

# THE WOMAN'S LEADER

## AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

#### Disarmament.

The general opinion of the nation most clearly is that however else the Labour Government may fail it will at least do the right thing about Disarmament. The Prime Minister of Great Britain is to visit the President of the United States—a gesture which should go far to placate America—and what we know of both men makes us believe that the outcome of their conversation is likely to be a way out of our present troubles. If it is not we must indeed despair of human reason, for anything more artificial or unnecessary than the deadlock in which we find ourselves at this moment can seldom have been devised even by experts. As we write, no particulars are known of the "new yardstick" which is said to have been devised in the States for measuring cruiser tonnage. All that is evident is that American admirals who do know them are feeling upset. If the proposals are of such a nature that their publication upsets our own admirals too they will indeed be welcome. In the meantime *The Times* gives out—as entirely unofficial—a rumour that we are to be allowed to count two 6,000 ton cruisers with 6 in. guns as equal to one 10,000 ton cruiser with 8 in. guns. This would give to each country her darling luxury, the type of cruiser she has nearest to her heart, and therefore presumably appease to some extent the cruiser-loving element in each. But there is nothing in it, as *The Times* observes, to alarm admirals, so let us hope that if this forecast is true the scheme will be found to be accompanied by some proposals as to a mutual reduction in total tonnage.

#### Next Session and Women's Questions.

It may be remembered that before the General Election the leaders of the three political parties received deputations from most of the principal women's organizations. Of the points then raised, there is no doubt whatever that those relating to peace and unemployment will undoubtedly find a place in the King's Speech. It is hoped, also, that other points ripe for legislation on which the present Prime Minister expressed himself in sympathy will find a place. These included equal opportunities and equal pay for equal work in the Civil Service, together with the abolition of the regulation that women should resign on marriage; the compulsory appointment of women police; the need for the repeal of the present Solicitation Laws and the substitution of a law on the lines of the Public Places (Order) Bill, equal for men and women; and the introduction of testamentary provision for spouses and children.

#### International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship at Berlin.

Our Berlin Correspondent writes :—During the past week delegates from all the world over have been assembling in force, and the Headquarters of the International Alliance for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship at the Kaiserhof have been a beehive of variegated activity. Committees have been in session discussing reports and preparing resolutions for the full Congress, delegates have been getting to know one another, and much preliminary German hospitality, both private and official, has been offered and gratefully received. Altogether it has been a pleasant time for delegates in anticipation of the heavy and continuous labour to come. Berlin in June is a cheerful city for wanderings in the intervals of business, with shining sun by day, cool breezes by night, the Tiergarten alive with fresh green foliage, and a tantalizing plethora of first-rate opera. One outstanding personality is already playing a leading part: the gifted and gracious President of the Alliance, Mrs. Corbett Ashby. And another, Frau Adele Schreiber, Socialist member of the Reichstag, and Chairman of the Committee for the Unmarried Mother, stands at the moment vividly in the consciousness of delegates by reason of the peculiarly interesting form of hospitality which she provided for the Board and leaders of deputations on Friday last. This took the form of a reception at the Tempelhoferfeld—formerly a dusty military parade ground—now thanks to the immeasurable blessing of disarmament, a publicly-owned centre of civil aviation and perhaps the best equipped air port in Europe. Some of Frau Schreiber's guests were able to experience trial flights, all were able to contemplate near at hand the comings and goings of the giant monoplanes which link Berlin with London, Paris, Vienna, Lisbon, Prague, Moscow, as the case may be. In a tri-lingual speech of welcome, Frau Schreiber coupled the modern miracle of women's advancement with the modern miracle of aviation. One was reminded of the old English prophecy: "*When shall women vote? When men fly.*"

#### The Congress and Restrictive Legislation.

At any rate both the German Socialist Party and its well-known daily organ, *Vorwärts*, are under the impression that a gang of bourgeois feminists are out to attack the working women's standard of life by a root and branch condemnation of existing protective legislation, and a public meeting has been organized by the party for 18th June in opposition to the point of view (very generally misunderstood, it must be confessed) that legislative protection should relate to the nature of the work and not to the sex of the worker. Meanwhile, there is little doubt that the German delegation and the U.S.A. delegation will reflect this point of view in the Congress itself and that there will be a real clash of opinion with those persons, including the British delegation, who question the necessity for and are convinced of the danger of differential sex legislation in industrial matters. It is perhaps a significant fact that the Committee on Like Conditions of Work for Men and Women held two adjourned meetings last week.

#### The Housing Problem in France.

France seems in a fair way towards solving its housing problem by means of very generous State assistance and untiring experimentation in various methods of building. The new Loucheur law provides that the State takes the place of any building society, bank, etc., in providing the necessary capital, for anyone who wants to build his own house, at the low rate of 2½ per cent. This may be repaid at any time within 25 years. If there are three children under 18 years of age, or the applicant is a cripple owing either to the war

or an industrial accident, the State presents a subsidy of 5,000 francs, and a further subsidy of 2,500 francs for every further child up to a total of 15,000 francs. These new houses are to be free from local rates and taxes for 15 years. Among the new types of houses which can be supplied are concrete houses which can be bought and set up for £6 or less. These, it is true, are only one-roomed dwellings, but many an economical Frenchman is prepared to start his house-owning career in this fashion. A house with two rooms, a kitchen, and a little hall and indoor sanitation can be bought for about £200. Only £700 is required for a house with three living, three bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, electric lighting, central heating, etc. That type of house which is most in demand is one costing about £350. The cement used is reinforced in many ways. Some have a corps of bamboo poles, others a network of steel trellis and pottery, and so on. It is true that we in England have rather gone back to the idea of brick and stone as after all the most satisfactory materials for our walls, but it may be that we have not yet experimented sufficiently in alternating materials.

#### Women in the Universities.

Miss Margery Fry, conversing with a reporter on the occasion of Somerville's fifty year jubilee, summed up particularly well the triple use of women's colleges. They give a chance to women who desire knowledge to become specialists and scholars, they enable those who must support themselves to obtain a professional training, and they fit women to give full service to the community. The instance she gave of this last was Miss Eleanor Rathbone, the first old Somerville student to become a member of Parliament. As witness to the first, she was able to point out that this year both the Newdigate Prize, the Craven Fellowship, and the Pelham studentship have been won by women, although women are still at Oxford in so small a minority. This makes all the more unreasonable the masculine attitude which still prevails there—that the women are intruders, that their numbers are to be kept down to a ridiculously small proportion because their presence "spoils" University life—in fact, that hundreds of women are to be denied a chance of the education they desire because male dons and undergraduates do not like meeting them in the streets or sitting beside them in lectures. The whole question both at Oxford and Cambridge is in an unsatisfactory state. There is a danger that the existing women's colleges, who are on the whole as large as they want to be, may show a tendency to ignore the rights of the women who are shut out in order to maintain their own comfortable relations with the present authorities of the Universities.

#### "Women's Interests."

Even in feminist circles we hear the phrase "women's interests" because of the paucity of language, but it carries with it an unfortunate implication—that the somewhat limited group of subjects connoted by the phrase is really all that women care about. Miss Tuke, the retiring Principal of Bedford College, has, in her twenty-two years' experience, learnt otherwise. She tells us that the young University woman at least is far more interested in international than in local politics—in the League of Nations than in the price of sugar. One of our contemporaries calls this "an unexpected verdict." To one who reads only novels, newspapers, and sermons, it may be so.

#### Women Engineers and Women Grocers.

The Board of Education is offering twenty scholarships and eleven free studentships in 1930, tenable at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, open to both sexes. They will be given on the results of the Science Scholarship examinations which are to be held at various centres. As engineering is attracting more and more women to its ranks, it will be interesting to see how many enter for these scholarships. In grocery, we are informed, women are not holding their own, and of the 200 candidates who are assembling for the Higher Examination held by the Institute of Certificated Grocers, only one is a woman. We should like to know why? No one has ever considered the retail trade "unsuitable" for women.

#### General Bramwell Booth.

The death of General Booth must arouse mingled feelings of sadness and of an emotion more allied to joy. His work seemed to be done. He had stood the supreme test of being deposed by those upon whose support he had counted, and yet remaining gentle and unembittered. The Army had fallen under the leadership of a man whom, in spite of differences, we could respect. We cannot but deplore that Eva Booth, a leader

of the reform movement which led to the General's deposition, could not have said good-bye to him before she returned to her own wide sphere of work in America. We may even venture to deplore that the principle of equality of opportunity of service for men and women, so staunchly upheld by the Army, could not have received its crowning recognition in the choice of so able and devoted a woman to the supreme leadership. But, be these things as may be, we trust that in this matter of equal service the noble tradition of the Army will be maintained and further developed.

#### That Difficult Problem.

In Wales and in Ireland certain religious assemblies are again suffering much heart-searching because of their women, and the matter which is troubling them is delicately indicated in the headlines of a Belfast contemporary as a "Difficult Problem." As long as Nature continues to furnish forth women to the worried world there will, of course, be difficult problems in plenty. The particular problem referred to in the headline is that of women and the ministry of religion. We learn that among the Calvinists of South Wales there are many women who have charge of "Forward Movement Centres" where they exercise the functions of accredited ministers in all things except in the administration of baptisms and Holy Communion. These women are reported to have done excellent work as preachers, visitors, and pastors and to have proved themselves popular with their congregations. Last year a joint committee from North and South Wales was appointed to consider the problem presented by them and their success, and this committee met in Liverpool last month to report. Their report expressed the view that the advisability of opening the door of the ministry to women should be again considered, that conditions should be the same as for men, but, a large but, "the marriage of a woman in the ministry be considered as terminating her services as pastor of a church."

#### Mrs. Martin, M.Sc.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, meeting in Dublin last week, was confronted by the difficult problem referred to above in a more directly personal form. The Newry Presbytery reported that they had on their books a student for the ministry named Mrs. Sinclair Martin. A lively discussion took place on the following resolution: "That, without coming to a decision upon the eligibility of women for the ministry of the church, the Assembly permits Mrs. Martin to continue her course as a student under the supervision of the Presbytery of Newry." Finally, the view of the Moderator (so aptly named) prevailed, namely that the motion be withdrawn and an "overture" on the subject continued next year. Doubtless Mrs. Martin's burning zeal will continue to glow.

#### A Conference on Organization.

Considerable interest has been shown in the Conference being organized by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, at which methods for the organization of Townswomen's Guilds will be discussed. These Guilds, as our readers probably know, are to be formed in those small towns where as yet there is no society existing to meet the requirements of those women whose main occupation is the home. The Conference is intended to give some idea to those who would be glad to assist in the formation of such Guilds, of how these societies should be developed. It is to be held, by kind permission of Mrs. Adrian Corbett, at Pembroke Lodge, Pembroke Gardens, W. 8, during the week-end 28th June-1st July. Among those attending the Conference will be some members of those Guilds which have already been formed and whose practical knowledge of the requirements of their members will be invaluable.

#### Dr. Elizabeth Miller's Salary.

We note that Dr. Miller has recently been appointed deputy assistant Medical Officer for Plymouth at a salary of £500, in spite of the British Medical Association's demand for £600. It will be of interest to learn whether any men applied for the post and, if so, whether it was proposed to pay them the modest £500.

**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.

## ELECTORAL REFORM.

There can be no doubt that the time has come round again for a thorough discussion of electoral reform. Whenever in any country one of the party machines feels that it has a grievance in this matter the attention of that country is immediately invited to a great injustice, and such a situation is now with us. As formerly the Labour Party, so now the Liberals point out that the number of seats they hold in Parliament is far smaller than the number they would have held if the electorate voted in one huge constituency for a party list and not in over 600 constituencies for individual members, each supposed to be the special representative of his constituents. On some future occasion the same point of view may be put forward by the Communists or the Conservatives. . . . To state the case like this is to show the immense change in principle that will be needed before such a claim can be conceded. Our actual constitution takes only a half-hearted cognizance of parties. If by a majority of one in each constituency the electors decided that the man who could obtain the greatest number of their suffrages was a Conservative, the wholly Conservative chamber resulting would be a perfectly valid result. And a great many voters do as a matter of fact still cast their vote for a particular person in the belief that, whatever may be his "politics," they prefer him to the other candidates as the custodian of their interests. Others support him because he helped their mother to get her pension or because they like his wife's smile. In short, there were members of Parliament before there were political parties at all. By this time, however, it is undeniable that we have also parties firmly in command—some citizens think too firmly—of our political life. If they are to be regarded as rightfully in command, and all His Majesty's subjects as born properly in one of their folds, then our electoral system presents anomalies. As Mr. Humphreys shows in the interesting article which we publish this week, the strength of the parties in the House does not correspond to the aggregate number of votes they polled. And in so far as these votes were cast-iron party votes, which would have been given to the candidate of the same party whatever had been the local circumstances, this result, from the party point of view, must seem illogical. It becomes our duty therefore, as citizens to consider carefully the various proposals being put forward for electoral reform. Of these, the three most important are known as Proportional Representation, the Single Alternative Vote, and the *Scrutin de Liste*. The two first are not altogether foreign to us, as the elections for the members both for Oxford University and the Combined English Universities took place under a form of Proportional Representation. In the Cambridge University election use was made of the single alternative vote. Neither of these systems can be fully described or discussed in a short leading article. But of Proportional Representation it may at once be said that the result it gives seems to be almost entirely a matter of hazard. If any candidate polls a "quota"—a number of votes sufficient to elect him right off—his "surplus votes"—the votes he polled in addition to the quota—are re-examined and the second preferences distributed among the other candidates. Putting aside the question of which of his votes are to be treated as "surplus"—i.e. which second preferences are to be distributed—this means that the party which has already succeeded in returning one member is to have a greater share in deciding who are to be the other members than the parties which have not returned any member at all. This is why Gilbert Murray was not the second member for Oxford, although he polled the second largest number of original votes. But it is possible that no one may receive a quota. In this case the *bottom* member is knocked out, and his second preferences divided among the

others, so that the voters with no chance of getting their own man in may share in determining the choice of other people's men. This is from many points of view a sound principle, but it is the exact opposite of the principle of distributing "surplus" votes, so that the whole theory on which the election is conducted will depend upon whether the top candidates happen to get a quota or not. This confusion and uncertainty, and the opportunities it gives for electoral intrigues, such as running unpopular subsidiary candidates so as to obtain their second preferences for your first candidate, constitute a very grave objection to Proportional Representation. If surplus votes are distributed, the winning party will win by a greater margin than ever. If men at the bottom are knocked out, minorities will tend to increase their representation. The processes are diametrically opposed, and a few hundred votes will decide which method prevails. The Single Alternative Vote, on the other hand, is simple. It does not involve enormous constituencies and ordinary people can understand it. The bottom man is knocked out, and the electors who cannot get their own candidate in are not therefore entirely disfranchised. But one point calls for notice. This system does not help the bottom party to return its own members. It may help a middle party as against the party which obtains the largest number of votes. And it is because the Liberals regard themselves as a middle party, the natural heirs to the second preferences of both Conservatives and Labour, that they are demanding it, not merely because they are the bottom party on the voting figures. If they are right in their estimate of how their fellow-countrymen regard them, which we do not know, the result of the change would be that the country might be governed by that party of the three which the smallest number of electors really wanted. Another objection to single Alternative Vote is that it tends to smooth out majorities and produce weak governments and factious oppositions. It is for these reasons that the Commission on Electoral Reform, which sat before the war, recommended the third system, that of the *Scrutin de Liste*. This involves huge constituencies—so huge that all local ties are lost—and lists of candidates placed in order of preference by the party machines. As all parties under this system are able to return their top men and no party those who are lowest on the list, such a procedure places the ordinary member completely at the mercy of his party caucus. Further, as all candidates know, it is hard enough to make oneself a reality to the electors even in a single-member constituency. When thirty men are standing for a large area personal contact becomes impossible. The vote is a vote for a party machine and a party programme, and for nothing else. This contention is borne out by the fact that almost all the Belgian electors do not even trouble to record the order of their preference but put a line against their party list *en bloc*.

There may be many people who consider such a change desirable, but we must make no mistake as to the magnitude of the change or of the extent to which it would make more mechanical our political life. These three systems affect, of course, only one side of electoral reform. There remain the plural vote, redistribution, which would chiefly help the Conservatives, and the burning question of the expense of elections. Here there is much to be said for the French system, under which each local authority provides a certain amount of poster space, equal for each candidate, and no one may use any more. The anomalies due to the unequal size of constituencies are at least as striking as those so freely quoted now-a-days. In fact, each party in the State is at a disadvantage at present in some particular, and it is most unlikely that either of the other parties will be prepared to help the Liberals without also at the same time doing something to help themselves.

## HOUSING AND THE NEW PARLIAMENT.

By G. W. CURRIE.

Lord Rosebery took diplomacy out of politics—if not entirely, at all events to a great extent. Housing—the "internal diplomacy" of Britain as it might be called—awaits a like treatment. D'Israeli showed in *Sybil* eighty years ago an imaginative forecast of how the evils clamant in his day might be countered, and in the earlier speeches of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain an echo of a sort of D'Israeli's voice is to be heard. It is not very fashionable to quote Mr. Lloyd George just now, but it is true and only fair to remember that in the speeches of the campaign

which ended in establishing the system of National Health Insurance, which will be his monument long after many other things are forgotten, he repeated these voices crying in the wilderness. The late Conservative Government was entrusted, at its own request and on its own representations, with the twin task of house-building and slum clearance, and, largely we believe because housing reform has remained a party issue, it completely failed to convince public opinion that it was in earnest as regards the slums, though its achievement of new

house-building under the Chamberlain and Wheatley Acts was a substantial success. As the Bishop of Southwark put it the other day—"For once party warfare should cease and men of good will in all parties should unite in a resolute attempt to remove a grave scandal to our civilization." This is the tremendous task which devolves upon the new Parliament, and it is scarcely too much to say that by its success or failure here it will at the end of the day fall very largely to be judged.

The evil forces which appeared to cow Mr. Neville Chamberlain are for the most part banished from the new Parliament; whether their voice will be raised elsewhere remains to be seen. *Prima facie*, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's Parliament starts with both the intention and the power to eliminate the slum. So, of course, did Mr. Chamberlain, but his enemies were those of his own household and the energy and courage which carried him a certain substantial length along the road of housebuilding failed him entirely when he came to deal with slums. Any Minister of Health should realize that one of two things will happen. Either he eliminates slums or slums eliminate him; and so the splendid opportunities which were Mr. Chamberlain's real inheritance have passed to another. We wish Mr. Greenwood, the new Minister, all success. That he enters into office (as indeed did Mr. Chamberlain) as the result of a very great party triumph at the polls is true; but his real success will, we hope, lie in an entirely new orientation of the policy nominally endorsed by all parties—in the detachment that is of this vast moral problem from the quagmire of party strife.

One lesson of the General Election is plain. The country will no longer tolerate the constant attempts made on one side or another to coin party capital out of evils so desperate as those of the slums; still less will it tolerate any attempt to plead that their remedy is impracticable or unduly costly. The entry in to high office of Miss Bondfield, who did so much in last parliament to expose conditions prevailing in London, the re-entry into parliament of Mr. E. D. Simon, whose equipment for the discussion of such matter is a real public asset, and the election to the House of Commons of Miss Eleanor Rathbone—in itself a significant vote of thanks and confidence from no ordinary constituency—do not stand alone as assurances to Mr. Greenwood that he can count on support, but they do stand out as leading parliamentary results of the General Election.

The association, in England as distinct from Scotland, of local government with party politics has been a most evil influence on the former. Again and again local bodies which, left to themselves would in all probability have done the right thing, have been deflected by pressure of political opinion.

Question after question raising issues of vital importance were shelved by the Minister of Health in Parliament. The impression on the public mind was one of indifference: in any case as the *Spectator* says quite plainly, governmental action was inadequate. The electorate turns to a new parliament.

Local administration is largely influenced by the attitude of the Ministry of Health and the Home Office policy is not without its reflection in the Courts of Justice. It is much to be hoped that Mr. Greenwood's influence will make itself felt in a quickened sense of responsibility on the part of local authorities. The slums proper are surrounded on all sides by masses of property whose condition could and should be markedly and rapidly improved without the expenditure of a single sixpence of public money. So long as really bad landlords thought that they had reason to believe that they could find effective shelter behind a bad political tradition there was never much chance that they would cease from their evil ways.

If Mr. Greenwood will make it his first business to enforce as against bad landlords reasonably full compliance with existing laws he will go far to secure for his party the moral support of the "balancing millions" on which every government depends. We believe that Mr. Baldwin will not fail to stand by him in this task, and it may well come to pass that a Prime Minister deprived of place and stripped of official power may do more to promote sound legislation out of office than in it. The really unknown quantity in the new parliament is indeed Mr. Baldwin unmasked.

**THE LIVERPOOL CHILD GUIDANCE COUNCIL.**

THE COUNCIL has at its disposal a BURSARY for a woman holding a Social Science degree or diploma, preferably one with some experience of Social Work.

The successful Candidate will be required to take a year's course in Child Guidance from September next, at the London School of Economics, for which fees and expenses will be found.

On completion of training the Candidate will be expected to work under the Council if so required, though election to the Bursary carries no guarantee of future employment.

Apply, stating age, experience, and with copies of testimonials, by 30th June to Dr. Fitch, Hon. Secretary, 25 Rodney Street, Liverpool.

**THE GENERAL ELECTION.**

By JOHN H. HUMPHREYS.

First, may I tender my hearty congratulations to Miss Eleanor Rathbone, the first woman Member returned to Parliament by a University constituency, the first woman member elected to the British Parliament under a proportional system? When Parliament permitted proportional representation to be used in a few elections in Great Britain, the conditions under which the system was to be employed were of the most grudging character—in constituencies returning two members, at the most three. The combined Universities return two members; to be sure of winning it was necessary to poll just more than a third of the votes. Miss Rathbone very nearly polled this amount in first choices alone. It was a great triumph.

The general election was historic as the first in which women voted on equal terms with men; it marked the passing of a great injustice. The figures of the election reveal, however, injustices of another order, the spectacle of millions of voters whose names are on the register but who may have no effective opportunity of securing representation. I have often called attention to the position of Liberal and Labour minorities in many of the counties of Southern England, minorities which for a long period of years have had no representation. The County of Glamorgan gives an indication that now in many industrial areas large Liberal and Conservative minorities may, for a long period of years, be without representation. The figures were:—

**GLAMORGAN, 1929.**

Party.	Votes.	Seats.
Labour . . . . .	320,164	16
Liberal . . . . .	173,460	0
Conservative . . . . .	109,752	0
Others . . . . .	8,123	0
Total . . . . .	611,499	16

Equal franchise loses much of its meaning if 320,000 citizens can secure sixteen spokesmen and 280,000 secure none.

At first sight it would seem that a method of election which punishes minorities so severely would provide little possibility of rule by a minority. But the election has furnished abundant examples. The Labour minority in Wales has secured 25 seats out of 36. In Scotland, Labour polled a higher percentage of the votes than it polled in Wales, but it was not so fortunate. Nevertheless, with a minority of the votes it secured thirty-seven (or thirty-eight if Mr. Scrymgeour is included) of the seventy-four seats. The figures for London are equally instructive. The sixty-one contested seats gave the following result:—

**LONDON, 1929.**

Party.	Votes.	Seats.
Labour . . . . .	784,646	36
Conservative . . . . .	754,242	23
Liberal . . . . .	353,737	2
Others . . . . .	14,852	0
Total . . . . .	1,907,477	61

Labour, polling 784,646 votes out of a total of 1,907,477, secured thirty-six of the sixty-one seats.

*The Result of the Gamble.*

There was a widespread consciousness that the election was a great gamble. The more the figures are examined the more they confirm this view; they show how accidental was the final result. With the same totals of figures, a few changes in distribution of votes could have given a very different result. The totals for the 608 contested seats were:—

**GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND, 1929.**

Party.	Votes polled.	Seats obtained.	Seats in proportion to votes.	Cost in votes per seat obtained.
Conservative . . . . .	8,658,918	256	233	34,000
Labour . . . . .	8,384,461	288	225	29,000
Liberal . . . . .	5,305,123	59	142	90,000
Others . . . . .	292,886	5	8	—
	22,642,388	608	608	—

In votes the Conservatives had a majority of 274,457 votes. In 1895 a majority of 117,000 in votes was sufficient to give the Conservatives a majority of 150 seats; in 1900, a majority of 157,000 gave a majority of 134 in seats. Our electoral system has often been defended on the ground that it gives to a small majority in the country a large majority in the House of Commons. The truth is, we do not know whether it will give a majority in seats to the majority or to the minority.

**REPORTS.**

**ASSOCIATION OF HEAD MISTRESSES.**

The 55th Annual Conference of the Association of Head Mistresses of Girls' Public Secondary Schools, was held on 14th and 15th June, at the Leeds Girls' High School, under the Chairmanship of Miss L. A. Lowe, M.A., who, with her double function of President of the Association and Hostess of the Conference, opened the first day's proceedings by welcoming about 350 guests in the beautiful Hall of the school of which she is the Head Mistress.

Miss M. D. Brock, O.B.E., M.A., Litt.D. (Head Mistress of the Mary Datchelor School), Chairman of Committee, in a rapid summary of the work done during the year, emphasized the vigorous effort which the Association, strong in its consensus of opinion, has continued to make in order to secure a wider range of subjects and a greater elasticity in the First School Leaving Certificate Examination, and to place the subjects of Group IV (those dealing with the arts and handicrafts) on an equal footing with the literary and scientific and mathematical subjects of other groups. This record formed a fitting prelude to a paper on "The Philosophy and Function of Examinations," in which Miss Haig Brown, M.A., of Oxford High School, conducted a penetrating scrutiny into the nature of examinations, their true function and their right conditions. Judged by the Gamaliel test of 50 years' experience, she considered that examinations had shown themselves capable of an intrinsically valuable contribution to education by affording an opportunity of testing intelligence and ability to pass on to other stages of work. But their function must ever be that of servant or instrument, not that of a master or agent.

Among desirable reforms in the methods of examination, Miss Haig Brown urged:—

- (a) The more generous recognition of different types of mind and of intelligence, and therefore of different modes of approach in testing efficiency.
- (b) The abolition of personal competition by substituting qualifying tests for those of elimination.
- (c) The use of tests implying more thorough knowledge of the candidates' powers of work than that afforded only by papers written under artificial examination conditions.
- (d) The use of dictionaries and references books during the examination.

The subject of examinations was followed by a cycle of papers dealing with "The Secondary School: Its Contribution to the Life of the Nation" introduced by Miss E. Addison Phillips, M.A. (Clifton High School), the President-Elect. Miss Phillips sketched the rapid development of Secondary Education since the Act of 1902, the rise of the Day Secondary School, which had brought "the school into the home, and the home into the school." She hailed the increased resources and efficiency in education, but emphasized the need of care in maintaining traditions amid rapid growth. She also sounded a warning note lest a limited interpretation of the recommendation of the Hadow Report should result in narrowing the function of the Secondary School and impoverishing the conception of "further education." Three successive papers dealt with the special contribution and conditions of the larger town Secondary School, the Mixed Secondary School, and the Boarding School, and Miss Bone, M.A., of Yeovil High School, in a most interesting and able paper, made her hearers realize how valuable to the community can be the small Secondary School in a small town. For its function is not only to keep the lamp of scholarship alight, but also, and in greater measure, to redeem the life of the ordinary woman in industry, or in the home, from monotony, apathy, or pettiness, by developing her power of initiative, her interest in current affairs, her love of beauty and her social sense.

Two thoughtful and stimulating papers on the subject of "Training in Mental Honesty" were contributed by Miss Drummond, M.A. (North London Collegiate School), and Miss Walker, M.A. (Sheffield High School). Miss Drummond defined mental honesty as consistency with mental vision, and the process of training as that of a unification of the personality towards a true vision of reality. Passing from the philosophical aspect of the subject, she suggested many practical ways whereby both in the classroom and outside the child

(Continued in previous column.)

The election gives rise to many reflections. The new parliament and the new government have to consider the problem of representative institutions for India. We may be sure that the British Parliament will not advise adopting a method of election that would give 16 seats to 320,000 Mohammedans, while giving no representation at all to Hindu or other minorities, amounting to 280,000. It will probably take special steps to ensure the representation both of majority and minority. But, if it is essential to give representation to a religious minority, on what grounds can fair representation be denied to an important political minority? Mr. Brailsford recently wrote: "I know the feeling of the genuine party man on this subject. He hopes by refusing this elementary measure of justice to crush the Liberals between the upper and the nether millstones. . . . But this whole attitude seems to me deeply immoral and anti-democratic. There are over 5,000,000 of our fellow citizens who demand Liberal representation. By what right do we disfranchise them?"

It would need a separate article to examine the various proposals for reform, to discuss the bearing of the election on the future of our parliamentary system. I can only point out that proportional representation, in some form or other, has now been accepted by all the countries of North Western Europe, save Britain and France; that universal suffrage, universal education, a greater consciousness of economic inequality has given birth to more than two parties. We need not fear the consequences; the cause of good government is not bound up with the suppression of political thought, nor with a representation in the House of Commons that is a distortion of public opinion as it exists in the country.

**OBITUARY.**

**MRS. JOHN CLAY.**

The death of Mrs. Mary Hamblin Clay is a real loss to the woman's movement and particularly to the Mothers' Union, of which she was the Central Vice-President, being responsible in the main for their Parliamentary work. Mrs. Clay, through her courage and tolerance and her strength of feeling, saw to it that the influence of the Mothers' Union should be a very wide one. Always willing to co-operate wherever possible with other women's organizations, and prepared when necessary to urge immediate action, Mrs. Clay was a pillar of strength to many of the causes in which this paper has been particularly interested, notably the moral welfare of girls and women. Her fight with constant ill-health, and the amount of work which she was able to undertake in spite of great frailty of body, was amazing.

**REPORTS. (Continued from next column.)**

can be trained to develop her own mental vitality, to see truth for herself, and to record it faithfully.

The President then refreshed and delighted her audience by presenting them with a three-fold vision of education in England in retrospect, in survey, and in prospect. With Miss Lowe as guide we contrasted the conditions of school life in England one hundred years ago, as they were seen in Yorkshire by Charlotte Brontë and recorded in her novels with the happier conditions of to-day. Miss Lowe closed upon a note of hopeful prophecy at the prospect of an England fifty years hence, when the signs of promise which to-day we hail with joyfulness shall have become achievement. The last event of the Conference was an address from Dame Bertha Phillpotts, D.B.E., M.A., Litt.D., on "Education and the Exceptional Girl."

EDITH M. BANCROFT,

Head Mistress of the Chelmsford High School.

**THE PROFESSIONAL WOMAN'S HAIRDRESSER**

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PERSONAL ATTENTION. MODERATE CHARGES.

### THE ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL AND MORAL HYGIENE.

The large and enthusiastic audience which filled the Caxton Hall last week for the Annual Meeting of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene was certainly a sign of the times. On this question of the equal moral standard, the change in public opinion is perhaps more marked than in regard to any other question.

The chair was taken by Miss J. E. Higson, and there were two very interesting and inspiring speeches from Lord Balfour of Burleigh and the Rev. William Paton.

Lord Balfour repeated Josephine Butler's words that the equal moral standard was wholly a part of ordinary Christian belief. Josephine Butler's work, he said, gave a tremendous impetus to the feminist movement, for the subjection of women was at once the result and cause of the double standard of morality.

In 1928 the British Medical Association had rejected compulsory treatment in the Edinburgh Corporation Bill, and also local option to experiment in compulsory treatment. Speaking of the Report on Conditions in Malaya issued by the Committee appointed by the Colonial Office, of which he himself was Chairman, Lord Balfour of Burleigh said that some doctors were still where the opponents of Josephine Butler were, and a great number of them seemed to live in Singapore. Local opinion there seemed to be entirely regulationist and against the Report. It was entirely due to the A.M.S.H. that the matter came to light and the Committee was appointed. Again, but for the A.M.S.H. the Edinburgh Bill for compulsory treatment would have gone through without a division and would probably have been followed by Bills for Glasgow and other places. The Street Offences Committee Report proved one thing, and that was that there was no alternative to the Public Places Bill. The fact that the new Attorney-General was one of those who signed the reserved Report of that Committee was a good omen for the future; so was the Prime Minister's declaration on equal treatment for men and women when speaking to the women's deputation before the election. Another good sign was the way in which Lord Byng was letting light and air into Scotland Yard; but the best sign of all was the real tide of advancing public opinion, for it was on the lines of higher morality alone that ultimately a solution of this problem would be found.

The Rev. William Paton, of the International Missionary Council, said he was very glad to be associated with the A.M.S.H., because he always believed in Societies that interfered. He gave an interesting account of the history of State Regulation in India. The C.D. Acts were repealed in 1888, but regulations crept back until conditions were almost as bad as before. Then on 2nd August, 1918, there was an Order abolishing brothels and abolishing the inspection of women for soldiers. The immense preponderance of men over women was one of the great problems of India. The Calcutta Vigilance Association had opened a Home to accommodate sixty girls, many of them minor girls rescued from brothels.

Mr. Paton said that anyone who had been away from India for four or five years could not but be struck by the great growth of the social reform movement, especially among women, all over India. He emphasized the fact that would-be reformers must talk to Indians with humility and sincerity, because in their hands lay the ultimate solution. Any expert knowledge was welcomed with open arms, but it must be given on a basis of friendliness and humble service.

V. LAUGHTON MATHEWS.

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#### THE KING'S SPEECH.

The following are the points on the Programme of the N.U.S.E.C. which being ripe for legislative action we are urging the Government to include in the King's Speech: The introduction of Equal Opportunities, Equal Pay for Equal Work, and Family Allowances in the Civil Service and under Local Authorities; the making compulsory of the Provision of the Maternity and Child Welfare Act, 1918, and the inclusion of adequate Medical and Nursing Services in the National Health Insurance Maternity Benefit; the compulsory appointment of Women Police; Testamentary Provision for Spouses and Children; and an Adoption of Children Act (Scotland).

#### LUNCHEON TO WOMEN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

The public luncheon which the National Union of Societies is holding in honour of the women M.P.s is to be held at the Criterion Restaurant, Piccadilly, early in July. Miss Margaret Bondfield, the first woman member of the Cabinet, it is hoped may be present, and, as well as the other women M.P.s, the Vice-Presidents of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship who have been returned to the House will also be our guests on this occasion. All those who wish to be present should apply at once to the Secretary at Headquarters, as places will be allotted in strict order of application. Tickets, price 6s.

#### TOWN COUNCIL ELECTIONS, NOVEMBER, 1929.

In view of the transfer of the administration of the Poor Law to County and County Borough Councils after April next, the elections for Town Councils this year are of special importance, and the return of more women is more urgent than ever, for it is most important that women should be able to continue to take their share in the administration of Poor Relief. All Societies, therefore, are urged to hold meetings specially to consider the urgency of the need for more women Councillors, particularly of those with some knowledge of Poor Law work, and those Societies in areas where there will be elections this November are urged to take immediate action to put forward the names of suitable women candidates.

New leaflets giving reasons why women are wanted on County and Non-County Borough Councils (price 1s. per 100 or 5s. 6d. per 1,000), and dealing with the work of Town Councils have just been published by the National Union. These include the duties of the Councils under the recent Local Government Act, and should be of real use both to women candidates and to those working for the adoption of women candidates.

#### TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD CONFERENCE, 28th June-1st July.

We are glad to be able to announce that, thanks to the generous kindness of Mrs. Adrian Corbett, this Conference will be held in the gardens of Pembroke Lodge, Pembroke Gardens, W. 8. The programme of the Conference is as follows:—

*Townswomen's Guild Programme.*—Friday evening, Purpose of School, etc., Mrs. Corbett Ashby and Miss Rathbone. Saturday, 10—1, Activities of Guilds, Political and Civic, Mrs. Hubback and Miss Macadam. Saturday, 2.30—4.30, Activities of Guilds, Educational and Recreational. Saturday, 4.30—6, Model Guild Meeting. Sunday, 2.30—4.30, Method of forming Guilds, etc., Mrs. Clowes and Mrs. Ryland. Sunday, 5—7, Future Developments, Mrs. Corbett Ashby. Admission will be by ticket, which may be obtained on application to Headquarters. We very much hope that all who are interested in the formation and organization of these Guilds, which aim at meeting the needs of women in small towns where no such organization as yet exists, will be able to take this opportunity of discussing the best methods of organization.

#### COMPETITION FOR DESIGN OF BADGE

The Committee for Townswomen's Guilds decided to offer a prize for the best design for a brooch badge to be used by Guild members. The design should include "T.G." in bold letters. It should be easy to reproduce in large quantities and will be patented. Designs should be sent to the Secretary at Headquarters, before September 1st.

Prize offered for selected design: *The Cause*, by Ray Strachey.

#### BERLIN CONGRESS.

The Triennial Congress of the I.A.W.S.E.C. is reported elsewhere. The British Delegation, of which Miss Rathbone is leader, includes the following eight representatives of the N.U.S.E.C.: Miss Rathbone, Miss Courtney, Mrs. Stocks, Mrs. Franklin, Miss Margesson, Miss Macadam, Miss Goddard, Miss Neilans; and the following are acting as alternate delegates: Miss Bury, Miss Clegg, Miss Cornwall, Mrs. Corbett Fisher, Miss Leaf, Miss Macdonald, Miss Catherine Marshall.

#### NEWS FROM SOCIETIES.

##### BIRMINGHAM N.C.W. (CITIZENSHIP SUBSECTION).

In the General Election campaign the fact of having thirty-two candidates for Parliament in twelve constituencies was a source of considerable embarrassment, but the preliminary work was begun early, and a special questionnaire drawn up. As a result, six deputations to candidates were organized, one of these being a joint deputation, representative of various constituencies, to five Unionists, with a Cabinet Minister in the chair.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

##### THE MENTAL DEFICIENCY BILL.

MADAM,—May I be allowed to add a note to your very clear article in last week's issue of THE WOMAN'S LEADER, under the heading of "Local Government News"? I ask permission to do so as I find there is a good deal of misunderstanding about the powers and duties of Local Authorities in the case of the Mentally Deficient. These powers and duties in (say) the case of an imbecile child are what would be, simply, the power and duty of a parent unhampered by great poverty. This is clearly provided for in the Act. As Miss Mason says, "The Local Authority . . . is required . . . to provide . . . (that such children) be dealt with by being sent to Institutions, or placed under guardianship." The usual expression for this process is "Sent to an Approved Home". The misunderstanding I allude to is due to two things. One is failing to notice the important words "under guardianship", the other is supposing the words "Institution" and "Home" to signify a place with a very large number of beds (I do not know why capitals are always given to these two nouns). Although of course many Local Authorities might do much more than they do, it would be wrong to suppose (as one might do from merely glancing at the list of Authorities providing "Institutional Accommodation") that those counties that have no "Institution" do nothing. There are, in point of fact, large numbers of small institutions, all over the country, where the utmost care and kindness are given by women who use their skill and experience attained in the large establishments. The cost to the county of putting a child "under guardianship" in one of these may be a little more than that of putting him or her into a House built and equipped by its own Authority, but when capital charges are taken into account the cost is very little more, and going the right way to work a small Home can easily be found, where the highest degree of skill, the best and most sympathetic medical inspection, and the greatest amount of human kindness will be met with. To give some idea of the care with which these small Homes—often of one or two inmates—are supervised, I may mention that in the London area even the doctor's visit has to be made every fortnight, not to speak of that of the County's Inspector.

Having recently gone into this subject in a specific instance, and having asked advice and information from the Mental Welfare Association, I should be glad to pass on my experience to anyone to whom it would be a help. Many people who are co-operating with Local Authorities are quite unaware of how much can be done at a reasonable cost for mentally deficient children. Indeed, I doubt if the officials of all Local Authorities realize it themselves. If anyone in difficulties in this matter would care to write to me on the subject, I should be glad to give any information, etc., that I could.

MARGERIE SMITH.

Dinbren Hall,  
Llangollen, Denbighshire.

##### UNIVERSITY VOTING.

We print below a letter from *The Times* of Wednesday, 12th June.

SIR,—The letter of your correspondent, Mr. G. R. Y. Radcliffe, in your issue of 7th June has more than a local Oxford interest, while the remarks (in the same issue) of your Political Correspondent regarding the Combined English Universities' election call for some added comment. The result of the count of first preferences in this election was as follows:—

Miss E. Rathbone (Independent) . . . . .	3,331
Sir Martin Conway (Conservative) . . . . .	2,679
Professor R. S. Conway (Liberal) . . . . .	2,231
Sir A. Selby-Bigge (Conservative) . . . . .	1,762

Miss Rathbone thus led the poll by 652 votes. The quota needed for election was 3,336, which was not obtained by any of the candidates. The second preferences of the candidates receiving the least number of votes were then distributed among the other three candidates:—

Sir Martin Conway . . . . .	1,642
Miss E. Rathbone . . . . .	63
Professor R. S. Conway . . . . .	50

This brought the figures on the second count to—

Sir Martin Conway . . . . .	4,321
Miss E. Rathbone . . . . .	3,394
Professor R. S. Conway . . . . .	2,281

Thus Sir Martin Conway and Miss E. Rathbone were declared elected. The published result, showing Sir Martin Conway at the head of the poll, does not, however, fully express the mind of the electorate, as it does not reveal that (a) the Independent candidate led on first preferences, (b) the combined Liberal and Independent vote outnumbered that of the two Conservatives by 1,121. It is reasonable to suppose also that a considerable majority of the second preferences of those who voted for the Liberal candidate would have been given to the Independent rather than to the Conservative. It is therefore probable that but for the accident that the second Conservative candidate obtained the least votes Miss Rathbone would have headed the poll on the final count also.

The anomalous result in no way affects the validity of the return, but leads one to suppose that (a) methods of reporting these results in the Press need amplification, as indicated by your correspondent, Mr. Radcliffe; (b) Statutory Rules and Orders, 1918, No. 1,348 (University Elections), paras. 12 and 13 (copy enclosed) need some recasting, in order to avoid the misleading index of the relative support given to candidates which may be presented to the public.

We are yours faithfully,

ARTHUR FITCH.  
ROBERT COOPE.

Liverpool, 10th June.

##### "A NEW FORM OF ART?"

MADAM,—The letter on the work of Dorothea Spinney that appears in your issue of 7th June makes me wish to say a few words on what Miss Spinney's interpretation of Greek plays is to me.

I have never read a play by Euripides either in the original or in a translation, and frankly I think for an ordinary busy woman such reading is not easy. Dorothea Spinney has given me a vision of what Greek tragedy is; for her interpretations have been the only way of approaching these marvellous works, and I have been so enthralled that I have felt I have watched the living people of the drama and seen even the country in which the scenes were enacted.

MARY GILLOCK.

Moravian Close, 381 King's Road,  
Chelsea, S.W. 10.

MADAM,—May I add a few words of support of the admirable appreciation of Miss Dorothea Spinney, contained in a letter published in THE WOMAN'S LEADER of 7th June?

With technical points of criticism, such as the correctness of Miss Spinney's setting, interpretation and presentment, Mr. Carvalho's letter has dealt fully. But I should like to testify to the value of the impression made upon an audience of High School girls and adult friends when Miss Spinney, by my arrangement, visited Chelmsford High School in order to give a performance of "Iphigenia in Tauris" in our large Assembly Hall. School girls under thirteen were not admitted.

I knew nothing of Miss Spinney save by hearsay, but I was at once markedly impressed by the way in which she was able to hold her audience. By a brief introductory exposition of the characters, without actual narrative, she made the situation so clear that even to those visitors in the room who had made no previous acquaintance with the play there was no difficulty in realizing the situations or in following the verse. By the suggestion of sensitive and yet controlled gesture Miss Spinney made graphic the long descriptive passages so that they were effectively visualized by her audience.

The performance gave the School intense enjoyment, and in subsequent conversation with the girls I have been amazed to find to what an extent the play was understood, even in the case of girls of moderate ability.

EDITH M. BANCROFT,  
Head Mistress.

County High School,  
Chelmsford.

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## COMING EVENTS.

## BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE.

25th June, 1 p.m. 17 Buckingham Street, Strand. Luncheon. Mrs. Goodman: "Canada—British Colombia and some Indian Legends."

## ELECTRICAL ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN.

10th-12th July. Annual Conference, Newcastle. Full particulars from E. A. W. Headquarters, 46 Kensington Court, W. 8.

## INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR SUFFRAGE AND EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

To 24th June. International Congress, Berlin. Chair: Mrs. Corbett Ashby. Excursions, sight-seeing, tours, etc., arranged. Particulars from The Secretary, 190 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W. 1.

## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

Croydon W.C.N. (North Ward).—28th June, 3 p.m. Miss Caton, "Age of Marriage in India."

28th June-1st July. Pembroke Lodge, Pembroke Gardens, W. 8. Townswomen's Guild Conference. First session, Friday, 8.30 p.m.; second session, Saturday, 10-1; third session, Saturday, 2.30-4.30 p.m.; fourth session, Saturday, 4.30-6 p.m.; Sunday, 2.30-4.30 and 5-7 p.m.

## ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

8th July, 6 p.m. St. Patrick's Clubroom, Soho Square. Open Meeting, "Feminism the World Over." Speakers: Councillor Mrs. Craufurd, Mrs. Laughton Mathews, M.B.E. Chair: Miss C. Gordon

## WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

4th July, 7 p.m. Caxton Hall, S.W. Mrs. Despard's Birthday Party.

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TO Let.—Pleasantly situated Flat, 168 High Street, Notting Hill Gate; s.c. 3 rooms, small hall, 3rd floor; bath, geyser, gas fires, electric light, telephone; long let; furnished, £120 per annum; unfurnished, £90 per annum.—Apply, Grace Mayman.

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FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 23rd June, 6.30, Maude Royden.

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