for the point of view of Women House Painters and Decorators in regard to the Lead Paint Act, to be put before the public. The meeting was well attended by women painters, men painters, and the general public. Mrs. Abbott was called upon by the chair without delay, and gave an able review of the main facts. She pointed out that not only had the women been three times refused when they had asked for a deputation to be received, but also the authorities concerned had not troubled themselves to learn the views of the women's firms affected in other ways. The order came into action on the 19th, and in future women will not be permitted to paint walls or ceilings, or to do any decorative work except such work as is "not for industrial purposes," unless they use zinc paint. This will in effect stop all apprenticeship for the future though the present apprentices may remain. Mrs. Abbott further reminded her hearers of the extreme obscurity surrounding the means and the persons by which the clause prohibiting the woman painter crept into the Geneva Convention of 1921, and her account of these mysterious proceedings without any discussion of the women's case was corroborated by an expert from the body of the hall, who had been present throughout.

Dr. Graham Little was the next speaker and his speech, from the scientific and medical point of view, carried conviction to his hearers. It may be summed up in his epigram, "I dislike half-baked physiology and wholly cooked statistics." His analysis of certain English statistics was most damning, and Miss Bondfield's justification for claiming that Dr. Alice Hamilton's figures supported her contentions was shown to be more than doubtful. Dr. Little expressed the opinion that Miss Bondfield had not read the book through. After Miss Whately had spoken the meeting was thrown open for discussion, and the audience were invited to ask the House Painters questions. Several male painters who spoke showed a certain inability to understand the women's position, but on the whole the discussion was fruitful. A male painter, voicing the widespread demand for the total prohibition of lead paint, was received with sympathetic applause. The following resolution was passed (proposed by Miss Goodbrugh, a woman decorator, and seconded by Miss Neilans) :-

"That this meeting of women house painters and others, held in the Caxton Hall on Thursday, 17th November, 1927, protests against section 2 of the Lead Paint (Protection Against Poisoning) Act, 1926, in so far as it prohibits women from engaging in the work of house painting and decorating under the same protections as men, and calls upon the Government to introduce an amending Bill to remove this disability. The meeting further expresses the strongest indignation that such disabilities should have been placed upon women's employment without any inquiry having been instituted by the Home Office into the health of the women engaged in the painting industry or their conditions of work."

LABOUR WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS AND PROTECTIVE LEGISLATION.

The November number of our contemporary *The Labour Woman* contains a long statement signed by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and secretary of the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organizations on the subject of Protective Legislation and the Woman Worker. The arguments set out are for the most part familiar to our readers. It is again claimed that the chances of employment and the wages of women are not affected by restrictions placed on their work, and it is again stated that medical opinion holds that there is a greater incidence of lead poisoning among women than among men. In regard to this we would call attention to the statements of Dr. Graham Little and others in a contrary sense. The appalling injury caused to many men and through them to their families seems to constitute an almost overwhelming argument for total prohibition, not of employment in the trade as established by law, but of the use of lead paint, for both sexes alike. The Committee's manifesto states "That if women could be relieved of domestic duties, it may be their resistances to industrial fatigue would approximate more nearly to that of men, but legislation

has to deal with things as they are" (the italics are ours), for it is perhaps here that so much misunderstanding arises. We look to the future while the typical "restrictor" of women's work looks rather to the *status quo* and to the past. We believe that the present domestic drudgery can be relieved and that women should, and will eventually, be paid such adequate wages that they can employ some domestic help if they are in the outside wage-earning market. It sounds like a miracle, but miracles do happen continually if we believe they can. In this connection it gives us pleasure to endorse with all the emphasis at our command the Committee's opinion that "the greatest evil in the industrial employment of women is low wages—whether of men or women." We regret, however, to see certain (possibly unconscious) misrepresentation of the feminist point of view such as is shown for example in the suggestion that feminists might oppose the fixing of minima, both of wages and work and prefer "that the employer maintains his right to sweat his workers in the name of equality." We confess this sentence is difficult to understand, as there seems every reason that minima should apply to both sexes.

ONE ROYAL ROAD TO LEARNING. (Continued from previous page.) and a thorough grasp of the matters to be explained, and demands from the meeting intelligence, alertness, and courage in the expression of opinions. Can anyone doubt the educative value to President and to members of learning together how to conduct a business meeting?

The lines of development in each institute depend on the will and ability of the members.

The programmes for the monthly meetings reveal an amazing variety of interests. There are few subjects which have not appeared on Institute programmes. The replies from two Institutes to the question "which lecture interested your members most?" Plato's Philosophy and the Care of Perambulators remind one of the individual psychology of each Institute, though the comment of a shrewd old member: "it's the kind of speaker that matters more than the kind of subject" is, to a great extent, true. The realization of the necessity of concentration on a subject if real knowledge is to be gained has led to the formation of Study Circles in many Institutes. Some of these Study Circles organized in the simplest, most delightful ways have led to unexpected results. For instance, a Berkshire Institute Study Circle on Local History ended its session with a charming pageant of episodes in local history. Sound teaching in handicrafts has done more than encourage the production of good work, it has helped the humblest worker to realize that in creating a good article for household use, she is among the constructive workers of the country.

The National Federation is the only organization of country women. Valuable work has been done in its 4,000 branches throughout rural districts in definite community service of various kinds.

Serious thought has been given to the solution of the problems affecting the countryside. Apart from the economic questions involved in the difficult position of the agricultural industry at the present moment, there is still the social question of how to make life in the country so attractive that the glitter of life in the town will cease to allure.

Women's Institutes have welcomed the spirits of good fellowship and of gaiety to the village. The men (slow to recognize the readiness of the Women's Institute to undertake any piece of work which makes for the good of the village) are now eager to acclaim that if "anything is to be done the Institute must do it." The coming together in a village, on a common platform, of women old and young of different positions in life, women of different political and of different religious views, women of widely different outlook united in the purpose of doing all they can as an associated body to make their bit of the countryside right and pleasant, will be of enormous benefit to their own and succeeding generations. The mine of public service in shrewd, capable, and practical countrywomen has been discovered by the Women's Institutes. The use made of the treasures to be found will depend on the wisdom of the workers.

The cumulative result of countrywomen making use of the facilities afforded by the Institutes to develop their powers of mind and heart, must have an appreciable and growing influence on national public thought and conduct.

The latest official recognition of the value of Institutes in adult education occurs in the recently published Development Commissioners' Report and in the Report of the Adult Education Committee of the Board of Education.

STREET OFFENCES INQUIRY COMMITTEE.

The first public meetings of this inquiry were held on 17th and 18th November. The plan is to hear the official witnesses first, then the critics of the present law and practice, and later to consider what amendments, if any, to the existing code are desirable. The witnesses heard were Sir Ernley Blackwell, Legal Under-Secretary to the Home Office; Mr. Graham-Campbell, stipendiary magistrate at Bow Street; and Mr. Cancellor, the stipendiary at Marlborough Street. Mr. Hugh Macmillan, K.C., proved an excellent and most lucid Chairman, and his examination of the witnesses clearly brought out most, but not all, of those absurd anomalies in these solicitation laws with which the active and challenging propaganda of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene during the last five years has already made our readers familiar. The *Evening Standard* (18th November) says that the first discovery of the Inquiry Committee "has been of an almost incredible legal tangle, of definitions and regulations which go criss-cross through one another, contradict and cancel one another until the whole corpus of law on the matter begins to look almost meaningless." The points which have already emerged show that the alleged "annoyance" is in most cases a purely artificial formula, that in these charges there is no behaviour at all "likely to cause a breach of the peace", nor is there usually any "riotous or indecent behaviour." It was freely admitted that the law has to be constantly "strained" in order to obtain convictions in thousands of cases where, in actual fact, none of these things really happen. It is easy to see, after these two days' examination, why the A.M.S.H. has laid such stress on the need for having legal experts on this Inquiry and we are thankful that Mr. Hugh Macmillan, Sir Joseph Priestley, and Mr. Jowitt have, by skilful questioning, laid bare many of the absurdities of the present system.

We shall have to be on our guard, however, for there is already a noticeable tendency to suggest that it would simplify matters if mere solicitation were to be made the offence, thus dropping the present necessity under English laws of alleging annoyance. Solicitation for immoral purposes is an almost unprovable offence, and is quite unprovable if the person solicited will not give evidence. The reason why we have supported the A.M.S.H. in its demand for an Inquiry was not to make convictions easier but to obtain a just and equal law, and we see neither justice, equality, nor sound law in making an unprovable offence.

The Bishop of Durham pressed each witness to say if they thought the present system led to injustice and were there complaints of such injustice? The general answer was that "very few persons are unjustly convicted as prostitutes who are not, in fact, prostitutes," and very few complaints were received. But that is not the point. What we should like to have had asked, and answered is: "Are many prostitutes unjustly convicted of annoyance or of riotous or indecent behaviour who have, in fact, been guilty neither of annoyance nor riotous nor indecent conduct?" The reply of the witnesses, on their own previous admissions, would then have had to be: "Yes, the great majority of the 3,000 'prostitutes' convicted each year are unjustly convicted."

We noticed that the witnesses, two of whom were London stipendiary magistrates, seemed to have great difficulty in hearing Mr. Hugh Macmillan, whose questions were clearly enunciated and easily audible to those at the back of the room. This apparent deafness of magistrates must make matters even more difficult for nervous and confused defendants in the Courts, and we suggest this is an item which might well receive consideration in the Committee's Report.

THE CASTLE OF HIMSELF.¹

A new nursery book has come into being. A real fairy story. Real because it deals with real life and a fairy story because the writer sees fairies all around us in this wonderful world. Mary Rolt possesses in a high degree the greatest of all gifts, imagination and sympathy, and she is able to write for children the sort of books they love.

To see all life as a game is the great attribute of childhood, to live oneself into a story is one of the greatest joys of children of all ages. In many cases we grown-ups drag them out of this fairyland all too soon. Mary Rolt would preserve it for them, and she succeeds most admirably in *The Castle of Himself*, a book that many mothers and nurses will learn to bless when they are trying to deal with "Messrs. Cough and Cold," etc. A most suitable Christmas gift for any small child. M. S.

¹ *The Castle of Himself*, by Mary Rolt (Oxford University Press, 1s. 6d.).

THE AMSTERDAM STUDY CONFERENCE ON PEACE.

By CICELY CORBETT FISHER.

The decision taken at the Paris Conference of the International Alliance for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship to study Peace questions, was evidently fully approved by the Auxiliaries. The First Study Conference on Peace and the League of Nations that has just been held in Amsterdam was a striking success. The delegations were alert, interested and well-informed. The economic and political experts, men and women, were listened to with the closest attention and appreciation, and the resolutions (which will be published next week) closely debated. The standard of the speeches was high, and all three Alliance languages were impartially used—very little time was spent on translations and the time-table was strictly adhered to, through the commendable ruthlessness of the various chairmen. There is a universal feeling of satisfaction in so well ordered and smooth running a conference more than justifying the expectations of its organizers, to whom infinite credit is due.

A brilliant account of the World Economic Conference was given by M. Maurette, Director of the Research Section of the I.L.O. M. Maurette stayed throughout the meetings, as also did the other experts, so that the conference was able to consult them on the various resolutions presented. Dr. Marie Elizabeth Lüders, M.R., a delegate to the E.C., spoke admirably on Economic War or Peace. Dr. Heer Jan Oudegust, the well-known trades union leader, discussed the distribution of raw materials, and Sir George Paish presented a disturbing picture of the crisis through which the world was passing, from which it could only avoid complete economic and financial breakdown if all countries abandoned their customs tariffs and cancelled their war debts.

Two distinguished Dutch women, Dr. Kluyver, the technical expert to the Dutch Delegation to the League Assembly, who spoke with extraordinary clarity on Arbitration, and Dr. Bakker van Bosse contributed immensely to the success of the Conference. Disarmament was dealt with by Frau Emmy Freundlich, M.P. for Austria, and President of the International Women's Co-operative Guild, and by M. de Madariaga, Chief of the Disarmament section of the League, in a speech of wonderful simplicity and persuasiveness.

The public dinner numbered nearly 200 guests. Quite the most popular speech was made by Lord Astor, who recommended to the husbands and bachelors of the world the public minded wife as the ideal home maker.

Apart from the really excellent work done by the Conference, and the amazingly generous Dutch hospitality, individual and general, perfect down to the minutest and most ingenious detail, the presence and eloquence of Mrs. Chapman Catt ensured success. She had come specially from New York to be present at this first Peace Study Conference. No one could have resisted the inspiration of her speech at the public meeting, when she gave a solemn pledge to devote herself henceforward to the cause of peace—nor when she suggested that the miracle of the sudden enfranchisement of the women of so many countries was perhaps brought about in order that they might the more effectively go forth as apostles of Peace.

NOW EAST NOW WEST.¹

This is one of Susan Ertz's clever stories about Americans in England. It describes how a charming, egotistic, ambitious young woman dragged her husband away from the life that suited him in New York because she hoped that materially and emotionally she would be able to get what she wanted in Europe. She made friends in a set of people who were regarded as socially and intellectually important, and for the time charmed them. Then she discovered that they did not really want her, and did not in their heart of hearts feel that she was one of their own kind. Her husband meanwhile had developed and become less narrowly American under the influence of a woman friend. He began to fit into the English environment better, just as his wife discovered that she could never really belong to it. Of course, she dragged him back to America again; in spite of his awakened interest in European culture, his only very strong feelings were for his wife and child.

¹ *Now East Now West*, by Susan Ertz. (Ernest Benn, 7s. 6d. net.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS.

By BERTHA MASON.

FOURTEEN WOMEN MAYORS.

The outstanding feature of the elections of Lord Mayors and Mayors in over 300 boroughs and cities in England and Wales was the number of women chosen as chief magistrates. Liverpool elected as its Lord Mayor Miss Margaret Beavan, J.P., who by her work for the invalid children of the poor has earned the title of Liverpool's "Little Mother." Sir Arthur Salvidge, in proposing her election, said: "Women will soon be in a position to make or mar the prosperity and progress of this country. Already," he added, "women local government electors were in a majority in Liverpool over men electors in twenty-four wards, and that," he thought, "was an additional justification for the innovation of a woman Lord Mayor." It is encouraging to note that Miss Beavan's election to the office was supported by all parties. We congratulate the City Fathers of Liverpool on their generous recognition of the fact that there are "Mothers in Liverpool" as well as "Fathers," and that the service of the former in local government work is as much needed as that of the latter.

A somewhat different spirit prevailed at Deptford, where some opposition was raised, unsuccessfully, we are glad to say, to the election of a woman, Mrs. Beatrice Maude Drapper, as Mayor for the ensuing year. Mrs. Drapper has been a member of the Deptford Borough Council for nine years. For nearly twenty-one years she has been a member of the Greenwich Board of Guardians, and for the last three years chairman of the Board, the first woman to hold that position. Certainly she does not lack experience. Nor did the opposing councillor base his objection to Mrs. Drapper's nomination, if we are rightly informed, on any other ground than that the Mayor elect was a "woman", and he objected to serving under a "woman." If this was really the case, we agree with Mrs. Drapper that the objection is "antediluvian." If, however, the pain of serving under a woman Mayor is too deep-seated, and too acute to be easily borne, there is a simple remedy ready to hand.

The Deptford episode brings us back to the point we tried to make in our article of 11th November. So far as we are concerned, we are of opinion that questions of sex, party, or creed should not be introduced into elections for local authorities. We hold no brief for the election of unsuitable women to public bodies because they are women. What we want for county, borough, and district councils and for boards of guardians are the best representatives we can find, irrespective of sex, creed, and party politics—men and women who are the best fitted and the most suitable for the work which has to be done. If the best-fitted for the office and the work happens to be a woman, why should any objection be raised. If local government work is to be satisfactorily carried out, we must have men and women, working harmoniously together, for the good of the community.

In addition to Liverpool and Deptford, twelve other councils have elected women as their chief magistrates, viz. Bury St. Edmunds, Chesterfield, Eastbourne (Councillor Miss Alice Hudson re-elected), Lichfield, Merthyr Tydfil, Pudsey, Salisbury, Southampton (Mrs. Foster Welch, J.P., thus becoming *ex officio* "Admiral of the Port"), West Bromwich, Tenby, Whitehaven, and Wrexham. At Wrexham considerable amusement was caused in the Council Chamber when Mrs. Edwards Jones, Wrexham's first woman Mayor, appointed her husband, who was himself Mayor of the borough seventeen years ago, as her deputy, using the form of words prescribed, "Reserving to myself the power to revoke this appointment when I so choose."

We have little space for the statistics promised in our last article in proof of a fact not yet fully realized, that in many boroughs the women local government electors outnumber the men electors. In Blackpool, for instance, where the Borough Council is composed solely of men, the women local government electors outnumber the men local government electors by approximately 4,000; in Bradford, 2,300; in Leeds, 3,000; in Weston-super-Mare, 1,800; in Lytham and St. Annes, 1,500; in Salford, 7,000. These figures, a few out of many which might be quoted, are taken from the electoral register of October, 1927. They refer only to local government electors, not to Parliamentary electors. In the latter case, men electors, so far as we can judge, outnumber the women.

In our next article we hope to draw attention to the apathy of electors.

EQUAL FRANCHISE.

"THE UNKNOWN QUANTITY."

The following Unionist Members of Parliament have during the last two weeks signified their support of the Prime Minister's proposals with regard to Equal Franchise:—

Apsley, Lord	Southampton.
Courthope, Lieut.-Col. Sir G.	Rye.
Hacking, Capt. D. H. (Government)	Chorley.
Lindsay, Major H. B.	Partick.
Moore, Sir N.	Richmond.
Pilditch, Sir P.	Spelthorne.
Somerville, A. A.	Windsor.

THE LONDON AND NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE.

The annual meeting of the London and National Society for Women's Service took place on 17th November, Mrs. Kinnell being in the chair. The hall at 35 Marsham Street was crowded, partly no doubt owing to the fact that announcements of exceptional interest were expected.

The Report of the year's work was read by Miss Philippa Strachey, and duly adopted, together with the Financial Statement presented by the Hon. Mrs. Spencer Graves as treasurer. The report showed a remarkable extension of work especially in the provinces. The Society's Junior Council, founded about a year ago, has grown rapidly, and one of the most interesting occurrences on the 17th was the adoption on the motion of Dame Millicent Fawcett as Hon. President, seconded by Miss Russell Smith (Junior Council Executive Committee) of a proposal adapting the rules to allow of the free functionings of the junior body within the Society. A franchise resolution was moved from the chair, and one calling on members to secure more suitable women candidates for local bodies was proposed by Lady Roney, Town Councillor of Wimbledon, in a most interesting speech seconded by Mrs. Oliver Strachey.

The eagerly awaited news proved to be an announcement made by the Committee that the benefactor to whom the Society already owes so much had added a further wonderful gift to the Women's Service Trust in the form of a freehold property in Marsham Street on part of which it is the intention of the Trustees to construct a Hall for the Society's purposes with a restaurant and library. This news was received with the liveliest satisfaction, and it was agreed as a small recognition of this generosity that a general effort should be made to increase the Society's membership in the course of the year sufficiently to ensure that the subscriptions therefrom should total at least an annual £1,000.

DISARMAMENT.¹

There are two points of encouragement in the position with regard to Disarmament at the League of Nations at the moment.

First, it is to the good that the Disarmament Conference, which is to meet in Geneva on 30th November, is being called at all. After the failures to secure any definite progress; and the lack of success of the Coolidge Conference, it was generally felt that the Disarmament Conference itself would be deferred, and that the next meeting of the Preparatory Commission was likely to be delayed also. Events at the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly in September fortunately changed the outlook. In view of the reconsideration of the principles of "Arbitration, Security, and Disarmament," to which the Assembly devoted so much of its attention, it was decided that a new committee should be set up to work side by side with the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament, and studying for its part the questions of Arbitration and Security specially in relation to Disarmament. In the belief that the combined bodies would make progress towards Disarmament more immediately possible the Assembly requested the Council "to urge the Preparatory Commission to hasten the completion of its technical work, and to convene the Conference on the Limitation and Reduction of Armaments immediately this work has been completed."

Secondly, the news that Russia is ready to consider an invitation to take part in the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament is very good. The actual menace of a Russia outside the League keeps her border States in a condition of nervousness which prevents serious progress on their part in the reduction of armaments. This hindrance is used as an argument against all general Disarmament Treaties, but with Russia co-operating it may be hoped that obstacle at least will be cleared out of the way.

¹ Contributed by the Women's International League, 55 Gower Street, London, W.C. 1.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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

NEW LITERATURE.

Those who are anxious for an easy way in which to interest friends and others in the work of the N.U.S.E.C. will welcome the pamphlet which has just been issued by headquarters. It is entitled "Our Winter's Work," and gives a brief account of the various activities in which the N.U.S.E.C. is at present engaged, and those in which it will be engaged during the early part of next year. Copies of the pamphlet can be obtained on application to headquarters, free of charge (postage ½d.). The pamphlet on "Equal Pay for Equal Work" by Mrs. Stocks has been revised and brought up to date, and societies holding meetings on this subject are advised to get supplies on sale or return. Copies of the pamphlet can be obtained from headquarters, price 3d.

CANTERBURY BY-ELECTION.

The Parliamentary Questionnaire was sent to the two candidates in the above by-election. No reply has as yet been received from Sir W. Wayland (Unionist). Col. Carnegie (Liberal), while not answering the Questionnaire, has replied as follows:—

"... While I do not pledge myself to every measure proposed in your Questionnaire, in the terms set out therein, I have no hesitation whatever in stating that I would support any measure which would secure the rights of citizenship to all, equally and without distinction of sex. I would support the proposed measure for giving votes to women at the age of 21. I would also accept the principle of Equal Pay for Equal Work." (Signed) DAVID CARNEGIE.

DEMONSTRATION ON EQUAL FRANCHISE.

8th March, 1928, at 8 p.m.

We are glad to be able to report that several groups have already been formed to practise the songs for the Demonstration in March. Applications for tickets are coming in quickly, and this great event is now supported by over 40 organizations representing men and women of all shades of opinion. Tickets and all particulars can be obtained from Miss Auld, Organizer, N.U.S.E.C., 15 Dean's Yard, S.W. 1, all numbered and reserved, a few at 5s. and 2s. 6d., the rest at 1s. (12 at 1s. for 10s.). Book NOW.

NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

BARNSELY S.E.C.

The opening meeting of the Autumn Sessions of the Barnsley S.E.C. was held recently to welcome Miss Maude Royden and her Crusaders. Large numbers were present to hear Miss Royden speak of her old suffrage experiences.

CHESTER W.C.A.

The Chester Women Citizens' Association held their Annual Dinner on Saturday, 22nd October, at the Grosvenor Hotel, when a large and enthusiastic gathering of members and friends welcomed Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, D.B.E., of London University, one of the few women who hold professorial chairs in this country. Dame Helen, after congratulating the Chester Association on the work it is doing, went on to speak of Citizenship, which in her opinion comprised two things, duties and rights. Speaking of woman's position to-day, the speaker said there was much greater community of thought between all social classes than there used to be, which was working towards a finer and more open-minded world. She concluded by wishing the Association every prosperity and success, such as might be evidenced in more women councillors and J.P.s, and in the great developments that were possible in service and citizenship.

DUNDEE W.C.A.

The opening meeting of the season's lectures, arranged by the Dundee W.C.A., was held at the end of last month, when Mrs. W. L. McKerron, from Glasgow, gave a very interesting address on "Family Allowances." There was an extremely good attendance, and the meeting was presided over by the President of the W.C.A., Mrs. David Johnston.

KENSINGTON AND PADDINGTON S.E.C.

The Kensington and Paddington S.E.C. held an interesting and well-attended meeting recently at which Mrs. Abbott and Miss Rathbone debated the question of "Restrictive Legislation affecting Women in Industry." The question was not put to the vote, but the addresses were followed by a good discussion, during which many questions were asked of both speakers.

PERSONAL.

We know that our readers will regret to hear that on 22nd November Mrs. Anthony gave birth to a girl (still born).

OBITUARY.

We are called upon to record the loss of another pioneer suffragist, Miss Mary E. Dalby, of Birkenhead, who died recently at the age of 71. Miss Dalby inherited her interest in the suffrage movement from her father, Mr. G. W. Dalby, who was associated with John Stuart Mill, in connection with the first petition to Parliament. Miss Dalby was treasurer of the Birkenhead and District Women's Suffrage Society for almost a quarter of a century, and played a prominent part in the great campaigns of the early years of the present century. In the famous pilgrimage of 1913 she travelled with two young friends all the way to London in a caravan, and only those who remember the pilgrimage will realize what this meant in pre-War England. Miss Dalby had many interests in her long and varied life—housing, public health, moral questions, the welfare and freedom of women workers, and latterly the League of Nations. Advancing years did not lessen her eager interest in new discoveries, new ideas or aspirations. She gave of her best to the woman's movement in money, time, strength and her life has been an inspiration to many. Her name will find a place in the lengthening roll of women who led the way to the final victory which we hope so soon to celebrate.

CORRESPONDENCE.

DRINKING MADE EASY.

MADAM,—May I, on behalf of the National British Women's Total Abstinence Union, numbering over 160,000 women, ask for space to comment on a matter, important to child welfare, being a new departure (recently reported in the Press) in the policy of the Licensing Magistrates.

On the application of Messrs. Barclay Perkins, owners of the Fellowship Inn, a "reformed" public house on the County Council's Bellingham estate, the magistrates granted permission for the partitioning off of a portion of its roof garden, to be used by children whose parents are drinking on the premises, a special attendant being also provided. Without criticizing the decision of the magistrates, which was no doubt dictated by compassion for the children now nightly waiting outside drinking places, we should like to point out that its ultimate effect upon their real welfare will probably be the opposite to what was intended. The Trade has declared that it does not want people to drink more, but wants more people to drink. By this proposal it will certainly secure both. Mothers, hitherto held back from spending their time and money in public houses by fear of the effects upon their children of exposure and fatigue will lack this salutary restraint, and will for the first time join the drinking community, while women who already frequent the bars, but curtail their visits in order to take the little ones home, will now stop on without scruple. Thus there will be more drinkers and more drunk. That is why the Trade is ready to sacrifice floor space and provide extra wages, it will pay it to do so. But it will not pay the children. They already do not get their fair share of the weekly budget. Over £300,000,000 is paid out annually for drink for the parents, only £76,000,000 is paid out for milk for the children, and by this new plan the balance will be weighted still further against them, they will get less food, less fire, and less clothing. This additional money going into the public house tills will be drawn from the children's account, it is always they who really have to pay.

We therefore as a body of women who have long studied and endeavoured to alleviate the hardships of children caused by drink, respectfully urge upon County Councils and Licensing Magistrates applied to for permissions similar to the above, that they should take into full consideration the serious facts which we here submit, and should ask themselves whether by removing the existing checks to drinking by mothers, they will not do the children more harm and entail upon them more privations than they already have to endure.

(Miss) AGNES E. SLACK

(President of the N.B.W.T.A.U.).

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GUILDHOUSE WOMEN CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION.

NOVEMBER 25. 3 p.m. Miss Marjorie Blythe, Lecture Recital; Folk Songs in costume.

LONDON AND NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE.

DECEMBER 8. 11-1 a.m., 3-5.30 p.m. American Tea and Christmas Sale at 30 Ennismore Gardens, S.W. 7 (by kind permission of the Lady Emmott).

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

Kensington and Paddington S.E.C. NOVEMBER 25. 8 p.m. Town Hall, Kensington. Equal Franchise Meeting. Speakers: Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., A. Duff Cooper, Esq., M.P., Miss Barbara Bliss.

St. Pancras S.E.C. DECEMBER 7. 8 p.m. 27 Grove Terrace, Highgate Road. Miss Alison Neilans, "League of Nations Report on Traffic in Women and Children." Chair: Captain Fraser, M.P.

St. Andrews W.C.A. DECEMBER 1. 3.45. Cinema House. Cinema Film and Lecture, "The Golden Eagle," by Captain Knight.

SIX POINT GROUP.

NOVEMBER 26. 5 p.m. 92 Victoria Street, S.W. Commandant Mary Allen, O.B.E., "Women Police in this and other Countries." Chair: Mrs. Archdale.

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NOVEMBER 25. 8.15. Dance at St. Patrick's Schools, Great Chapel Street, Oxford Street. Tickets 2s. 6d.

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DECEMBER 6. 8.15. King's College for Women, Campden Hill, W. 8. Baron Mayendorff, "Women under the Soviet Government." Chair: Prince Mirsky. Tickets from 22 Westbourne Park Villas, W. 2, or at door.

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FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 27th November. 3.30. Miss Rosamond Smith, L.C.C., "Local Government." 6.30. Miss Maude Royden.

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