

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

The King's Speech.

The Cabinet is now having frequent meetings, largely concerned with the consideration of what is to be included in the King's Speech. Clearly the long list of reforms referred to in the Conservative Party's Programme cannot be tackled in one Parliamentary Session, but there appears to us every reason to hope that many of the reforms of special interest to women have been dealt with in earlier Parliaments at such great length that they are ripe, if not over-ripe, for such legislation. We shall be intensely interested to see whether the Government proposes to put forward new legislative proposals with regard to Housing and Unemployment. We ourselves are of the opinion that whatever is done, both in this direction and with respect to Education, will depend chiefly on the administrative measures adopted by the departments concerned. We fully hope and expect to see reference in the King's Speech to the Equal Guardianship of Children, to Widows' Pensions, Legitimacy, and other reforms of this nature. Will any reference be made to the setting up of a Committee to deal with Equal Franchise? Mr. Baldwin's statement that the Unionist Party believes in equal political rights for men and women gives us cause to hope that something may be done.

Widows' Pensions.

In the course of a conference of the Distributive Workers Approved Society, held in London last week, Mr. Rhys Davies well known to our readers as a Parliamentary protagonist in the fight for Widows' Pensions, referred to the future prospects of that long-suffering cause. There was a rumour current, he said, that the present Government, having openly declared itself in favour of a Widows' Pensions scheme, had its eye on the accumulated surpluses of the State Health Approved Societies. Whether such a rumour was well founded or not, he declared it was the business of the insured population to make sure that its economic surplus should be safeguarded from expenditure for any purpose other than that for which it was originally subscribed—the provision of a first class health service. He added that any Widows' Pensions' scheme which "meant a charge on wages in any way whatever" should be "strongly opposed." The taxpayer was, in his opinion, the proper person to bear the weight of this particular responsibility. As regards the latter opinion, Mr. Davies' view is ours. We have always believed and still believe that both as regards justice and economy a non-contributory scheme of Widows' Pensions burdened upon the broad shoulders of the entire tax-paying com-

munity is the proper solution of the problem. But we do not go all the way with him in demanding that any contributory scheme which may involve a charge on wages shall be "strongly opposed." We prefer to wait and see what kind of a contributory scheme Mr. Baldwin may have up his sleeve. In view of the apparent "stability" of political groupings at the present time, there is much to be said for a contributory scheme "in the hand" as the alternative of a non-contributory scheme "in the bush." More especially as there is no certainty that the Labour Party, in the event of it assuming office some four or five years hence, would hasten to provide us with the precise scheme that we want. It is impossible to refrain from embodying the lessons of the immediate past in the prospects of the immediate future.

Women Inspectors in the Civil Service.

In welcoming the announcement that women may enter for next year's examinations for the administrative grade of the Civil Service, the *Daily Telegraph* writes:—"Not, however, until one has enjoyed the opportunity of seeing a tabulated statement of the posts held by women in 1920, in comparison with those of to-day, does one realize how very narrowly have the women's opportunities been allowed to expand. Everyone admits now the value of the work of women inspectors of factories since Dame Adelaide Anderson some thirty years ago was first called to that office. She built up a brilliantly effective staff at the Home Office, and it is here, perhaps, that there has been development greater than elsewhere. For in 1920 the personnel consisted of one principal, one deputy, and six senior inspectors, while there are to-day one principal and two deputy chief inspectors, with two superintending and five deputy superintending inspectors, as well as eight district inspectors. On the other hand, the Board of Education stands to-day very much where it did four years ago. Then it had a chief woman inspector, five staff and fifty-four inspectors. At this moment it has a chief, six staff, and sixty-two inspectors. Numerically, though the titles have been a little changed, its medical staff is precisely the same. The Ministry of Labour, which may be held to be one of the most progressive departments in regard to women, has an assistant secretary, which is an important rank, and has evolved an understanding that in certain branches the chief posts are most fittingly held by men, as are others by women, while there is certain work that can be regarded as common to both. In net result women held thirty-four posts of responsibility in 1920, and now have fifty-one. In the Post Office there is now a woman establishment officer, one principal, and three assistant medical women officers, and fifty-one women filling other posts, as compared with four medical women and forty-four in other branches in 1920."

Liverpool "At Home".

Liverpool has inaugurated the novel scheme of a "welcome" week; for six days the City is to be at home to all who wish to see something of her civic and business life. Eight ocean-going liners are open for inspection at the docks, factories are showing how their goods are made, the telegraph and telephone exchanges and the letter sorting department may be visited, the fire brigade is giving demonstrations, and in every way attention is to be drawn to the town's activities. The committee that is responsible for the scheme is circulating statistics to show the great part that Liverpool plays in the industrial and commercial life of the nation; for example, the bulk of exports that passes through Liverpool is greater than the exports of London, Manchester, Hull, Middlesbrough, and Bristol combined. In many ways the scheme seems to us to be admirable. Knowledge and understanding of the forces round us and civic pride are

excellent things and are unfortunately comparatively rare; the ordinary boy and girl grow up in utter ignorance of the activities of their own town, and this ignorance has far reaching effects on the individual as well as on civic life. But there is a danger in demonstrations of this kind which inevitably focus attention on the town's successes and not on its failures. We wish, for example, the Committee would also circulate statistics of overcrowding and housing conditions. We do not say this to imply that Liverpool's record is worse than that of other great cities, but we merely wish to emphasize the fact that civic pride has its dangers if it is not accompanied by a knowledge of the social factors which urgently require improvement. Business men will naturally emphasize the achievements of the town; it is the measure of their success as well as an advertisement. It should be women's function to rouse the civic pride which looks at the evils in the city, and demands reform.

Women and Electricity.

We referred last week to the Conference at Manchester on Smoke Abatement and the need for a wider use of gas and electricity. In this connexion it is interesting that at a meeting held under the auspices of the Women's Engineering Society on 12th November, at Lady Parsons' house, at which various women's organizations were represented, it was agreed to form a Women's Electrical Association. The scheme was warmly supported by various prominent engineers who agreed that there was a real need to interest women on the subject, and to form a closer contact between the woman's point of view and that of the electrical engineer. Amongst other speakers was Miss Enfield, of the Women's Co-operative Guild, who pointed out how little the working woman understands the labour saving value of electricity. The Association is still of course in the preliminary stages of development, but the proposals for its activities are interesting. The work will of course be mainly educational. Demonstrations of electrical labour saving apparatus will be given to help women as housewives, but the importance of interesting them also as citizens will not be overlooked, and there will be lectures on smoke abatement and on electricity applied to medical work, to transport, agriculture, and other branches of the life of the nation. The Association will also aim at encouraging women to get elected on local electricity committees. It is also proposed to have a section for educational work in girls' schools and amongst Girl Guides. This last section would certainly be an important one, as it involves the education of the housewives of the near future. Boys have a natural interest in technical questions, and we believe it is chiefly a question of tradition and lack of opportunity that makes their sisters regard a fuse wire as something beyond their ken. Altogether, the Association seems to have a great sphere of usefulness before it, and we heartily welcome its formation.

Remembrance Day in Dublin: The Woman's Share.

A correspondent writes: On Tuesday, 11th, Remembrance Day was celebrated in Dublin with a great public demonstration largely unorganized and spontaneous. In it the women of the city bore their part, as did the ex-service women. In the great crowds which filled College Green from ten in the morning to late in the evening were many widows, wearing dead husband's decorations; many older women, walking alone, whose son or husband lay far away at Guillemont or on the shore of Gallipoli. The total parade was made up of about 21,000 men and about 1,000 women, who, as the *Irish Times* says, "helped to win the war in the auxiliary services." Another way in which the women, yes, even the women of Southern Ireland, helped to win the war was told by the man who spoke of "the friend of my own who lost her three best sons." It was the best who went, without conscription, and the whole city on Tuesday last mourned for them. To quote the *Irish Times* again: "Crowds in single file marshalled by Legion men kept moving past the cross till darkness fell. During those hours the most touching scenes of the day were to be witnessed. Once the procession halted while two nuns dropped on their knees in front of the cross and prayed. Flowers were continually handed by poor women to the Legion men inside the railings. A woman dressed in black had great difficulty in getting away from the spot, her little boy, wearing his dead father's decorations, kept complaining 'I want to see my daddy.'" Wreaths were laid by Mrs. Kettle, widow of Lieutenant Kettle, and by Mrs. Despard. Surely the women who thus met in a common sorrow will meet again in a common effort to build again the structure of their national life.

Women Barristers.

Seven new women barristers have been called to the Bar, making the total number up to forty-one. Some of the papers have recently been commenting on the fact that no women have as yet made a marked success at the Bar, but it is difficult to see why this should surprise anyone considering how long most men remain "briefless barristers." The *Manchester Guardian*, on the other hand, remarks with its usual common-sense that it is surprising, seeing how few men barristers ever attempt to practise, that there are a dozen or more women already who have put their names up in chambers and have been briefed at least once. The women barristers are breaking down the social as well as the professional barriers. Last year the Hardwicke Society, the debating society of the Inns of Court, admitted women barristers; this year they are allowing women visitors, but with the amusing proviso that they must be the guest of women members. The uninitiated have always suspected lawyers of a love of hair-splitting; this condition certainly looks like another example of it.

Rutland's First Woman J.P.

Rutland is small, but that is no reason why it should not have a woman amongst its Justices of the Peace. We are glad to hear that Miss A. S. Brocklebank, O.B.E., has been appointed as the county's first woman J.P.

Lectures on the Draft Protocol.

We would like to draw the attention of our readers to the lectures, organized by the Women's International League, on the Protocol which are advertised elsewhere in this number. The question is of such vast importance that a well instructed public opinion is a necessity, more especially as no decision has yet been made. The names of all the lecturers are a sufficient guarantee of the standard of the lectures. In view of Dr. Jane Walker's letter as to Mrs. Swanwick's achievements at Geneva, we are sure everyone who can will seize the opportunity to hear her speak on 27th November.

E. D. Morel.

Mr. E. D. Morel's death last week came as a sudden shock to a wide circle of friends and fellow-workers. He was one of the best loved and best hated men of our generation. For the number of his admirers, and the depth of their admiration, it is not difficult to account. His conduct of the Congo Reform Association before the war, the combined ability and tenacity which he devoted to the castigation of the Belgian Congo administration and the atrocities of its rubber industry, alone entitle him to the admiration of all humane persons. It was, as the *Manchester Guardian* remarks, "probably the most extraordinary piece of one-man organization known in our time." To this fine record of work accomplished he added a wide knowledge of Foreign affairs in general, a fearless pen, and a tireless spirit of reform; while as founder and honorary secretary of the Union of Democratic Control he pursued throughout the war a course of consistent and constructive pacifism which involved him in much unpopularity and a positive avalanche of press-fed misrepresentation. This last goes far to account for the bitter hatred of his enemies. But when it is duly discounted, there remained in his work and outlook that genuine grain of perversity which invariably led him during and after the war to discount the sins of his country's enemies and magnify those of his country and her allies. This tendency when applied personally is generally regarded as a virtue which receives Gospel recognition in the simile of the mote and the beam. When applied nationally it is, to the vast majority of persons, positively exasperating. And much that Mr. Morel said was exasperating even to those of his countrymen who could appreciate the debt which the world's civilization owed to him. In internal affairs Mr. Morel reflected the principles of his internationalism. He was a great democrat, and like all great democrats he was a good feminist.

Ourselves.

The attention of our readers is drawn to a letter from Mrs. Fawcett printed with this issue, begging each subscriber to obtain at least one new subscriber to the WOMAN'S LEADER before Christmas, and suggesting that in this way not only can a Christmas present be given to ourselves, but that such a subscription would constitute a very welcome Christmas present to a friend likely to be interested in our news and point of view. We hope that Mrs. Fawcett's request will receive the very careful attention of our readers.

MR. BALDWIN ON THE WAR PATH.

A week or so ago, Mr. Baldwin said in one of the first of his Prime Ministerial utterances, that he intended seriously to tackle the problem of high food prices, with a view to seeing whether something could be done to diminish redundant and expensive distributive costs. It will be observed that in his diagnosis of high prices, Mr. Baldwin instinctively puts his finger on the chief source of the difficulty, i.e., the distributor. It is, he assumes, during its tortuous journey from producer to consumer, that our daily bread becomes so disturbingly expensive. Nor can we be anything but grateful to Mr. Baldwin for this tentative preliminary declaration of war. It was not for nothing that we digested and reviewed in these columns the successive reports of the Linlithgow Committee on the prices of home-grown foodstuffs. We carry fresh in mind the price policy of the London wholesale and retail milk trust which uses the high costs of the inefficient but independent "marginal" distributor as a sort of smoke-screen for the retention of its own swollen profits. Our heart still aches for the weary tribulations of that much-handled and mis-handled commodity, the London vegetable, which wends its way from middleman to middleman, through that ineffective anachronism known as Covent Garden Market, until it reaches us over the badly stocked counter of a retailer whose effective policy is "a large profit on a small turnover." Nor, to turn to another class of goods, are we forgetful of the methods by which the federated newspaper distributors protect the consumer from the good gifts of inexpensive weekly journalism.

But, though we welcome Mr. Baldwin's declaration, and urge our readers to give him as much support as they can in his courageously foreshadowed enterprise, we are convinced that it is not enough simply to concentrate upon the shortcomings of the distributors. Goats they may be—wolves and cormorants even; we would not spare them. But scape-goats they must not be. And it is unfair to assume that the evil of unduly high prices is solely the work of the distributors, and in no wise connected with similar villainies and inefficiencies on the part of the producers. And never was this fact brought into clearer

light than during the brief operation of the Profiteering Act between the summer of 1919 and the summer of 1921. It is true that during that period the attention of the press and the public was mainly concentrated upon the shortcomings of shopkeepers, and upon the efforts of individual consumers to use the machinery of the local profiteering committees for securing the return of minor overcharges from individual local retailers. But it is equally true that under cover of such spectacular efforts the Central Profiteering Committee conducted a number of inquiries into the organization and methods of large-scale producers, which revealed the immense extent to which these gentlemen had succeeded in circumventing the day to day whip and spur of industrial competition by the manifold and multifarious methods of trustification. We learned, for instance, during the time when an official body was empowered to take evidence on oath concerning business organization, and publish its findings without fear of libel or slander actions, some pertinent reason for the prevailing high price of household soap. We learned why sewing cotton was so expensive. We learned something of the method by which the National Light Castings Association "steadied" production and maintained a standard price list for such essential domestic articles as baths and grates. We learned, all along the line, of the marvellous economies which a trustified industry is enabled to accomplish by the method of trustification, and by the same method, retain in the form of profits instead of passing on to the consumer in the form of cheapness. All this and more we learned, during the period when impartial inquiry was allowed to play like limelight over the shrouded ramifications of industrial organization. And what we learned confirms us in our belief that Mr. Baldwin's forthcoming campaign against the distributor is not enough. Nevertheless—we repeat—we wish him all success in the delicate and difficult task which he has ahead of him; and we sincerely hope that his good intentions in this respect, incomplete though they may be, will not add a single square inch to the paved area of Hell.

WOMEN'S LEGISLATION IN THE NEW PARLIAMENT.

By EVA M. HUBBACK.

It is with no light heart that we have to envisage once again the Parliamentary fight on the many reforms, such as Equal Franchise, Equal Guardianship, Legitimacy, amendment of the laws dealing with Separation and Maintenance Orders, etc., that have been before so many successive Parliaments. The three General Elections in the last three years have, as is well known, each time prevented the final stages of Bills dealing with these questions from becoming the law of the land. There are many further fields to conquer in the shape of reforms hitherto not embodied in Parliamentary Bills, and Women's Organizations are thirsting to tackle them. But once again we find ourselves faced with the familiar list of reforms which must reach the Statute Book before further enterprises can be undertaken. We will hope, however, that by the time the next Parliamentary Session is at an end, we shall have real achievements to record, and we appeal to all those interested not to let constant repetition dull the edge of their weapons.

In our opinion the prospects for the majority of the reforms for which we have been fighting so long are bright, though the cause of Equal Franchise may represent a very big exception. Let us deal with this most vitally important question first—we know that many Conservative Members of Parliament are pledged in its favour, among whom are included some prominent members of the Government; we also know that the whole of the two Oppositions stand solidly by it, even if they have shown no really great fervour in the past on its behalf, but we do not know the attitude of a large section of the Conservative Party, and we do know that yet a third section of that Party is opposed to Equal Franchise, at any rate at the age of 21. May we remind our readers that Mr. Baldwin made the following statement during the Election campaign:—"The Unionist Party are in favour of equal political rights for men and women, and desire that the question of an extension of the franchise should, if possible, be settled by agreement. With this in view, they would, if returned to power, propose that the matter be referred to a conference of all political parties on the lines of the Ullswater Committee?"

The inherent contradictions in this statement are obvious. There is no one who would not interpret "equal political rights"

as meaning equal franchise rights; one is forced to the conclusion therefore that the Prime Minister is trying to drive an unruly pair of horses, of which, the white horse is in favour of real equality between men and women, and the black horse still bears the shadow of an anti-suffrage past. The fate of Equal Franchise will obviously depend on the personnel of the Committee, and on the pressure brought to bear on all Members of Parliament, especially the more recalcitrant ones, on the need for Equal Franchise. At any rate, even if, as we hope, the Committee is established shortly, it is highly improbable that any legislation embodying whatever may be its conclusions will come before Parliament next Session. We would rather not give expression to our fears as to what the worst recommendations of such a Committee might be, for as all good followers of M. Coué know, suggestions may result in embodying those fears in facts.

When, however, we turn to the other matters, the situation is distinctly hopeful. Mr. Baldwin, in his Election address, included the following among reforms he desired to see carried out:—"The Probationary System for dealing with offenders; a Bill to amend and consolidate the Factory and Workshop Acts; that children born out of wedlock whose parents have subsequently married should be legitimized; the law relating to separation and maintenance orders should be amended; equal rights should be ensured to women in the guardianship of children; adoption should be legalized; the number of women police should be increased; and the penalties for criminal assaults against women and children made adequate to the offence."

We should like to draw special attention to the phrase dealing with Guardianship of Infants. It appears that the Conservative Government wishes to go one further than the Labour Government in the direction of giving equal rights to mothers and fathers; whether it will succeed in over-riding the well known objections of our bureaucrats in the Departments remains to be seen.

With regard to the amendment of the law relating to Separation and Maintenance Orders, we fear that all Mr. Baldwin has in his mind is the small departmental Bill, which has been introduced either by the Government itself, or by the National Union of

COMING EVENTS.

ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT MISTRESSES, DEVON BRANCH.

NOV. 20. 3.15 p.m. Modern School, Exeter. Mrs. Robie Uniacke on "Teachers: Their Responsibilities as Citizens."

GUILDHOUSE W.C.S.

NOV. 24. 3 p.m. Annual Business Meeting. Mrs. Marston Acres on "Why do so few Women become Ministers of Religion?"

LONDON SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE.

NOV. 25. 8 p.m. 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. Mrs. John Stocks on "The New Factory Bill."

NOV. 26. 3 p.m. 12 Smith Square, S.W. (by kind permission of Mrs. Walter Rea). Lecture by Miss Lillian Redstone, B.A. Lond. (Hons. Hist.), on "Old Westminster." Tickets 2s. 6d., from 35 Marsham Street.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

NOV. 26. 5 p.m. Caxton Hall, Westminster. Conference on "The Separate Taxation of the Incomes of Married Persons."

NOV. 26. 4 p.m. Mrs. Clement Davies' and Lady Pares' "At Home" for the N.U.S.E.C., at 11 Vicarage Gate, W. 8.

DEC. 10. 3-6 p.m. Sale of Work in aid of Funds of N.U.S.E.C., at Church House, Westminster.

Horsham W.C.A. NOV. 24. 8 p.m. Lady Pares on "Current Legislation Affecting Women."

Croydon W.C.A. NOV. 28. 3 p.m. Mrs. Wrightson on "Legislation for Equal Franchise."

Tunbridge Wells S.E.C. (in conjunction with Tunbridge Wells W.C.A.). NOV. 27. 5.30 p.m. 7 Church Road. Lady Pares on "Current Legislation especially Affecting Women and Children."

UNION OF JEWISH WOMEN.

NOV. 24. 3.30 p.m. 37 Cornwall Gardens, S.W. 7. Mrs. F. W. Hubback on "Widows' Pensions."

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE.

NOV. 27, DEC. 4, 11 and 18. 8 p.m. Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand. Lectures on "The Draft Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of Disputes." First lecture by Mrs. H. M. Swanwick, M.A. Further particulars from the W.I.L., 55 Gower Street, W.C.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS.

LONDON SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE, 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. Secretary, Miss P. Strachey. Weekly "At Homes," Tuesdays in November at 8 p.m. See "Coming Events."

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 23rd November. 3.30, Music; Lecture: Miss Margaret Bondfield. 6.30, The Rev. Percy Dearmer, D.D.

GENUINE FRIENDSHIPS formed through the U.C.C.—Write, Secretary, 16 L., Cambridge Street, S.W. 1.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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