

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Unemployment.

There cannot be a thinking woman in the country who is not uneasy at the recent increase of a quarter of a million in the unemployment figures. The Government very rightly gave the first week of the new session to a discussion of the problem. We now know, therefore, what their remedy is. It consists of the benefit which they hope will accrue to industry under the de-rating scheme, plus any help which may be given to particular industries by safe-guarding. Neither of these will begin to be felt until after the General Election. Then there is emigration, also rather a future hope than a present support, and lastly, schemes of training and transference. These last are a substitute for the old policy of relief works within the distressed areas, and they are certainly an improvement on them. Instead of asking bankrupt districts to pledge their credit, the present idea is that areas where unemployment is low shall obtain loans on easy terms through the Unemployment Grants Committee for such purposes as drainage and coast erosion as long as they engage to employ 50 per cent of transferred men. Then, when the scheme comes to an end the men will at least find themselves in areas where there is some chance of getting fresh work instead of none whatever. The success of the scheme depends ultimately therefore upon a general increase in the amount of work available—i.e. upon a trade revival, but in the meantime boys will be saved from the moral consequences of continued unemployment and useful national work will be carried out with money most of which would otherwise have been poured into the abyss of unemployment benefit. Moreover, the better-to-do areas are encouraged to take a share in carrying the burden of unemployment. We only regret that these public utility works are not to be carried out on a bigger scale.

A Victory for Equality.

That maddening phrase "women and young persons" was much to the fore in the debate which took place on Friday on the two-shift system. Mr. R. J. Davies brought forward an amendment to the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, 1920, which came up under the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill. If carried, this would have prevented the Home Office from issuing orders making possible the employment of women and young persons on the two-shift system (i.e. a system whereby 98 hours are worked in a fortnight in shifts of eight hours each). The Home Secretary made out a good case for his orders, stating incidentally that careful research

had not shown that the system had any ill-effect whatever on the health of those working under it. The amendment was fortunately defeated by a majority of sixteen. But not one voice was raised to protest against this way of limiting the employment of adult women. Doubtless young persons ought not to work hours which, whether excessive or not in themselves, disturb their regular sleep. Growing boys and girls need punctual sleep. But to tell grown-up women that they must not work during dancing hours is a totally different affair. There is no need to stress the point in the pages of this journal. The pity is that the House contains no woman who can be counted upon to urge it there when there is need for doing so.

Equal Pay for Equal Work.

Some surprising facts were disclosed last week at a conference called by the Open Door Council last week. Mrs. White reminded her audience that in 1920 the Woolwich Borough Council, in fulfilment of an "equal pay" election pledge, began to pay their women employees in public baths and lavatories at the same rate as the men employees performing precisely similar services. This they continued to do, in spite of a Joint Industrial Council award which indicated a lower rate for women. In 1925 the government auditor surcharged them for an unreasonable wage scale, and the case, on appeal, was finally given against the Woolwich Borough Council in the House of Lords. Last April they were again surcharged to the tune of something over £500 for a similar offence, and being unable to face the costs of a new legal action they bowed to superior force and reduced the women's rates from £3 8s. 2d. to £2 9s. 2d. per week. The conference decided that representations should be made to the Minister of Health, whose department was represented by the auditor in question. A peculiarly sinister feature of the case is of course the fact that the Government is itself committed by an old Treasury minute and two resolutions of the House of Commons to apply the principle of equal pay for equal work as between men and women in the Civil Service. It does not choose to fulfil its own commitments, therefore it does not choose that local authorities shall shame it by fulfilling theirs.

The Royal Commission and Women Police.

In giving evidence before the Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure Sir Charles Rafter, Chief Constable of Birmingham, said that women police had been an unqualified success in Birmingham. In all cases, he said, they should be members of the regular police force and under the direct control of the chief constable. Later in his evidence he expressed the opinion, which of course many people will dispute, that women could do their best work in plain clothes. We welcome this direct tribute from an experienced chief constable from a city with the reputation of Birmingham. Moreover his strong views on the value of work in *preventing* crime as compared to the work of *detecting* crime lend powerful indirect support to the movement for women police so often labelled contemptuously welfare work. Another witness from Birmingham stated that there was a real field for the appointment of highly trained women in connection with the investigation of crime in all great cities. Mr. W. B. Trubshaw, Chief Constable of Lancashire, stated that there was a larger proportion of women police in his force than in any other in this country, the present number being eighteen. The value of this apparently satisfactory state of affairs in Lancashire appears to be somewhat diminished by the fact that the women do not wear uniform and do not perform patrol duty except occasionally. Most of them are shorthand writers and efficient typists and are employed in the Criminal Investigation Department on clerical duties. Mr. Trubshaw

said, however, that in offences against women and children they were *nearly always* (the italics are ours) employed in making inquiries and taking statements, and occasionally they did duties in the parks and open spaces. Miss Mary S. Allen, Commandant of the Women's Auxiliary Service, suggested that trained police women should be entrusted with the taking of statements from women. She advocated the employment of more uniformed women police, and added that women had the necessary qualities and could be trained to be efficient detectives if they were given the same intensive training that the male detectives received.

Intolerance.

We cannot help regretting the legal decision of last Friday which condemned Miss Radclyffe Hall's *Well of Loneliness* to the flames. We hold no brief for the publication of obscene matter, and we are of opinion that freedom to publish indecent literature, post-cards, advertisements, as the case may be, like most other forms of personal freedom, may touch limits to which official coercion is an inevitable and proper reaction. But where, in the name of public policy, shall these limits be set? In general, we think that the verdict of Sir Chartres Biron, and the public action which has led up to it, errs gravely on the side of caution when it sets them so far forward as to clash with the presentation of a seriously developed thesis, however repugnant that thesis may be to current morality. For it would seem that the determining consideration in the magisterial summing up was the belief that Miss Hall was deliberately condoning and attempting to justify the existence of an abnormal relationship between women. History has an uncomfortable way of making the scruples of one age appear as the absurdities of the next; and it may be that succeeding generations will regard our present refusal to allow serious discussion of this particular relationship with somewhat of the same disdain which we bestow on those of our forbears who were actuated by similar motives to stifle serious discussion of the normal sex relationship. But when we turn to the practical side of the matter we find that the action of the authorities has most ridiculously defeated its own ends. A "highbrow" novel by an obscure author has been given a first-class advertisement. Her thesis has obtained through the Press reports of police court proceedings a far wider publicity and a keener measure of discussion than the unfettered circulation of her book could ever have provoked. Her next novel will be a "best seller." Our authorities have touched the pitch of interference with free speech and suffered the inevitable defilement, without even having the satisfaction of knowing that the pitch has been effectively used to strengthen what may believe to be the fabric of public decency!

Rebecca West's Diagnosis.

Last week Miss Rebecca West gave the Fabian Society a provocative and intriguing address on the wide subject of feminism. She boldly faced the fact that men are apt to develop a hostile attitude towards women, and set herself to delve for the deeper causes of this hostility. These, she said, were more fundamental than any which economic or political conditions could produce. They had their roots, she thought, in a sense of inferiority. The man who is inferior to other men seeks eagerly for a gospel of his own superiority to women. Turning to the position of women in the U.S.A., from which she has recently returned, Miss West developed the interesting thesis that wealth has here been used in a curious way to thwart the natural development of woman. The immense costs of maternity, the sky-scraping proclivities of housing development, make it difficult even for women whose real vocation is maternity, to have more than two or three children. On the whole, she characterized America as a "male country." Miss West may not always be right, but without doubt she is always interesting; and we should like the opportunity of perusing that lecture word for word, in book form.

Canadian Women and the Senate.

Canadian women continue to fight gallantly on behalf of eligibility for the Canadian Upper House. On 16th November the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council granted leave for an appeal against the Canadian High Court decision which ruled that the word "persons" as used in the British North America Act of 1867 cannot be applied to women, and that the Govern-

ment cannot therefore nominate women as members of the Senate within the terms of this Act. There are five appellants concerned in the case: two are women who were for several years members of the Alberta Provincial Legislature; one is a present member of the Legislature as well as of the Executive Council; one is an Edmonton Police Magistrate. We wish them all success in their venture, hoping sincerely that the British North America Act may be interpreted by the Privy Council in the spirit of 1928 rather than in that of 1867.

The Vote and University Graduates.

There is grave danger that many women graduates will forfeit the privilege of voting at the next General Election because they have not realized that in many cases claims must be sent in accompanied by a specified payment before the end of this year. The conditions vary in different Universities, and we intend to publish an article in next week's issue showing the precise steps which it is necessary to take.

An Error Rectified.

The omission of the Home Secretary to include any women on the recently appointed committee to inquire into the organization and administrative machinery of the police courts and juvenile courts in the Metropolitan area roused a ferment of indignation in unexpected as well as expected quarters, and Mrs. Barrow Cadbury and Miss Elizabeth Haldane, both magistrates of great experience, have accepted an invitation to serve as additional members of the committee.

An Exceptional Woman.

It was announced last week that Mme Sigrid Undset, the leading novelist of Norway, had been awarded the Nobel Prize. Mme Undset is, as a matter of fact, something more than a novelist; she is a mediaeval scholar of high repute, and in her off moments a keen gardener. We congratulate her upon this latest international tribute to her literary eminence. But it is a regrettable fact that so cheerful an event should be sullied by the manner of its reception. Mme Undset has given to the Press a diatribe against feminism and the equality of the sexes. Women, she says, are in no need of equality which deprives men of their feeling of responsibility as protectors of the family. She herself finds domestic work enchanting and has never loved work outside her home. Such in brief is her attitude. We venture to think that it is a selfish attitude. Home or no home, she has managed to follow her vocation, and the world is the richer because she has. But there are vocations and vocations. Hers leads her to quiet places and individual endeavour. But there are vocations which lead men and women out into the world of corporate and competitive effort. Are other women not to follow their vocations too? And does Mme Undset herself owe nothing to the "unwomanly women" of earlier generations who helped to make the world safe for women writers?

Presentation to Dame Millicent Fawcett.

The N.U.S.E.C., in co-operation with the London and National Society for Women's Services, is arranging for the presentation of her portrait to Dame Millicent Fawcett. The presentation is to take place on the 12th of December. Lady Astor is very kindly allowing it to take place at her house, 4 St. James's Square. By the generous assistance of Sir Joseph Duveen's Committee which encourages the work of young artists, the portrait has been painted by Mr. Lionel Ellis for a nominal fee. Full particulars will be announced next week.

Women Members in Parliament.

We are interested to read in the Press that Mrs. Runciman is to be invited to stand as Liberal candidate for the Tavistock Division at the next Election. It is also announced that Mrs. Hilton Philipson will not be standing again, her withdrawal from candidature being due to domestic reasons.

POLICY.—The sole policy of THE WOMAN'S LEADER is to advocate a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women. So far as space permits, however, it will offer an impartial platform for topics not directly included in the objects of the woman's movement but of special interest to women. Articles on these subjects will always be signed, at least by initials or a pseudonym, and for the opinions expressed in them the Editor accepts no responsibility.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.

With the publication of the Local Government Bill, the great task of the session becomes defined. Our readers will become familiar with the various issues involved during the next few months. In another column will be found a summary of the first part of the Bill. The whole Bill is of vital interest and importance, and will affect us all whether as industrialists, householders, or consumers. We must perforce content ourselves here with dwelling on certain points on which it is probable that many of the women's organizations will wish to take action, the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, the National Council of Women, and many others having already declared their policy.

There are two groups of subjects round which the interest of women's organizations as such will be chiefly centred. The first of these deals with the transfer of the administration of poor relief from Boards of Guardians to County and County Borough Councils. Of the effect of this transfer on the efficiency of the work there is very considerable difference of opinion. Our Local Government Correspondent, for example, feels herself wholly out of sympathy with the proposal. We ourselves, on the other hand, cannot help seeing many advantages. As a matter of fact, there seems to be little or no criticism directed to the administration of indoor relief, that is to say, of Poor Law Institutions being handed over to the County Councils; there has clearly been too great a lack of co-ordination among these, which has resulted both in little specialization and in waste of beds in a large variety of cases, etc.

The most acute difference of opinion arises with regard to the administration of outdoor relief. It appears to us at this juncture difficult to say what the efficiency of the new committees will prove to be. What concerns us most closely, of course, is the part which is likely to be played by women on these committees. We regret very much that the proposal put forward in the Government's Provisional Proposals of 1925, for an increase in the number of members on County Councils, has not been adopted this year. All that we find in the Bill is that local authorities may (not "must") co-opt persons of experience amongst whom must be women, both on to the public assistance committee of the County Council (if formed) and on the various local assistance committees, which administer the various forms of out-relief. It is interesting to note that the London County Council has accepted the Government's proposals on the whole, putting forward as an alternative once again an increase in the number of councillors, pointing out that if this is not done it is impossible in London at any rate that the local public assistance committees can consist—as insisted upon in the Bill—of a majority of elected members. We feel that this proposal for the increase in size of County Councils should be very carefully considered, and failing its acceptance, that the

co-option of members, including women members, should be made compulsory rather than optional.

The second point on which public opinion, both of women's and of public health organizations, has already spoken with no uncertain voice, is that of the substitution of block for percentage grants for public health work. We have not so far heard this advocated by a single individual on the only grounds which concern us, that is the advantage to public health in general and to maternity and child welfare in particular. Outside the ranks of those workers for public health who one and all wish to retain the stimulus of the percentage grant, the result of the substitution of the block grant on the efficiency of public health work is not even mentioned. Both the report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health, the experience of those engaged in infant welfare and other forms of public health work—all support the existing system by which Local Authorities or voluntary associations have the advantage of the stimulus, the help and the control of the Ministry. It is true that provision is made in the Bill for the reduction of the grant if a Council has failed to achieve to maintain a reasonable standard of efficiency in the discharge of their functions relating to health or alternatively when there has been excessive and unreasonable expenditure. The procedure, however, by which this is to be done is clumsy, and has to be laid before Parliament. In any case retribution is not swift or automatic as with the percentage grant system. Nor does the provision do anything to stimulate any real enterprise on the part of any Council. The same applies to the position of voluntary associations. Even though their position is safeguarded to some extent, its being provided that any scheme of dealing with grants by Local Authorities has to be approved by the Ministry, and is not to be less than that of the standard year it is difficult to say what effective pressure can be brought on Local Authorities administering the scheme, and certainly there is no provision for any extension.

Is it too much to hope that combined pressure from all those interested in public health might possibly result in some part, at any rate, of the grants being paid still on the percentage basis? Of all the public health services, that which stands most to lose under the proposed new scheme is undoubtedly that of maternity and child welfare. As a comparatively new service, its work is considered by many Local Authorities to be largely experimental. It is far too soon for the work which Local Authorities have undertaken under the Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1918, to risk becoming stabilized. Is there anyone who claims that this risk is not a very real one unless these grants are still given, as are those for the educational services, on a percentage basis and special provision made for distressed areas?

WHISPERS FROM WESTMINSTER.

By GREEN BENCH.

THE ENDING OF A PARLIAMENT.

The course of the debates during the last fortnight has shown that those Members who are again standing as candidates at the General Election are more concerned about things outside the Palace of Westminster than about things inside. Or alternatively, they are inclined to judge events inside by their probable effects outside. The debates have been interesting, but never, as yet, passionate, but the front benches have taken more than their fair share of the available time. All sides are doing their utmost to colour the national mind, so that it may be favourable when the nation goes to vote for the first time in mass formation next summer. One of the few remaining sex disqualifications has gone down this week for the woman Member of the Kitchen Committee has succeeded in getting the Committee, now under the chairmanship of Sir Robert Sanders, to open the Strangers' Dining Room irrespective of sex. This is a practical, as well as a theoretical gain, for meals are cheaper in that dining room than they are in the Harcourt Room downstairs. When the special seats in the Chamber now only allotted to men are made available to women, as they doubtless will be, it will be left to the men to agitate for the opening of the Ladies' Gallery to men, otherwise it will be twice as easy to gain entrance for a woman than a man visitor. We look at the grille in the central lobby with amusement as a record of "battles long ago" if not of "old unhappy far off things."

The state of the world and the state of trade have again occupied our time, except on Friday, when the Government had

a narrow escape over the problem of the double shift system in mills for women and young persons. It is possible that the fact that many Government supporters are not again standing for election may keep them from regular attendance, and if this is so, there will be anxious times for the Whips, despite their nominal majority of over two hundred. They escaped on Friday by the narrow margin of sixteen. While the debates have been concerned with foreign affairs and unemployment, the Committee Rooms have been filled with members of all parties holding meetings and sub-meetings with intent to get a grip of the new Local Government Bills, and there is a good deal of anxiety among Members as to the probable effects of the proposed block grant on the maternity and child welfare services of the country. The English measure consists of 115 clauses and twelve schedules, and the Scottish measure of sixty-one clauses and seven schedules. Several of the schedules attached to the Bill are in six or seven parts, and in addition to memoranda circulated in explanation of the proposals, there is also a long explanation of the financial proposals bound up with both Bills. The size of the measure and the breadth of the implications will make it difficult both for Ministers and Members to condense the issues sufficiently so as to marshal the available material clearly. The field for genuine misunderstanding, for legitimate difference as well as for stunt campaigns, will be almost unlimited. The debate on the Foreign Office resolution of the Liberal party was in the nature of a post mortem, but it was valuable as raising the

question "can the nations ever disarm along strategic lines?" Members on all sides of the House with the memory of Armistice Day fresh, were uneasily conscious of the fact that millions of ordinary men and women outside were asking "Is it peace?" The Government has been compelled by the swelling of the unemployment figures to revise its policy towards the provision of work for the unemployed. It has issued a new memorandum through the medium of the Lord St. Davids Committees, seeking to persuade local authorities to undertake schemes, and laying down conditions as to the use of a percentage of workers from the necessitous areas. Members who do not sit for such areas are being awakened from their slumbers by the production of a Bill for increasing the borrowing powers of the Unemployment Insurance Fund from thirty to forty millions. With the unemployed percentage at 11.5 the original powers will be exhausted this week.

In the course of the debate, Members on all sides, Mr. Thomas Shaw, Captain MacMillan, and Mr. Ernest Brown, among others, expressed uneasiness as to the effect next April of the enforcement of the new rule of thirty contributions in two years, but the Minister seemed unaware of the depth of the anxiety which exists in the areas where many men have long ago exhausted any rights they had to benefit. This week's smile was a subtle one. The whole of the newspaper world got the Prime Minister's joke at Mr. Kirkwood's expense about the privacy of negotiations about titles, but his score off Lady Astor was more subtle and was passed over except by those who remembered that both Lady Astor and Lady Iveagh came into the Commons on the succession to peerages by their husbands. The Prime Minister is good at repartee as the following smile will show.

Viscountess Astor: Will the Prime Minister consider what a nuisance it is to people who want to sit in the House of Commons having to go to another House where there is nothing to do?

Mr. Stanley Baldwin: There are always others who will step into the breach!

MRS. ANNIE BESANT.

It is an invidious task to write a critical biography of a living person, yet that is what Mr. Geoffrey West has set himself to do¹ in a recent addition to Gerald Howe's *Representative Women* series. And in view of the formidable occult powers upon which Mrs. Besant may be in a position to draw, we suggest that he has discharged his effort with some courage, for his pages show no lack of critical faculty. One criticism, however, he himself deserves. We cannot stomach the assertion contained in his opening paragraphs, that Mrs. Besant's work shines out to-day, while that of her two great contemporaries, Mrs. Booth and Mrs. Butler, "belong to a now faded past." Josephine Butler forgotten, forsooth! We venture to think that she will be on her way to canonization long after Mrs. Besant's influence has been engulfed in the tangled personal cross-currents of the Theosophical Society.

So much for an odious comparison. It provokes comments which are perhaps unfair on Mrs. Besant and her followers. Her society may have been a happy hunting ground for personal feuds enlivened by conflicting supernatural claims. But is it the only religious body of which this can be said? And in the pages of Mr. West's book these feuds emerge in very crude outline, shorn of dignity and garnished with much absurdity. There was a time, many years ago, when our own youngest daughter perpetrated a series of unaccountable acts at the superior behest, so she explained, of a disembodied kitten called "Moppet." We found it, on such occasions, impossible to receive these supernatural explanations with the conviction which she appeared to expect of us. A similar scepticism (a temperamental defect perhaps, but there it is!) has always impeded our ability to accept with any conviction the personal revelations of Mrs. Besant's "Masters," or to bow the knee to the peculiar brand of priestcraft which she so pontifically represents. Nor does Mr. West's unvarnished chronicle of events tend to increase our faith. Nevertheless he helps us to realize that it is no small personal achievement to promote and dominate a world-wide religion as Mrs. Besant has promoted and dominated Theosophy. Nor is it possible to read his record without some dawning realization of what she has done for India: not only by that deliberate awakening of Hindu self-respect which carried her to the high peaks of personal popularity, but also by the astute and courageous moderation which later precipitated her onto the side of the Montague-Chelmsford reform programme and left personal popularity in eclipse.

¹ Mrs. Annie Besant, by Geoffrey West. (Gerald Howe, Ltd., 3s. 6d.)

No less interesting than the records of Mrs. Besant's Theosophical activities are the earlier chapters in which Mr. West chronicles the events of her adventurous pre-Theosophical spiritual pilgrimages: from conventional Christianity and a regrettable marriage to militant atheism and the championship of the individualist Bradlaugh, through the famous birth-control prosecution of 1877, to Fabian socialism and the spiritual leadership of Mme. Blavatsky. Always the vivid force of her personality shines through events and explains what the quality of her recorded thought would leave unexplained. Among the memorable incidents which stand out from this well-told story is her interview with Dr. Pusey, a former pillar of her faith, to whom she clung in the opening stages of spiritual negation. "It is not your duty to ascertain the truth," he told her, "it is your duty to accept and believe the truth as laid down by the Church. . . . Did not the Lord promise that the presence of the Spirit should be ever with the Church to guide her into all truth?" One is tempted to wonder whether these unsatisfying phrases ever haunted her later assumptions of a comparable authority. "There will be times," an accredited devotee subsequently wrote of her, "when you cannot understand her motives, for she is taking into account many things which you cannot see and of which she cannot tell you. But whether you understand, or not, you will be wise to follow her implicitly, just because she knows."

Well—there is no doubt at all that whether her peculiar brand of greatness may attract or repel, some element of greatness there undoubtedly is in this astonishing campaigner in the political and religious spheres of two continents. She is, and always has been, an egoist on the grand scale. Of such stuff are world dictators made. And to-day the astonishing and almost magical physical and mental vitality which enlivens her old age weighs down the scale in favour of her queer recipe for the achievement of power in this life, if not for glory in some other life.

M. D. S.

WELFARE IN GERMANY.

Familienfürsorge, a study by Dr. Marie Baum, published in Karlsruhe last autumn, is an up-to-date account of social welfare work as at present undertaken in Germany.

One knows that certain people—women generally—are put into the world to help others, and although like the questioning child, one asks occasionally, "And what are the others put into the world for?" it is profitable to read what is really being done. The "others" placed there by an inscrutable Providence, include the unemployed, the unemployable, the tuberculous, expectant mothers, sick and necessitous infants, large families, drunkards, delinquents, those crippled or "wanting" in different ways.

Dr. Baum deals with the beginnings of housing reforms and family welfare in Worms, health measures in the Düsseldorf district, and the care of school children in Charlottenburg. Family welfare, for instance, includes visits and instruction by trained workers, on the proper cleaning and arrangement of room-space, position and equipment of beds, especially in cases of sickness under ordinary conditions, the combatting of child mortality, of tuberculosis, and alcoholism.

Health work has to do with the care and apparatus for relieving the crippled, those suffering from venereal disease, provision for change of air, and convalescence and other *sozialpädagogische Arbeit*.

In Charlottenburg, the Verein Jugendheim started in 1894 with the care of children out of school hours, beginning its work with a shelter and Kindergarten for tiny tots otherwise left in the hands of the older children. Afterwards the Verein went on to holiday colonies, convalescent homes, play centres, the encouragement of gardening, acting, etc. Then came the feeding of certain uncared-for school children and inquiry into the causes of the need for this—in all a complete organization.

Of course, the war brought big problems and in inexorable course poverty went on flowing from its sources, sickness, unemployment, *Kinderreichtum* (a prettier word than big families!), lack of energy, domestic ignorance, personal faults, and other deficiencies. But also from like sources, points out Dr. Baum, flows the helplessness that is *not yet* poverty and that appeals for sympathy and supervision. Both should receive succour and the magic word for their healing comes from the right union of guidance from headquarters and of decentralized administration, says our author. Then there is that blessed word "co-operation," which brings with it (if one does not yawn!) the scent of the millennium when health questions shall be dealt

with by various efficient authorities and trained workers, each purged from jealousies, pettiness, and pink tape. And overlapping shall not be, but unification; and each department of Fürsorge shall work into each other as a dream into a dream.

To judge from Dr. Baum's book, things in Germany are tending that way, although it is still a long, long way to travel—hope fully—finding some knowledge at each pause, or some new thing to know.

One reads her notes upon English methods with interest, her comments upon our voluntary—if indebted—hospitals, our passion for Einfamilienhäuser, not flats! our other institutions long ago, she says in Germany *Sache der Gemeinden*, but in England voluntary, unfettered in form, running their own finances.

The poor, in mind and body, are, alas! always with us. But to let poverty work as little harm as possible to our complex civilization is both our dream and our duty. And the equipment of the social worker includes knowledge as well as zeal.

Dr. Baum's study gives methods and results by competent workers. Another writer in English tells us:—

"It is to the universities that we ought to be able to look in these days of economic transition for the scientific and undogmatic inquiry and study which will unite those of widely different religious, social, or political creeds in the common service of the community."

Those workers seem to remind us of the Pilgrim Lover of Queen Blanchelys with the staff and scrip:—

And there the sunset skies unseal'd,
Like lands he never knew,
Beyond to-morrow's battlefield,
Lay open out of view
To ride into.

T. OUPIE.

THE DISENCHANTED ISLAND.

Mr. H. G. Wells is himself again. In *Mr. Bletsworthy on Rampole Island*¹ he writes deftly and strongly, with all his former vivid interest and movement. And, as we read, it seems as though "body gets its sop and holds its noise, and leaves soul free a little." After a long course of not quite first rate novels and journalistic political treatises, the apprehension of a masterly literary technique rises like a tide of comfort, brushes aside the incipient sense of revolt and insecurity, and leaves the mind free for the appraisal and comprehension of Mr. Wells' story.

Mr. Bletsworthy, by a stroke of family fortune, escapes, on the material and social plane, from the dark entanglements of his heredity, and lives out the early years of his life in the secure framework of a country parsonage, an Oxford college, and an unearned income. What one might call his own mental wave-length, is adjusted for the reception of all that is gracious, merciful, and constructive, in the pre-war civilization of his age. A violent mental crisis precipitated by financial and personal shock, disturbs his balance—readjusts his wave-length, and tunes him in to a new aspect of the civilization which formerly smiled upon him. A quick series of adventures leads to his shipwreck among the cannibals of Rampole Island. For five years he dwells under the shadow of their cruelty, their dirt, their besotted conventionalism, their multitudinous taboos, and finally of their stalemated tribal war. In the end a second shock readjusts his wave-length to its old tempo and life becomes normal again—in time for him to fight as a private in the later stages of the great war. Rampole Island is around and about him, and at times an easy readjustment of mental wave-length would transform the objective savagery of civilized existence into the subjective savagery of that strange mental state which made him for five years a sleep-walker in the material world. But in the end he holds Rampole Island at bay. Or rather, it is not he himself that holds it at bay, but certain others. . . . But let Mr. Wells tell his own story.

M. D. S.

LADY HEATH'S FLIGHT (continued from page 327).

with the African native. Her view of the Italian method is that it is 'colonization by extermination.' In the French possessions the European man and the African woman mingle, and the population becomes lighter and lighter. In British Africa the ideal more or less well carried out is to do the best for the native on his own lines.

For those readers who do not know the earlier record of Lady Heath it may be interesting to add that she is a B.Sc. of Dublin, and won her spurs in athletics as the Championess of the High Jump."

¹ Mr. Bletsworthy on Rampole Island, by H. G. Wells. (Benn, 7s. 6d.)

QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT.

NOVEMBER 15TH: INCOME TAX.

Mr. Day asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has arrived at any decision for the purpose of introducing legislation having as its object the protection of male persons whose wives' earnings are such as to make them responsible at law for Income Tax in respect to the woman's earnings.

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Arthur Michael Samuel): Pending the Report of the Committee which is now considering the whole question of the simplification of the Income Tax law, I think it best to refrain from proposing to Parliament amendments in the machinery of that law unless they are of urgent importance.

Mr. Day: Can the hon. Gentleman say whether anomalies of this kind are being considered by the Committee?

Mr. Samuel: Oh yes, everything is being fully considered.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS.

RECEPTION TO DAME EDITH LYTTTELTON.

The Reception given by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship to Dame Edith Lyttelton on 13th November proved a very great success, due largely to the generous hospitality of the Hon. Mrs. Franklin in whose house it was held. Dame Edith gave a most stimulating account of the work of the League, making special reference to those subjects which particularly concern women. A large number of Societies were represented, there being altogether about 100 guests.

CONFERENCE ON RATING REFORM PROPOSALS.

On Monday, 19th November, the Conference called by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship to consider the effect of the proposed substitution of block for percentage grants on the health services, was held at the Mary Sumner House, Mrs. Corbett Ashby being in the chair. Mrs. E. D. Simon, of the Manchester City Council, was the principal speaker against the block grant on the grounds of its probable deleterious effect on the health services in general, and on maternity and child welfare work in particular. Mr. Geoffrey Peto, M.P., defended the Government's proposal, and an animated discussion followed. Representatives of the following organizations were present:—Association of Assistant Mistresses, Association of Infant Welfare and Maternity Centres, British Commonwealth League, Catholic Women's League, College of Nursing, Conservative Women's Reform Association, Head Mistresses' Association, Joint Parliamentary Advisory Council, London and National Society for Women's Service, Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, Midwives' Institute, National Baby Week Council, National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child, National Society of Day Nurseries, National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, Birmingham N.C.W. Citizenship Sub-Section, Dunfermline S.E.C., Kensington and Paddington S.E.C., Kingston, Malden, Surbiton, and District W.C.A., Manchester N.C.W. (Group for E.C.), Reading S.E.C., St. Pancras S.E.C., National Union of Teachers, National Union of Women Teachers, Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organizations, Women's Co-operative Guild, Women's National Liberal Federation, Women Sanitary Inspectors' and Health Visitors' Association, Women's Unionist Organization.

The resolution which was moved by Mrs. E. D. Simon, seconded by Mrs. Blanco-White and carried by a large majority, read as follows:— "That this Conference of Women's Organizations believes that the percentage grant is the best system that has yet been devised for ensuring:—

(1) A progressive development of the social services;

(2) A fair division of the cost of services that are national as well as local between the ratepayer and the taxpayer;

(3) The advantages of central stimulation and control;

and it therefore urges that the public health services, hitherto financed on a percentage basis, be left out of the Government's Local Government Bill."

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THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.

By BERTHA MASON.

SOME NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS.

The Local Government Bill for England and Wales, the text of which was issued on the 12th November, is now before the country, and is to be purchased through any bookseller, price 3s. net. The Bill is admittedly a formidable and comprehensive document. Our sympathy goes out not only to all upon whom is laid the duty of wading through, and if possible digesting, the 115 clauses, the 12 schedules, and the explanatory memorandum which go to make up the Bill, but also to those who have been engaged on its drafting. All we can do at this moment, if our article is to take its place in *The Women's Leader* of 23rd November, is to give a few notes and first impressions of the measure.

(1) The Bill gives effect to the proposals for local government reform, issued as a memorandum in the form of a White Paper in June of this year, and subsequently altered or modified by discussions with local authorities.

The Bill is divided into eight parts.

Part I is concerned with Poor Law administration. Clause 1 provides that as from 1st April, 1930, the powers and functions of boards of guardians shall be transferred to the councils of counties and county boroughs. Clauses 3-6 provides for the preparation of administrative schemes by councils, including the establishment of "Public Assistance Committees," which may (not shall) include a minority of persons (some of whom shall be women) who are not elected members of the council. These committees will take over all the transferred functions except the raising of rates or the borrowing of money.

For the purposes of relief, counties shall be divided into areas, in each of which a local sub-committee of "The Public Assistance Committee," to be known as "The Guardians' Committee," will be set up. Clause 4 provides that "The Guardians' Committee" shall consist of not more than 24 and not less than 12 members composed of nominated members of the councils of the county districts; the locally elected members of the county councils; and members up to one-third of the total appointed by the county council. The duties of these committees will be:—

To consider and examine applications for relief.

To determine the nature and amount of relief to be given.

To determine what part of the cost of relief shall be recovered from the recipient or from those liable for his maintenance.

To inspect, report on, or manage a Poor Law institution in the area if requested so to do by "The Public Assistance Committee."

The Guardians' Committees will exercise their duties subject to the control of the county council. The appointment and dismissal of officers will remain in the hands of the county council.

It is provided, "with a view to prevent possible misunderstanding" between the Public Assistance Committee and the Guardians' Committee, that a Guardians' Committee shall be "entitled to send a representative to participate in, but not to vote at meetings of the Public Assistance Committee when business relating to its area is to be transacted.

Our impressions and convictions in regard to the Poor Law proposals are:—

(1) That the work of public assistance, involving as it does the care and relief of the sick, the aged, and the young, and those who have lost economic independence, is one which cannot safely be entrusted to bodies whose primary duty is quite different.

(2) That the committees to be called "Guardians' Committees" will be for practical purposes, *Boards of Guardians* robbed of the responsibility which direct election gives.

(3) That it is difficult to believe that public-spirited men and women will serve for long with officials over whose engagement and dismissal they have no control. Nor can we imagine that persons of individuality will in these days consent to act as representatives on bodies unless they are accorded "voting" power.

(4) That inasmuch as these committees shall consist primarily of nominated members of the councils of county districts—many of which have still no women members—and of the locally elected members of county councils, several of which are composed entirely of men, the State is in danger of losing the help of many intelligent and devoted women who to-day are rendering service, the value of which cannot be over-estimated.

(Continued at foot of next column.)

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

President: Miss ELIZABETH RATHBONE, C.C., J.P. Hon. Treasurer: Miss MACADAM.
General and Parliamentary Secretary: Mrs. HORTON.
Offices: 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.
Telephone: Victoria 6188.

CONFERENCE ON WILLS AND INTESTACIES (FAMILY MAINTENANCE) BILL.—27th November, at 3 p.m.

As previously announced a Conference to consider the above Bill will be held on Tuesday, 27th November, at 3 p.m., at 4 St. James's Square (by kind permission of Lord Astor). The provisions of the Bill will be explained by Sir Benjamin Cherry, the legal expert on the subject of testamentary provision in this and other countries, and by Lord Astor. The Conference will be limited to a representative from each of our Societies in the neighbourhood of London able to appoint one, and from other Societies particularly interested in the subject.

Those specially interested in the subject and anxious to attend the conference may obtain tickets of admission on application to Headquarters.

PORTRAIT OF DAME MILLICENT.

We are glad to be able to announce that the portrait which is being presented to Dame Millicent will be on view at the Sale which the National Union is holding at 27 Grosvenor Square, W. 1 (by kind permission of Mrs. Robert Fleming), on 11th December.

PERSONAL.

We wish to congratulate Miss Grace E. Hadow who has been appointed Principal of the Society of Oxford Home Students. Miss Hadow is a former member of the Executive Committee of the National Union and a leading member of the Oxford Society.

Miss Macadam has asked us to say that the subject of her addresses announced recently is not correct. She has been speaking on the present policy and work of the National Union, not on its future policy which is to be decided by the Council in March next year.

(Continued from preceding column.)

Part II deals with Roads and Town Planning, including the transfer to county councils of the functions of rural district councils in respect to highways in rural districts, and the transfer to county councils of classified roads in urban districts.

Part VI is concerned with the financial clauses of the Bill which give effect to the proposals of the Government to complete the scheme of rating reform.

Clause 68 and 69 provide for the discontinuance after 31st April, 1930, of grants at present paid to local authorities in aid of certain local health services, i.e. maternity and child-welfare, tuberculosis, the welfare of the blind, venereal diseases, mental deficiency, and the substitution of an annual consolidated grant, in other words of a block grant.

These proposals are viewed with grave apprehension by many interested in maternity and child-welfare work and other health services on the ground that the substitution of one block grant for the Exchequer percentage grants in aid of the health services now paid to local authorities would be detrimental to the efficient administration and expansion of the health services by local authorities and might, by the elimination of the element of central control ensured by the existing Exchequer percentage grants, seriously injure the work and position of voluntary agencies carrying on work with Government approval and support.

(To be continued.)

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CORRESPONDENCE.

"CZECHS AND THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS."

MADAM,—As the writer of the article "Czechs and Their Fellow Citizens" in your issue of 26th October, may I say in reply to your correspondent Vladimir Cerny that I am aware that there is a German theatre in Prague. My statement was that the old German theatres of Prague and Brunn, with their great traditions of German music and art, have passed out of German hands.

Also, I am aware that two German Parties, the Agrarians and the Christian Socialists, joined the Government Majority in 1925 over the Grain Duties, while on the same occasion the Czech Socialist Parties went into Opposition.

As to German schools, I am informed by those who know well educational conditions in Bohemia and parts of Noravia that on account of the Czechizing policy of the State it is in many cases very difficult to maintain the efficiency of the old German schools and colleges, while the alterations of town and district boundaries have in many cases reduced the German percentage of the population below the point where it has the legal right to special treatment.

But my article was intended to point out the opportunity which it seems to me is offered to the Czecho-Slovakian Republic of demonstrating to the world a great lesson in internationalism by organizing their State to foster equally the racial culture of the different groups of citizens, not Czechizing the Minority Cultures, as I freely acknowledge in the past the Czechs were Germanized.

The problem in Czecho-Slovakia is a much more complicated one than the problem Switzerland has had to face as the different races do not live in compact groups, but with our modern facilities for transit and communication this is surely not insoluble.

The Czecho-Slovakian Republic with its courage in facing new problems and its generosity to its Minority citizens stands out as the State to make the experiment.

Low Bridges, Stockfield,
Northumberland.

ETHEL M. N. WILLIAMS.

LADY HEATH'S FLIGHT FROM THE CAPE TO CAIRO.

A correspondent writes: "It was a refreshing sign of the times when Lady Heath gave her lecture recently on her solitary flight from the Cape to Cairo, that the Chairman made no allusion to the sex of the flyer in referring to what he called the feat which had done most to make British aviation respected by all nations. Not so long ago stress would have been laid on the wonder of a woman being able to perform it, but in the year 1928 'nous avons changé tout cela.' No one who heard Lady Heath's modest and matter of fact account could fail to marvel at the intrepidity and resource necessary to accomplish such a journey. One shudders to think what it might have meant to have gone astray in the wilds of Africa. Lady Heath did not go astray to any serious extent, but near Bulawayo she was attacked by sunstroke and was practically unconscious for hours. When she came to her senses she found herself lying on the ground surrounded by native girls who were laughing at her. Her first thought was anxiety for her aeroplane, but fortunately it was near, and still in a serviceable condition. She was tended at first in a native hut, and regaled with a chicken cooked in all its feathers! In four days she was off again on her lone flight though she did not fully recover for a fortnight.

Lady Heath insists that anyone can learn to fly in fifteen or twenty lessons, and her description of the dawn breaking over the great forests made one realize the delight of flying in Africa. Although it was the rainy season she knew she could expect fine clear mornings. Rain came on regularly at 11 a.m., and a thunderstorm at 5 p.m. All her flying therefore was done early, and several of the stormy hours each day were devoted to tending her engine. For months before her flight she had served an apprenticeship to running repairs.

Lady Heath made considerable breaks in her journey at times. Once the possibility of a buffalo hunt proved an irresistible attraction to linger. It was a most successful expedition (not from the point of view of the buffalo), the party returned with their steamer decorated with the trophies of five great beasts. After landing at Cairo, for the first time Lady Heath was assailed by qualms. She was afraid she might miss sighting the small Island of Malta, where she wished to alight.

Sounding the British authorities as to the possibility of being provided with an escort she gathered their view was: 'If we do it for this woman we must do it for everybody.' On confiding her difficulties to a young officer this youth suggested wiring to Mussolini asking him for an escort to Italy! Even Lady Heath's audacity quailed at the idea, but she did it, and received the answer 'delighted.' The Italian escort set out, but unfortunately lost its way. Eventually Lady Heath followed the coast line to Tunis, and from thence got across to Rome.

Lady Heath concluded her lecture by commenting on the different policies pursued by the three great Powers in dealing

(Continued on p. 325.)

LORD CECIL'S PLEA FOR A PRACTICAL POLICY.

We regret that a proof corrector's error in last week's leading note completely distorted our record of Lord Cecil's utterances at the British-American Women's Crusade meeting on 8th November. Lord Cecil asked for a realization that no practical advance was likely to be reached along the lines of insistence that conscription shall be absolutely abolished—rather that reduction of the training period should be pressed. The substitution of "the" for "no" credited him, erroneously, with having said the precise opposite.

M.P.'s WOMEN GUESTS.

We congratulate Miss Ellen Wilkinson on the adoption of her view by the House of Commons' Kitchen Committee that the House had not in the past shown sufficient consideration for women M.P.s. She proposed that all M.P.s should be allowed to entertain women guests in the strangers' dining-room, where the prices are more reasonable than in the Harcourt Room, to which women guests have hitherto been restricted. This proposal was adopted by the Kitchen Committee, whose new Chairman is Sir Robert Sanders.

A WOMAN MINISTER OF COMMERCE.

A striking tribute to a woman Inspector of Trade Schools comes from Austria. Mme Margarete Geyling, member of the Higher Council for Public Instruction, has been recently nominated Minister of Commerce in Austria. She is a member of the National Council of Austrian Women.

TO WHOM THE LAURELS?

Among the prizes bestowed recently by the Chiddingstone, Penshurst, Leigh, and Hever Agricultural Society, was one offered to farm labourers, carters, or stockmen possessing the largest number of children under 14. The first prize was awarded to Mr. S. Clifton, with six children. We congratulate Mr. Clifton on his fine achievement, and venture to hope that his health has not been impaired by the strain of these successive confinements.

Street Offences Inquiry Report.

POSTPONEMENT OF PUBLIC MEETING.

The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene regrets that, owing to the unexpected delay in publication of the above Report, the Meeting arranged for

MONDAY, 26th NOVEMBER

in the CAXTON HALL, at 8 p.m.,
is temporarily postponed.

Council for the Representation of Women in the League of Nations.

THE

ANNUAL MEETING

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BUSINESS MEETING 3.30 p.m.

OPEN MEETING, 5 p.m.

SPEAKER:

DAME EDITH LYTELTON, D.B.E.

(British Substitute Delegate to the Assembly.)

Chair: MRS. OGILVIE GORDON, J.P., D.Sc.

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COMING EVENTS.

FABIAN SOCIETY (WOMEN'S GROUP).

DEC. 11. 8 p.m. Caxton Hall. Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., "Women in Politics."

GUILDHOUSE W.C.A.

DEC. 3. 3 p.m. Mrs. W. T. Layton, "This Year's Assembly and the Peace Pact."

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

Dunfermline S.E.C. NOV. 26. 3.30. Burgh Court Room. Public Meeting on "Maternal Mortality." Speaker: Dr. T. Y. Finlay.

Edinburgh W.C.A. NOV. 28. 8 p.m. Gartshore Hall, 126 George Street. Public Meeting, "Government Proposals for Poor Law and Rating Reform in Scotland." Speaker: A. MacRobert, Esq., K.C., M.P., Solicitor-General for Scotland. Chair: Rt. Hon. Lord Salvesen.

Midland Affiliated Societies. NOV. 29. Y.W.C.A., 106 Corporation Street, Birmingham. One Day Conference, 11.30-1.30. "The Future of the N.U.S.E.C.—Finance." 3-5 p.m. "Protective Legislation." 6-7.30. "Equalities still to be Won by Women." Speakers include Miss Rathbone, Mrs. Abbott, Mrs. Blanco-White, Miss Macadam, Mrs. Ryland, Dame Ethel Shakespear.

Portsmouth W.C.A. NOV. 26. 7.30 p.m. Rechabite Hall. Councillor A. Rice, "Collection and Disposal of Refuse in Portsmouth." Chair: Mrs. Barton, M.A.

Preston W.C.A. NOV. 26. 7.30. Orient Cafe, Friargate. W. Allison Davies, Esq., O.B.E., "The Town's Purse."

St. Pancras S.E.C. NOV. 28. 8.30. "At Home," 1 Cumberland Terrace, N.W. 1. Miss Escreet and Mrs. J. Pollard, "The Ministry of Women."

MORLEY COLLEGE FOR WORKING MEN AND WOMEN, 61 WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD, S.E. 1.

DEC. 6. 8 p.m. Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., "Women of To-day in Politics and Industry." Chair: F. Briant, Esq., M.P.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

DEC. 3. 6 p.m. St. Patrick's Clubroom, Soho Square. Miss Fedden, "Nationality of Married Women." Chair: Miss Butler Bowden.

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