TRADES UNION CONGRESS
GENERAL COUNCIL

REPORT
of
WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

held at

LEICESTER on MARCH 20, 1925

CHAIRMAN - MISS JULIA VARLEY

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RESOLUTIONS CONSIDERED BY THE CONFERENCE.

1. "That this Conference, in view of the fact that a considerable number of women employed in industrial and other occupations are not organised in Trade Unions, calls upon Trade Union officials, Executive Councils, and members to make special efforts to secure the adherence of women workers to Trade Union organisations."

2. "That this Conference calls attention to the fact that in many cases the womenfolk of Trade Union members are introduced into industrial and other occupations without any steps being taken to influence them to become members of Trade Unions, and therefore calls upon Trade Unionists to use their influence in their domestic circle to increase the possibility of Trade Union membership amongst the members of their families."

3. "That this Conference calls the attention of the organised Trade Union Movement to the need for rendering assistance to those unions engaged in organising women workers, and urges the larger Trade Unions to recognise that weakness in industrial organisation in one occupation is a menace to Trade Unionism generally, and for this reason calls upon such unions to render all possible assistance in the task of organising the women workers of the country."

4. "That this Conference requests the General Council to circulate these resolutions to all the affiliated organisations, and to include them on the agenda to be considered at the forthcoming Area Conferences of Trades Councils; and further invites all Trades Councils to co-operate with the General Council for the purpose of giving effect to these resolutions."

Trades Union Congress General Council.

Report of Women's Conference held at Leicester, March 20th, 1925.

Chairman - - - MISS JULIA VARLEY.

General Council Representatives	Miss Mary Quaile, Mr. A. Conley, ,, J. W. Ogden, ,, E. R. Poulton, J.P., ,, Ben Turner, J.P., ,, Fred Bramley (Secretary).
For the Leicester Trades Council	Councillor Smith.
Delegates to the Conference:—	
Railway Clerks' Association	Miss M. M. Hughes.
National Union of Railwaymen	Mr. E. Yates.
Transport and General Workers' Union	Miss Carlin, Mr. George Sanders.
Amalgamated Union of Upholsterers	Miss K. Hanafin.
National Union of Printing, Bookbinding, Machine Ruling and Paper Workers	Miss E. A. Scott, Mrs. A. Bridge.
Bolton Operative Bleachers', Dyers', and Finishers' Association	Miss M. Seddon, ,, L. Cooke.
National Union of Textile Workers	Miss T. Livesley, ,, Moore.
Hosiery Workers' Society	Mrs. E. Goddard.
Leicestershire Hosiery Union	Mr. J. Chaplin.
Tailors and Garment Workers' Union	Miss Loughlin, ,, Quinn, Mrs. Hudson, ,, Messer.
National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives	Mrs. Bell Richards, ,, N. Dunnett, Miss V. Howard.
National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers	Mrs. Martin, Miss A. Wild, Mrs. Bamber.
National Society of Pottery Workers	Mrs. D. A. Wallett.
National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen, and Clerks	Miss E. Turner.
Civil Service Clerical Association	Miss C. Maguire, ,, Barford.
Post Office Controlling Officers' Association	Miss A. C. Clarke.
Union of Post Office Workers	Miss E. H. Howse, Mr. F. Andrews.
Actors' Association	Miss Ada Roscoe.
National Union of Clerks and Administrative Workers	Miss E. Cooper.
Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries	Miss Dorothy Evans.
National Union of General and Municipal Workers	Miss Margaret Bondfield, ,, D. Elliott, Mrs. L. Cohen, Miss E. M. Wooder.
Workers' Union	Miss J. Jacques, ,, E. Weaver.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS.

Councillor SMITH (Vice-President of the Leicester Trades Council) opened the Conference with a speech welcoming the delegates to Leicester. He stated that he thought that the organisation of workers in the factories, warehouses, and shops of Leicester compared very favourably with that of other cities in the country. But much remained to be done, and he knew that the position of women in industry, as a whole, was an absolute disgrace. Even in his own union (the Union of Post Office Workers), where women were comparatively well organised, the conditions in some cases—for instance, for telephone girls—were deplorable. In spite of this, however, he thought he could claim to belong to a union in which the organisation of women was very good. Although conditions in the industry were not ideal, Post Office workers had of late years secured many advantages, and he stated that they had been secured as a result of their strong Trade Union organisation.

In the name of the Leicester Trades Council and the 50,000 workers of Leicester, he welcomed most heartily the delegates to the Conference. He hoped that, as a result of the Conference, women workers, not merely in the city of Leicester but throughout the country, would be stimulated to take more interest in Trade Union matters and to become active Trade Unionists.

The CHAIRMAN (Miss Varley) said that she was sure the delegates would appreciate the kindly welcome which had been extended to them by the Leicester Trades Council. She did not propose to occupy much of the Conference's time with her speech. She thought that Leicester was rather better organised than many towns were, but there was room for improvement even in Leicester.

This Conference had been called as a result of the resolution passed by the last Trades Union Congress calling upon the General Council to arrange for conferences of women engaged in industrial and other occupations.

At the present time there were about 4,000,000 women engaged in industry. Perhaps 1,000,000 of these were engaged in domestic service, which was one of the most difficult trades to organise on account of the isolation of the workers. There were 3,000,000 engaged in industry, and of these about 700,000 to 800,000 were organised in Trade Unions. She did not wish to be discouraging about this, and the position was perhaps better than it appeared on paper.

The Women's Group of the General Council were greatly concerned about the organisation of women. The Conference had been called to see whether ways and means could be found of organising women in the country; it had been called in order that they could get each other's points of view on the matter. She assured the Conference that any useful suggestions made would be taken back by the Women's Group to the General Council, and they would receive full consideration.

She thought that it was essential to have the help and co-operation of the men in dealing with this question. She had always been opposed to the women being used by the employers as a means of worsening conditions for men, and thought that if men and women were organised together, it would be impossible for women to be so used. She thought that there were a sufficient number of delegates at the Conference to alter the whole face of industry if they would bring all their energies to the problem.

Mr. BRAMLEY said that this was the first Conference of the kind which had been called in this country under the auspices of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress. A report of the Conference would be printed and circulated to the delegates and to the unions which they represented. He did not wish to bring any discouraging note into the proceedings, but he was sorry that there were not more delegates present. However, it was not always the biggest numbers that got the best results.

For some time past the question of the inefficient and incomplete organisation of women workers had been receiving consideration. Miss Varley had quoted figures. Excluding those employed in domestic service, there were approximately 3,000,000 women employed in industry. Of these not more than 1,500,000 were organised, which left at least half of the women employed in industry untouched.

With regard to the resolutions, they were the result of definite instructions from the Trades Union Congress. Resolution 1 called upon the Executive Councils of unions and union officials to make special efforts to secure the organisation of women. The objection might be raised by the Executive Councils and officials that in requesting them to make special efforts there was the implication that they had not already done so. That was quite true, they had not made special efforts. The menace of cheap labour was not sufficiently recognised.

Resolution 2. In this resolution special stress was laid upon the point that Trade Union members who were also heads of families should take special steps to see that the members of their families were members of Trade Unions also. He thought it was the absolute duty of a parent to use his advice, his influence, and his experience in this direction. This resolution might have been carried further. It could be taken for granted that every Trade Unionist would have at least six acquaintances who were not members of Trade Unions, and all the influence he had should be brought to bear to induce both acquaintances and members of the family to join their appropriate Trade Unions. This would help considerably to strengthen the Trade Union organisation both of men and women.

Resolution 3 contains a suggestion that an important principle should be admitted. It must be recognised that a badly organised section of an industry, an industry where low wages are paid and where low standards prevail, is a menace to industry as a whole. This must be recognised in relation to the bad organisation and, in some cases, the lack of organisation among women workers. He quoted the case of the agricultural workers. Congress had voted a special grant to help in the efforts being made amongst the agricultural workers. It had been recognised that the low wages paid to these workers, the low standard of living, were a menace to the workers in every other occupation in the country. It was the same in all sections of industry.

He thought that this was a special task for women workers. They had more influence than they had used up to the present time. They could exert a wonderful influence on the industrial world if they would only organise themselves. There should not be nearly 2,000,000 women workers outside the Trade Union Movement. They should endeavour to stimulate the movement to take some action on this big question.

No detailed plans had been drawn up. It was not possible for one individual to do this; it called for the resources, the experience, and the energies of all satisfactorily to increase the membership among women

workers. In this task, as in all other tasks, they would have to get rid of a narrow sectional view. All those concerned with the organisation of women workers should take part in a general campaign, and use their influence to the maximum in this direction.

The CHAIRMAN stated that before she called upon Miss Quaile to move the first resolution she would like to make an explanation to the Conference. An addendum had been received to the first resolution, with a request that it might be discussed that day. The Women's Group had discussed the matter from all points of view, and had come to the conclusion that the proposals put forward in the addendum were not such as could be discussed by the Conference. They were matters for the unions themselves, and she would advise the unions concerned to send the proposals as a resolution to the next Trades Union Congress.

Miss MAGUIRE (Civil Service Clerical Association), who had proposed the addendum, stated that she was willing to withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN called upon Miss Quaile to move the first resolution.

Miss QUAILE said that, in her opinion, this resolution was a most important one, as it stressed the importance of developing, or trying to develop, the organisation of women workers. The need for this development was becoming more apparent each day, and particularly when one considered the state of the world at the present time. They should consider it from the international as well as the national standpoint. It was everywhere being urged that they should return to the gold standard, and this meant the development of capital and an intensification of competition. Organisers knew what that would mean to the women workers in factories, shops, etc. Competition in industry meant the exploitation of the weakest members, and at the present time women were the weakest section, and the least able to defend themselves.

She felt that the wording of the resolution would not meet the views of some of the delegates present that morning. No resolution would do this in a progressive movement. They must bring home to Trade Unionists that the unorganised portion of the industry was a danger and a menace to industry as a whole. Trade Union officials should treat this subject, not as they had treated it in the past, but as part of the work of the movement. A proper treatment of this question would mean not only the emancipation of the male workers, but also of the women workers and of the working-class families of this country and of other countries. She felt that special efforts should be made to induce the strong Trade Unions to come to the help of the weak. It was in the interests of the strong Trade Unions to help the weaker portion of industry. The influence which the larger Trade Unions had would help considerably in this work. Women in the past had been very badly organised, but there had been developments even within the last 15 years. The heads of families should certainly try to induce the members of their households to become members of Trade Unions.

She hoped that, although this resolution had been referred to as a pious resolution, they might get from it suggestions and ideas which would be of use. She hoped that as a result of this Conference a scheme or schemes would be drawn up which would enable them to tackle this question. She had very great pleasure in moving the resolution.

Miss BONDFIELD said she had much pleasure in seconding the resolution, as, on account of the ruling which had been given that morning, it would not be possible for her to move an addendum to the resolution, as she had intended. She proposed, however, to give the substance of the addendum in the form of suggestions. She felt that this was a skeleton resolution, and thought that the Conference should concern itself with discussing the machinery to be set up to deal with this question. No resolution on the agenda dealt with this point.

She thought that one of the most important things to be done was to increase the educational opportunities for the new members. She felt that the later generation did not know of or understand the struggles of the older generation of women Trade Unionists, and that there was some danger of the good which had been done in the past being lost now. Women workers should have the opportunity of learning about the history of Trade Unionism, and of its meaning. At present they knew nothing of it, and had no interest in it. She thought also that women should be encouraged to do things for themselves. She thought that greater stability in women's Trade Union membership would be secured if women's sub-committees could be set up in the mixed Trade Unions. She was in favour of mixed Trade Unions, but thought that if women could have more responsibility and more opportunity for developing on their own lines it would lead to a more active interest being shown, and would lead to wider co-operation between men and women.

More use should be made of the Trades Councils. It would be useful if the General Council would recommend the Trades Councils to form women's sub-committees. She thought it would be a great help if the General Council would convene area conferences, similar to those which were to be held by the Trades Councils, to which should be invited representatives from women's sections of Labour Parties, Women's Co-operative Guilds, adult schools. These representatives could discuss with Trade Union representatives the best means of carrying out the Trade Union education of women workers.

The General Council should convene a National Women's Conference to be held during the same week as Congress, at which four women should be elected to serve in a consultative capacity with the Women's Group, and a chief woman officer should be appointed to the General Council staff, who would act as the secretary of the Women's Group. In these ways women would be stimulated to take a greater interest in their own problems, and would have more responsibility to do things for themselves. These were all practical suggestions, and would, she thought, lead to the better organisation of women workers. Women could be organised as well as men, and when a woman once became a Trade Unionist she remained one all her life, even after she married. She thought that if machinery on some such lines could be developed, there would be a distinct improvement in the organisation of women workers. The resolution on the agenda was not wide enough.

Mr. CHAPLIN (Leicestershire Hosiery Union) said that he was probably the oldest Trade Union member present at the Conference. He had joined a Trade Union over 50 years ago and had paid his subscription every week since. When he joined the Trade Union, women were also members, even in those days. He had been connected with his union as secretary for 33 years. He might therefore claim to know a little about Trade Union organisation. Since the majority of the members of his union were women,

he might claim to know something of the problem of organising women. He would like to say a few words on the resolution, especially on the part dealing with Trade Union officials. As a person who had spent many years organising both men and women, he would like to say that it was much more difficult to organise women than men. He did not think that women understood Trade Unionism as men did. It might be said that the men had not done their duty, as, if they had, there would have been more women members. He would dispute that allegation as far as the district of Leicester was concerned. Scores of meetings had been held for women, and the women had taken very little interest in them and the meetings had been very badly attended. His executive consisted of eight members, and of these one was a woman. There was nothing in the rules or the constitution of the union which could prevent more women from being on the executive. Why, then, were there not more women? Because, although the majority of the members of the union were women, it was impossible to find more than one who would undertake the work. With regard to the view that more interest should be taken in the women, he affirmed that so far as Leicester was concerned everything that could be done had been done. There was no town in England in which greater efforts had been made, and which had held more meetings for women. For some reason women do not and will not take an interest in Trade Unionism, and the difficulties of organising them are very great. Miss Bondfield had said that once a woman was a Trade Unionist she would remain one as long as she lived. He could only say that such was not the case in Leicester. It was very difficult to keep the women members, even when one had succeeded in getting them to join. He hoped some solution of this difficult problem would be found.

Miss CARLIN (Transport Workers' Union) said that the figures concerning women in industry were not the latest figures obtainable. The "Daily Express" gave the number of women in industry as 5,000,000, showing an increase of 63,332 on the figures given in the last census.

She thought that in the past men had not treated women properly. The men Trade Union organisers thought that when they were dealing with women all they had to do was to make inane jokes. They ought to get more concrete proposals to enable them to deal with this problem. People had no idea how hard it was to get women into Trade Unions to-day. They came in simply to get something out of it.

Miss Bondfield had suggested that other bodies should be asked to help in this matter, and she agreed with this suggestion and thought that it would help to create the right atmosphere. She pointed out that a large proportion of Trade Union funds were devoted to political organisation and very little help was given to the Trade Union Movement, particularly to the women's section. She thought they were entitled to more help than the political side of the movement. She was taking part in the fight and knew the difficulties. She thought it was very difficult to be an organiser in a mixed Trade Union. She hoped that they would be able to arrive at some agreed proposals before the end of the Conference.

Mrs. BAMBER (N.U.D.A.W.) said that she wanted to give a few suggestions which might help the General Council in their efforts to secure the better organisation of women. The organisation of women was quite different from that of men. The great majority of women employed in industry were between 16 and 25 years of age, and it was much more difficult to deal with them than it was to deal with adult men.

She thought that the Trade Boards had had a very bad effect on the Trade Union organisation of women. There were more women organised in trades outside the Trade Boards than in those which were covered by Trade Boards. She wanted to tell women that they must take the responsibility for themselves, and see that they got decent conditions for the work they do.

It would be a good thing, she thought, if the unions catering for women would set up women's sub-committees. Efforts should be made to make women understand that they should keep up their connection with a Trade Union even when they are out of industry. The unions should also realise that unemployed women cannot pay contributions to a union, and some arrangement should be made whereby they could retain their membership when they were not employed. She approved the idea that Trades Councils should be asked to assist in the work of organising women.

She also suggested that the General Council should ask the Trade Unions to receive deputations from the General Council. These deputations should explain why it is so necessary for women to be organised in Trade Unions, and should urge the unions to make special efforts to deal with the question. She also suggested that the unions should be circularised at frequent intervals, in order that their interest in the question might be maintained. The names of all unions catering for women should be printed on the circulars, and also the names of the secretaries.

Miss HOWSE (U.P.W.) said that she wished to support the suggestions made by Miss Bondfield.

With regard to Mr. Chaplin's statement that it was impossible to get women to take an interest in their Trade Union and attend meetings, she would like to point out that working women were, for the most part, very differently situated from the men. There were very few women who did not have to help in household duties when they got home at night, and therefore they did not have the time and the opportunities for attending meetings which the men had. She thought that other steps must be taken by the Trade Unions than just trying to get the women to attend meetings. Her own union (U.P.W.) had made great efforts to give the postal workers some sort of Trade Union education. She thought it was very important that the organisers and officers of the various Trade Unions should endeavour to meet and to keep in touch with one another.

The unions must realise that one of the greatest difficulties in dealing with the organisation of women was the fact that women had not so much time to give to Trade Union work as men, and it was really no use expecting them to attend meetings in great numbers. It was possible to improve the organisation of women; her own union was an example of what could be done in this way. In 1913-14 they had 3,500 members, to-day they had 15,000. The unions should endeavour to get a number of the women into educational classes, and should try to interest them in social activities, and by these means get them interested in the Trade Union itself. She thought these suggestions and those made by Mrs. Bamber also were worthy of consideration.

Miss MAGUIRE (Civil Service Clerical Association) said that she was quite willing to withdraw the amendment which she had previously sent in, but she would like to say something on the suggestions made in the amendment. Although her Trade Union experience had not extended over very many years it had been varied. She had worked for two mixed

unions and two purely women's unions. They should not blame men for failing to understand the difficulties of the women's question. On the whole, she thought that women in industry were self-supporting, and had to do a great deal of work for themselves at home.

A charge had been made against women of not attending meetings, but in addition to the fact that women had not so much time to spare as men, they must also take into consideration the fact that the Trade Union meetings were devoted to a discussion of the men's problems, and women's questions were hardly touched upon at all. She thought that a certain number of meetings should be called by the unions for the specific purpose of discussing women's questions. She thought there would have to be a certain amount of special machinery set up. Perhaps the formation of women's sub-committees was the best way of dealing with the difficulty. She understood that there was a certain amount of antagonism within the unions to this course. Women would have to accept more responsibility for their own affairs, and not leave things to be done for them by the men. She added that she supported all the suggestions made by Miss Bondfield.

Miss EVANS (Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries) said that she wished to support the resolution, particularly the part urging the unions to make special efforts to organise women. She wished to lay stress on the word "special." Efforts had been made for many years, but it was more than time to consider whether some other methods of dealing with the question could be found.

The charge was always made against women that they would not come forward and take part in Trade Union affairs.

She thought that some sort of machinery on the lines of Miss Bondfield's suggestions should be set up. By these means she thought a stimulus would be given to the organisation of women. She hoped the Women's Group would consider the question seriously, and make a report to the next Congress. She would like to see the Women's Group strengthened; more than two women should be members of it.

The resolution was then voted upon and carried unanimously.

Mrs. COHEN (National Union of General Workers) moved that the remaining three resolutions should be taken as one composite resolution, as this would be a means of saving time.

After some discussion, this was agreed to.

Mr. BRAMLEY said, with regard to the figures quoted by Miss Carlin, the statistics used by the General Council had been compiled after proper investigation from official statements issued by the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Health, and from a special white paper report.

Mr. CONLEY said that he had much pleasure in moving this resolution, and wished to confine his remarks to the first portion of it. He hoped the Conference would not suggest that this resolution was to be considered as being a pious one. He wanted the group to be able to go back to the General Council and emphasised the importance of the work defined in the resolution. There were at the moment 6,000,000 male Trade Unionists in the country. If each of these Trade Unionists could persuade one of their female relatives to become a Trade Unionist herself, it would go a long way towards increasing the number of women organised in Trade Unions, and would help to solve this pressing problem. The policy outlined in this part of the resolution was not new as far as he was concerned.

He had employed it 17 years ago. Another method they had adopted was to make a round of all the branches of the union in Leeds. They had attended the Trade Union branch meetings and had spoken for about five or ten minutes. The campaign had lasted for about seven or eight months and had been very successful in increasing the number of women members. He thought the Trades Union Congress General Council had a greater amount of influence than any other body in the movement, and he thought it would be very useful and very helpful to the unions if they would issue circulars, not just to the General Secretaries of the unions, but enough to ensure that they would reach the various branches and be read at the branch meetings of the unions throughout the country. By this means the men Trade Unionists would be continually urged to consider this question, and having it continually before them would remember to try and persuade the members of their own families to join their appropriate Trade Union.

He realised the very great difficulties there were in organising women. In the first place, the period spent by the female worker in industry was shorter than that of the male worker, and so it came about that when a factory or workshop had been successfully organised, after a very short period the work had to be done over again. The personnel of the factory or workshop changed completely every ten or twelve years. He, therefore, thought that if the women could be tackled through the men Trade Unionists, there would be a far better chance of retaining their membership.

In the second place, women should be encouraged to take part in the administrative work of the branches. Women in some branches of his union had undertaken this work very successfully.

Mr. SANDERS (Transport and General Workers' Union) seconded this motion. He said that, in dealing with this question, it was essential that the special side of life should be stressed more than had hitherto been the case. He did not think that women would ever attend meetings with any eagerness or regularity unless they were made more attractive, and unless some definite entertainment were provided. His own union had done a great deal in this way and found that it worked most successfully.

He thought it was most important that Trade Unionists who were heads of families should not allow their daughters to work under bad conditions or in unorganised shops. They should do their best to see that all the members of their families were members of their appropriate Trade Union.

Miss HANAFIN (Amalgamated Union of Upholsterers) said that she wished to support the resolution. The organisation of women workers had to be done in the factories and workshops, and it was most important to have the help and support of the men, as they had to work side by side with the men in the factories and workshops. She thought it was important to have good shop stewards, but men really should take more interest in the question. Men had been organised years longer than women, and it was their business to teach women about it and help them. Women would not understand about it unless it was brought home to them. A good deal might be done through the men's branches. The Executives of the branches should be thrown open to women, and women should be encouraged to attend the meetings and to speak.

Mr. TURNER said he thought there was some misapprehension as to the unions represented at the Conference. Only those unions having women members, as shown in the Congress Report, had been asked to send representatives to the Conference. It must not be forgotten that nearly two-thirds of the men employed in industry are also unorganised. Some of the suggestions which had been made were very useful.

He agreed that the bulk of women employed were between the ages of 16 and 25, and that the problem of dealing with them was rather different from the problem of men's organisation. In dealing with the men, his own union (Textile Workers) had tried both mill-gate meetings and personal canvassing, and had found the latter more successful, in some cases, and in others the meetings had been of more value It was impossible to lay down any hard and fast rule about methods of organisation.

He wished to speak chiefly about the second part of the composite resolution. In his own industry there were many more women employed, and the National Union of Textile Workers had a larger number of women members than men. He thought it was essential that there should be co-operation between the unions in dealing with this problem.

Miss ARNOLD (Workers' Union) said that the consideration of this question had been very long delayed. She remembered that a certain union had a strike in Bradford 34 years ago, and until about six or seven years ago the women in that factory were unorganised. When the Workers' Union had tried to organise those women they had been accused of poaching. In Coventry they had also tried to organise women workers, and had again been accused of poaching, and those women were not yet members of any union. All Trade Unionists should work in agreement and that would go far to solve the problem. Delegates should be sent to the men's branches, and in particular efforts should be made to get the Miners' Federation to take more interest in the question.

Miss LOUGHLIN (Tailors' and Garment Workers' Union) said that she wished to support the composite resolution. She was sure that women could be organised and that they could take responsibility. But they were not always dealing with women. In many cases they were dealing with what could only be described as children, and they had got to get them inside their organisations by some method. In 1917 they conducted a strike in Reading and then found that only two girls out of 300 had ever heard of the union. Efforts must be made to get more money spent on the organisation of women. Affairs at home were quite as important as the international situation. The money contributed by the various unions must be spent in various ways. They ought to have more women representatives on the General Council.

Miss QUINN (Tailors' and Garment Workers' Union) said she also wished to support the resolution. She appreciated the fact that the General Council were taking the matter in hand and recognised the value of it. The present international position and the state of the industrial world to-day meant that women would be exploited at the expense of men, and some means of preventing this must be found. Men should see to it that women were as strongly organised as themselves.

Mr. ANDREWS (Union of Post Office Workers) said that he wished to make two suggestions which might be useful in developing the organisation of women workers. The first suggestion dealt with young girls employed in industry. He thought that articles should appear from time to time in the

" Daily Herald " which would help in the Trade Union education of girls (and young people generally) between the ages of 16 and 19. The second suggestion was rather a similar one. He thought that women's journalism should be developed. Articles dealing with industrial women's problems should be published at frequent intervals in the " Daily Herald." He also thought that the social side should not be neglected, and described what splendid use the Union of Post Office Workers had made of the cinema. He thought that the advantages of the cinema as a means of education had not been fully realised.

Mrs. BELL RICHARDS (Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives) said that she was a member of a branch consisting of women only, and they have their own officials.

She pointed out that the resolution on the organisation of women passed by the Plymouth Congress of 1923 had never been carried out, and asked why this was so. This resolution called upon the Trades Union Congress to set up women's sections in the Trade Union Movement as had been done in the Labour Party. Men might be able to organise women, but they would not be organised properly until they undertook to do it themselves. She thought that there ought to be many more women members on the General Council. If women's sections were set up in the Trade Union Movement, as in the Labour Party, the better organisation of women would be assured. She hoped that the General Council would do their best to get this machinery set up.

Conference adjourned until 2-15 p.m. for luncheon.

The CHAIRMAN said that, arising out of a question put just before the adjournment, the Committee had discussed during the lunch hour the question of allowing amendments to the resolutions, but it had been decided to adhere to the original ruling that amendments could not be accepted. They would take a record of all the suggestions made that day, and would submit them to the General Council. The reason why they felt that they could not admit amendments was because some of the suggestions put forward would involve an alteration in the rules of some of the unions, and as the resolutions had not been before the Executives of the unions the Committee could not accept responsibility for amendments of such a kind. The Committee would present a report and lay before the General Council all the proposals.

Miss HOWSE said that she had hoped that a number of concrete proposals would have been put forward, and that the General Council would have been forced to get something done. She would like the suggestion, that a representative committee of five women representing industries for women to act in co-operation with the Women's Group on the General Council, stressed and passed by all the delegates at the Conference.

Mr. BRAMLEY thought that the time of the Conference would be more properly spent in discussing general principles than in unfair attacks on the General Council.

Miss TURNER (Shop Assistants' Union) said that women could be organised by women, and there should be women's branches set up. She supported Miss Bondfield's suggestions.

Mrs. MARTIN (N.U.D.A.W.) said that she wished to support Mr. Conley's resolution. She agreed that it was most important to get the men interested in the organisation of women. She had always found it very difficult to understand why so many men were willing to subsidise women's wages.

Mrs. COHEN (N.U.G.W.) said that she wished to support the composite resolution. Meetings were very useful in many ways, but the most important thing was to get to the people concerned. She had been doing organising work for many years, and had always found that the most important part of the work was that done at the mill gates. It was often disheartening work and sometimes humiliating, but it had to be done. She thought that welfare supervisors ought to take more interest in and give more help towards the organisation of women. They were often quite hostile to the Trade Union organisers.

She agreed with the part of the resolution which called upon Trades Councils to help in the work. She thought that more use should be made of shop stewards, as they had very great opportunities of organising within the factories and workshops. She advocated conferences of shop stewards in the various localities. She knew of one factory where the shop stewards were negotiating for an increase of 6s. a week for the girls, who were not organised in any way, and who knew very little about the negotiations.

She thought that the other unions ought to help. Some, and in particular the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, were quite indifferent on this question. She knew of many instances of the wives and daughters of members of the Miners' Federation who were working and who were not Trade Unionists.

Miss WOODER (N.U.G.W.) said that she wished to speak for the rank and file workers, because she thought the rank and file had a definite point of view. The rank and file in the unions should have an opportunity of helping the officials, and should do their share of organising. She was sorry that no amendments to the resolutions were to be allowed, as she would have liked to be able to go back and say that these suggestions were definitely to be considered by the General Council.

She thought that the suggestion that women should have opportunities and encouragement to develop education on their own lines was a very helpful one. Many women had not the time to attend weekly branch meetings. Women must learn about Trade Unions and their work. She knew of girls working in industries covered by Trade Boards who were under the impression that their wages were fixed by the Board of Trade. And equal ignorance prevailed concerning other bodies, such as the Whitley Councils, etc. One of the first things to be done was to set up women's sub-committees on Trades Councils and to convene area conferences. That would be something tangible which could be appreciated by the rank and file. She was also strongly in favour of the appointment of a chief woman officer and the establishment of a consultative committee consisting of five women to act in co-operation with the Women's Group. She hoped that the Committee and the General Council would consider these questions very carefully.

Mrs. BRIDGE (Printing and Paper Workers' Union) said that very many helpful suggestions had been put forward that day. She thought, however, that it would be more useful if a conference such as this could be held during Congress week, as that would ensure a larger attendance. She thought that the Women's Group should endeavour to make more use of the

various trade journals. Articles should be published in them, dealing with women's problems and relating to the organisation of women. The trade journals throughout the country should be utilised for this purpose. She agreed with the statements which had been made that women must do the work for themselves, and she hoped that some practical steps would be taken as a result of the resolution passed at the last Congress.

Miss COOPER (N.U.C.) said that Mr. Bramley had informed them that a large sum of money had been voted for the campaign in connection with the agricultural workers. She felt that the Trades Union Congress should help women in that way, too. She could only speak for the clerks, but in London alone there were many thousands of clerks, mostly employed in small numbers in offices, and the question of organising them was rather costly and complicated. It was impossible to hold meetings and canvas workers at the mill gates as in the other industries. She thought that more use could be made of the "Daily Herald."

Miss CARLIN said that the question was not only one of organising women but of keeping them when once they were organised. They had heard a good deal about men helping them, but they would have to do the work themselves. The suggestions which were to go to the General Council should not go as personal suggestions, but should have been voted on by the whole Conference. She thought that the men officials in the unions often regarded the organisation of women as a side-line, and did not take it seriously enough.

Miss ELLIOTT (N.U.G.W.) said that she wished to say that she was very glad this Conference had been held, and hoped that a really constructive scheme would result from the very valuable suggestions made. Each union had its own difficulties in regard to this problem, and each union would have to deal with it in its own way. She agreed with the suggestions put forward by Miss Bondfield, and hoped that the General Council would act upon them. She hoped that a report would be made to the delegates attending the Conference, and that they would be informed of any developments which resulted.

Miss MAGUIRE said that she hoped that if the General Council called another Conference of this kind they would issue the agenda in time to allow the unions to consider it beforehand. She hoped that it would be possible to arrange for another Conference to be held in Congress week, as had already been suggested that day.

The CHAIRMAN said that the suggestion had been noted and would be considered.

Mrs. GODDARD (Hosiery Workers' Union) said that she hoped that if another Conference were called to consider this question the General Council would invite the unions not affiliated to Congress to join. She thought that women would have to be more independent in the future than they had been in the past. She had found it very difficult, almost impossible in fact, to get girls to listen to talk about the Trade Union.

Mr. POULTON said that he would like to try to clear up some little misunderstanding concerning the calling of the Conference. The Women's Group had to have regard to the resolution passed at the last Congress, and considering the terms of the resolution they had gone as far as they could

for the time being. Many of the suggestions put forward at the Conference were excellent and would be of great help to the Women's Group. They had been given authority and encouragement to go on with their work and call other conferences.

He wished to speak in support of the third part of the composite resolution. He thought there should be more opportunities of Trade Union education, and that people should be able to get more information and take more interest in things.

He was in favour of the Trades Councils being asked to help in this matter, and he thought steps should be taken to have the organisation of women made part of the programme to be dealt with at the Area Conferences. He thought the Trades Councils would be able to help a great deal in the organisation of women. If they all joined together in dealing with this question, they would be able to raise the standard of the whole of the people. He hoped they would pass this resolution unanimously. It had the support of the Women's Group, and if the men were at all backward concerning it, the two women representatives, the Chairman and Miss Quaile, would see that something was done.

The CHAIRMAN then put the resolution to the vote, and it was carried unanimously.

The CHAIRMAN said that once again she wished to assure the Conference that all the suggestions would be most carefully considered both by the Women's Group and the General Council.

The CHAIRMAN said that the business before the Conference had now been dealt with. She was very glad indeed that the Conference had been held, and hoped that it would have good results.

Mr. TURNER proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman for presiding at the Conference.

This was endorsed by the delegates to the Conference.

The proceedings then terminated.

SUGGESTIONS SUBMITTED TO THE CONFERENCE.

1. Trades Councils recommended to form women's sub-committees.

2. The General Council recommended to convene area conferences, to which women's sections of Labour Parties, Women's Co-operative Guilds, Adult Schools, etc., be invited to send delegates to discuss with Trade Unionists the importance of Trade Unionism for women.

3. The General Council recommended to convene a National Women's Conference, to be held in the same week as Congress, at which four women be elected to act in a consultative capacity with the Women's Group.

4. The General Council recommended to appoint to the General Council staff a chief woman officer to act as secretary of the Women's Group.

5. The General Council recommended to send deputations to the Trade Unions to give reasons why it is important that women should be organised in Trade Unions.

6. The General Council recommended to send notices at frequent intervals to the Trade Unions urging them to greater activity on the question of the organisation of women, and giving reasons for its necessity.

7. Mixed unions recommended to set up women's sub-committees in their districts.

8. Opportunities should be made for educational and social activities by the women on their own lines.

9. At regular intervals articles should appear in the " Daily Herald " and in the various trade journals devoted to a discussion of women's problems, which would help in the Trade Union education of women.

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