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Women's Co-operative Guild

17, GREAT PRESCOT STREET,
LONDON, E. 1.

January, 1936.

Please keep this Circular for Reference after reading it to your Branch.

FELLOW GUILDSWOMEN,

This new Year Greeting is sent to you from the NEW GUILD OFFICES. You will see the address at the head of this circular, and I want each Secretary to put it into her Branch Minute Book right away and so avoid delay and difficulty through correspondence being sent to the old address. The upheaval which must take place in removing from old established offices has, of course, disorganised our work to some extent, but we are working hard to get straight in the new home as well as keeping up with the correspondence and the orders as they come in.

We start the New Year in a position never before achieved by the Guild, that is, in possession of OUR OWN OFFICES. Guild members all over the country have made this possible, and now we shall be able to settle down without the feeling that in a few years we must pack up and travel once more. We are looking forward to a year of vigorous work in the Guild and in the Movement. This can only be achieved by each branch taking its fair share towards making our efforts successful. We hope, after what has happened in the political world, that the New Year will bring new vigour and new inspiration for the settlement of international as well as national difficulties.

Here is work which lies close to our hand at the moment. We are proud of our Guild and its achievement, and we feel quite sure that in 1936 we can reach still higher levels of attainment in the direction of world peace and co-operation if every one of us determinedly plays her part.

I send New Year Greetings to every branch, and I trust that each member will put her whole heart into making this a successful and prosperous year for the Guild.

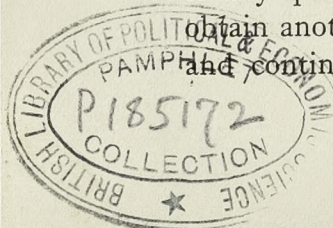
Travel Week-Ends and Holidays.

At the request of a large number of our members we have again arranged with the Co-operative Wholesale Society for holiday week-ends abroad during the summer months. From what I have seen of the preliminary programmes these will be a variation on those of the last two years, and they promise to be even more interesting than those which have gone before. Branches which have not yet started should begin right away to arrange for their members saving for these week-ends. I have had several requests for another trip to Russia to be arranged for Guildswomen. I am in touch with responsible people in Moscow, but I have not yet obtained sufficient information to enable me to give particulars of the trip. We hope, however, to be able to announce that at the end of July we shall be able to offer a three weeks' trip, similar to that of last year, and members desirous of taking part in this should commence at once to save. Our members should note that these trips are not confined to one sex only. Family parties can join and will find them most enjoyable.

Schedules.

This year we shall be very anxious to know what progress has been made by our branches in regard to the Two Year Plan. Questions will be asked on the Schedules, and we hope that all our branches will answer these as fully as possible. It is not possible to increase the size of the Schedule Papers, but any Secretary who is able to send more information in answer to any question than can be got in the space provided should

obtain another sheet of paper, give the number of the question, and continue her answer on the extra sheet of paper. Any



number of extra sheets can be pinned to the Schedule, and by this means any branch can send in the fullest information it is able to give in regard to any question. It will help very considerably if each Secretary will give in complete detail the work which her branch is doing in regard to the questions on the Schedules.

Propaganda Fortnight.

There will be the usual "Propaganda Fortnight" in February, and members would be well advised to get into touch with their own societies to find what part they can take in the special work of that period. This will enable the branches to see how far they can fit into the plans made by the Society and even contribute some special effort of their own to help forward the work and increase Co-operative trade and membership.

Comrades' Circles.

It has been brought to our notice that Comrades' Circles could be started in very many more areas than are now being worked, and the suggestion has been made that each branch of the Guild might try to organise a group. The names of young people who would be willing to attend a circle should be collected, and these, with the addresses, should be forwarded to the Education Committee of the Society. It would be a very creditable piece of work to get more young people interested in Co-operation and the Co-operative Movement, and this object can be achieved by the establishment of Comrades' Circles. Young people between the ages of 16 and 26 are eligible to join. Will your branch take up this matter and so help forward that co-operative education which is a part of the Guild Two Year Plan.

Guild Convalescent Fund.

Now is the time when branches consider their financial obligations, and we hope the usual subscription to the Convalescent Fund will be placed high on the list. We do not want our branches to allow their Annual Subscription to be forgotten or overridden in the special effort which they are

making for the fund this year. We want all subscriptions to go on as usual quite apart from the special effort, but we also want our branches to make this special effort one of the most successful tasks we have ever undertaken.

“Our Own” Paper—“The Women’s Outlook.”

Our branches have already received a circular from the National Co-operative Press outlining the new venture in connection with the “Women’s Outlook.” This valuable little paper is now to be issued as a weekly, with new features of interest, and a bright new cover which will be changed from time to time. We recommend it with confidence to every Guild member as a publication which they cannot afford to miss. We have to recognise in connection with the “Outlook” that our Guild branches are the medium and the centre through which this paper can be obtained. The extra money which will be spent in bringing out the new version will necessitate greatly increased sales if the venture is to be justified. In our Two Year Plan we undertook to push the sale of both the “Outlook” and also “Reynolds’s” Sunday Newspaper. The directors of the Co-operative Press have assisted with this new scheme for the “Outlook,” and it now rests with us as Guildswomen to see that it gets not only into the homes of every Guildswoman, and every Co-operator, but into other homes as well. The “Women’s Outlook” is not only a Co-operative paper like the “Co-operative News,” it is a paper which has features of interest for every woman whether co-operator or otherwise. We want each branch to see to it that a very special effort is made to extend the sales. Another point which has been considered by the Central Committee in connection with this issue of the “Outlook” as a weekly is in regard to those branches which meet only once a fortnight. We want branches in this position to make definite arrangements so that one of the members will be responsible for the distribution of the paper on those weeks when the branch does not meet. By this means we shall avoid a lessened sale by reason of no meeting being held and members will not miss their copy, and thus lose interest, because of difficulty in obtaining it.

Guild and Other Organisations.

The very growth and strength of our Guild organisation has meant that outside people who wish to build up an organisation for some particular purpose in which they are specially interested have tried to gain their strength from us. Individuals, and groups of individuals, with some special interest to serve, have joined up in our branches, and have tried to use our organisation to further the ends of some other body. It has, therefore, been found necessary, in the interests of the Guild, to lay down certain principles for guidance in regard to those organisations with which we do not work and the members of which are, therefore, not eligible to take office in the Guild. It must be recognised that no list of organisations can be complete. Groups will change their name from one organisation to another, but the members of these organisations, whatever the name they may use, still retain the desire to use the name and the strength of the Women’s Co-operative Guild for some purpose outside our own policy and principle of co-operation. The list which is here given, and which must be kept by our branches for reference, may not be complete, and as months go on other organisations may come into being which are not included, but we feel that more and more our branches must use their own powers of reason in regard to the difficulties which come along in this connection. We must not expect to find laid down in black and white every point of difficulty. Our branches must realise that the Central Committee is a National body, looking at the Guild work from a National point of view, and laying down National Rulings for the good government of our organisation. It is for the branches to take responsibility for keeping their own branch in line with Guild policy and principle. If that is done the National task will be eased and our organisation will have little need to fear those who come in for self-seeking motives or to further interests not concerned with the Guild and Co-operation.

Guild Rules as revised at the Birmingham Congress, state that while persons of any political persuasion are welcomed as members of the Guild, only those who are prepared to support the Co-operative Party, and any agreement entered into by the National Party with other democratic organisations in accordance

with General Rules, are eligible to hold office. Therefore members of organisations connected with the following are not eligible to take office in the Guild: Conservatives, Liberals, Communists and Fascists. In addition, members of the Guild who hold official position in Townswomen's Guilds, Women's Institutes, British Legion Branches, National Council of Women and Women Citizen's Associations, are not eligible to take official position in the Women's Co-operative Guild.

Affiliation Fees.

The Annual Branch Subscription to the Central Fund is now due, and we would like to remind branches that this subscription is 9d. per member for all branches which did not send half-fees in July last. Branches should be careful to pay on their full membership so as to secure full voting power in accordance with their strength. The Co-operative Party fee is also due, and this is 2s. 6d. for branches of 50 members or under, and 5s. for branches with a membership of over 50. The International Levy is 1s. per branch, and branch secretaries should send the Co-operative Party fee, together with the International Levy and their Central Fund subscription to the Guild Office at the new address. Send all money in registered envelopes to avoid any loss.

On behalf of the Central Committee I wish your branch a most successful and prosperous year.

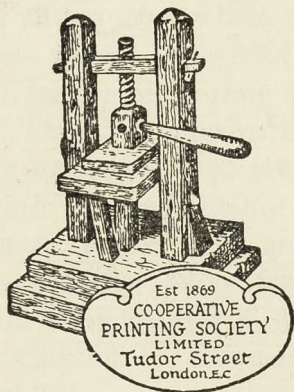
Yours fraternally,

ELEANOR BARTON,

General Secretary.

Enclosed with this circular you will find:—

1. Circular regarding People's Year Book.
2. Circular from the International Guild.



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