

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Registration of New Voters.

Women voters enfranchised under the recent Equal Franchise Act, entered on Saturday, 1st September, on the three months qualifying period at the end of which their names will be placed upon the new parliamentary register. We venture to remind our readers that all persons over 21 are entitled to appear on that register if for three months from 1st September they have resided at the same address or have moved from one address to another within the same parliamentary borough or county division. They may also be reminded that removal to an adjoining constituency counts in the same manner as continuous residence. Completed lists of electors will be published in England and Wales on 24th January, 1929 (in Scotland on 16th February). Thereafter three more months are allowed for corrections and additions, the new register actually coming into force in May, 1929. The compilation of a register including some five and a half million new voters is not an easy business, and with the best will in the world on the part of the registration authorities there are likely to be omissions. We therefore urge all qualified women to keep a vigilant eye upon the lists which appear on 24th January, and make sure that they are duly included.

A Married Woman Teacher Stands Firm.

The married women teachers controversy has reached a new stage in Leigh (Lancs) which opens the possibility of a second legal test case. As we have reported in an earlier issue, the Leigh Education Committee has for some time been committed to the policy of dismissing women teachers on marriage. The question which now arises is, how far is this rule enforceable against teachers in non-provided schools? According to existing regulations a local education authority can dismiss any teacher in any non-provided school in its area "on educational grounds", i.e. for incompetence. But the managers of the non-provided school representing its founders or providers, reserve the right of dismissal on other grounds. Thus in the Leigh area, the managers of the Pennington Mission Church of England school have chosen to retain in employment a certain valued infant school teacher, formerly Miss Varley, now Mrs. Bent. They hold that in this matter the Education Committee's power of dismissal on "educational grounds" does not apply. In support of its cherished policy the Education Committee has, however, seen fit to refuse to pay Mrs. Bent's salary and a deadlock has in consequence arisen. The matter has been referred to the National Union of Teachers, which has in its turn demanded a ruling from the Board of Education. Failing which, says an official of the N.U.T., "the case may be fought out in the Courts." Mean-

while we venture to congratulate the managers of the Pennington Mission Church of England school on their obstinate determination to make the efficiency of their school a dominating issue, and we hope that the Leigh Education Committee will be driven ignominiously from the position which they have taken up.

The Liberal Party in Conference.

The National Liberal Federation which will meet in Great Yarmouth on 11th and 12th October, has before it a series of resolutions which, if passed, will constitute a programme of national policy comparable to that issued recently by the Labour Party. Until they are passed, and ripe for discussion in this light, we will reserve detailed comment and comparison. But in the summarized lists which have appeared in the Press it would seem as though the Liberal Party were, on one point of economic application at least, still in the realm of airy generalization. The wage system of every industry shall, according to the terms of one resolution, "include minimum wage rates." But no indication is given of the principle on which these minimum wage rates are to be determined. Are they to relate in any degree to the cost of subsistence? And if so, of whose subsistence? We hope that the Liberal Party has discarded the belief (still obstinately held by many distinguished professors of economics) that every adult man acquires suddenly at the age of 21 a litter of three children who remain under school leaving age until he becomes eligible for an old age pension, at which point they simultaneously grow up and become self-supporting. But the Yarmouth discussions will doubtless throw some light upon the continued prevalence of this extraordinary belief. We await them with interest.

Women and the League of Nations Assembly.

The list of women who are taking official part in the Assembly is of much the same length as last year, but shows some changes of personnel. The figure of Frøi Bugge Wicksell, who died this year, will be greatly missed. Since 1920 she had acted as substitute delegate for Sweden and had served as the only woman member on the Legal Committee, also on the Mandates Committee. Her place on the latter will be taken by Frøken Valentin Dannewig, headmistress of a girls' school in Oslo. Sweden's new substitute delegate will be Frøken Kersten Hesselgren, chief woman factory inspector and the only woman member of the Swedish Senate. Frøi Martha Larsen Jahn, substitute delegate for Norway during the past three years, will be replaced by Dr. Ingeborg Aas, a medical woman of Trondjen. Frøi Tilma Hainanj will represent Finland. Frøken Forchhammer will again accompany the Danish delegation. To speak last of the women of our own land—Mrs. McDonnell, a native of Wolverhampton, but now of South Australia, makes the sixth woman substitute delegate sent by the Australian Commonwealth. Dame Edith Lyttelton is for the fourth time substitute delegate for Great Britain. Dame Edith has been interesting herself especially in the conditions under which outside bodies, such as the Institute of Intellectual Co-operation at Paris and the new Cinematograph Institute at Rome, can be accepted as organs of the League, and she initiated a resolution calling for an inquiry into the whole question of the conditions of admission in such cases. This matter has a special interest for feminists, as it is important that the rights of equal representation which have in theory at least been secured for women in the main body of the League shall be extended also to these auxiliary bodies.

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For Students of the League.

In view of the increasing demand for the official publications of the League of Nations, the department of Messrs. Constable's, which is responsible as sole agents in Great Britain for these publications, has been reorganized. It is now in charge of Mr. Peter Savery, who has been transferred from the Information section of the London Office of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, where he has worked for the last four and a half years. The monthly list of publications is invaluable for those wishing to specialize on any given subject of the League's activities, and any new developments arising from this reorganization will be watched with interest. We wish it were possible to issue some of the League's publications at a rather lower price, that at present charged, especially for the less popular reports, being at a high level. For example, on sending recently for the League's report on Health Organization in India, a moderate sized paper-clad volume of several hundred pages, it was daunting to receive a demand for 12s. 6d. instead of the moderate half-crown or five shillings we had expected. But doubtless the production costs of these more technical reports are heavy in proportion to the demand for them.

A New Children's Charter.

The announcement made by Sir William Joynson-Hicks that subject to the exigencies of Parliamentary time, he proposes to introduce a new Children's Act, will be welcome news to all social workers. The Act of 1908 was hailed as a great advance, but even then its shortcomings were recognized. Standards have changed greatly for the better in the last 20 years and a drastic overhauling of the measure has long been overdue. Various committees have reported from time to time on different problems of child welfare and have made important recommendations, but so far these have not been incorporated in legislation. The proposed measure will, we have the right to hope, deal

TOWARDS A STATIONARY POPULATION.

Following closely upon the Registrar-General's report for the second quarter of 1928 comes the publication of Part I of his Statistical Review for 1927. It shows a new low level for the birth-rate of England and Wales. A rate of 16.6 births per 1,000 of the population falls well below the pre-existing low record of 17.7 for 1918. But have we yet touched bottom in the matter of the birth-rate? One might put the question differently and ask: have we reached a stage when all children born are wanted children? For there can be very little doubt that the governing factor in the situation is the spread of birth control, operating of course in response to the new needs and ambitions of increasing material standards. And that being so, then the answer to our question must surely be in the negative. For every social worker knows that though the birth control movement has permeated the middle classes and touched the fungi of the artisan class, and even in some areas of the unskilled labour class, nevertheless large areas of the industrial and agricultural population are still virtually unenlightened. The movement, though it has gone far, as the figure of our present birth-rate shows, has still far to go. The birth-rate has by no means touched bottom.

But there is another governing factor in the situation, at least when we widen our view and look not merely at the number of children born, but at the general increase of the population. That other factor is the death-rate. As we remarked last week, the public, aided and abetted by the Press, are all too prone to assume that an increase in the birth-rate means an intensified rate of increase in the population and that a decrease in the birth-rate necessarily means a slowing down in the rate of increase. Thus it is often erroneously supposed that the depopulation of France is due to an abnormally low birth-rate, and that the high birth-rate of the Far East connotes an abnormally rapid increase of its peoples. This particular misapprehension was aptly refuted by a paragraph, which also appeared in the Press last week, relating to the birth and death-rates of Palestine. It appears that Palestine's birth-rate is the highest in the world. It stood in 1927 at 50.4 per 1,000. Within this general figure, the Moslem community boasts a rate of 56.1, the Christians show 38.9, and the Jews 35.1. It is pointed out that polygamy cannot be held accountable for this astonishing Moslem rate, since the practice is confined to a mere handful of the wealthier Moslems. Are we therefore to suppose that Palestine is in danger of becoming, by a natural process of differential communal

with many reforms for which this paper has pressed, including the age of marriage and child assault. We believe that the Home Secretary has this subject very much at heart, and earnestly hope that he will carry out his intentions. Such an achievement would add lustre to his record as Home Secretary; he himself says "he would conceive it one of the greatest honours of his career". We hope and believe that it will be done.

Woman as High Court Judge.

We learn from the Indian News Service that Miss Daw Hme Khin, B.A., LL.B., assistant registrar of the Rangoon High Court, has been appointed a judge of the High Court. She is the first Indian woman to attain such a position, and no other woman holds a similar post elsewhere in the Empire. Miss Khin was heartily congratulated by the women's associations in Burma and India on having secured such a signal honour.

M. Maurice Bokanowski.

M. Maurice Bokanowski, the French Air Minister who met his death in a flying disaster this week, was an active supporter of Family Allowances, having some years ago introduced a Bill on the subject into the Chamber of Deputies. The Bill, however, ran counter to the prejudice of French employers against legislative interference with the question of Family Allowances, while the French Trade Unionists were not at that time convinced supporters of the principle, which they have since become.

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.

growth, an increasingly Moslem country? By no means—and it is here that death-rates play their part. Experience shows a striking coincidence between high birth-rates and high death-rates. The Moslem death-rate was in 1927 something more than two-thirds of the birth-rate. Among Christians it was slightly more than half; among Jews, it was about one-third. Thus it appears that the community with the lowest birth-rate secures the highest actual survival rate, and vice versa. The natural rate of increase is, in fact, greatest among the less fertile but more economical Jews.

But to return to our own problem with its narrower margin between a deliberately restricted birth-rate and a death-rate which is the product of a century or so of sanitary reform and expanding material prosperity. Since 1873 or thereabouts the birth-rate has fallen steadily. So has the death-rate. And year by year the population has increased by the natural process of excess of births over deaths. But in the year under review the death-rate did not fall. On the contrary it rose slightly, and stood at 12.3 per 1,000—still, of course, well below the birth-rate, so that the end of 1927 found the country, after allowing for net emigration, a little more densely populated than the beginning of 1927. The rise may, in this case, as the Registrar-General points out, be attributed to a severe influenza epidemic in the March quarter. Nevertheless it is pretty clear that looking into the immediate future, the general death-rate does not offer the same prospect of further reduction as the birth-rate. Indeed, as the age grouping of the population changes, as it must change with falling birth and death-rates, in favour of the older age groups, the general death-rate must inevitably reflect the increasing frequency of lives made precarious by old age. We are in fact moving steadily towards a stationary population.

For our part, we can see in this prospect no cause for tears and lamentation. Our dense population, the densest in the civilized world, has brought with it certainly, high material standards and world-wide economic power. But we are inclined to think that our industrialization has gone far enough. Its maladjustments are already difficult enough to cope with, and its normal adjustments, its rising standards of housing, its increasing transport needs, provide sufficient stimulus for the ingenuity of social thought. All things considered—and there are indeed more things to consider than are here set forth—we are able to contemplate a stationary population with something like a sigh of relief.

THE "NEW TIDE" IN CHINA.

The visit to China of Miss Edith Pye and two other delegates of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom has, amongst its other good results, had that of once more opening our eyes to the revolution in life and social thought which China is to-day undergoing. Forces which for years have been stirring below the surface are now bursting all bounds and sweeping away the trammels of the past. Miss Pye's two little publications,¹ especially perhaps the booklet on the Women's Movement in China, show clearly how much of hope and promise there is in this revolution.

The pamphlet on the Political Situation gives an account of the aims of the different leaders and, particularly, of the Nationalist Government. The popular character of the Nationalist Movement, and the ability and statesmanship of its leaders, stand out clearly. The value, both moral and practical, of its recognition by the western powers is emphasized. Miss Pye writes: "Out of an assimilation of what is valuable in western progress and a rejection of what is useless and harmful, the genius of the Chinese people may create a new form of civilization altogether." In view of the fact that China contains more than a quarter of the human race, this is a prophecy which surely fills us with some awe and a great desire that the western powers will use what influence they possess in a spirit of goodwill.

The second publication under review, that on the Women's Movement, gives an amazing survey of the many fields into which, after centuries of seclusion, the women of China are now pushing their way, or even—so encouraging are their men—being pushed half reluctantly. In the spheres of medicine, social work, education (both higher and elementary), and in the many fields of political activity, the women are taking their share in the building up of the new society. Their power of initiative, their ability, and their public spirit form an inspiring tale, and no one interested in the position of women in the world of to-day should fail to read this little book.

M. I. A.

THE FLAPPER VOTE AT THE LIBERAL SUMMER SCHOOL.

We have the kind permission of the Editor of the *Nation* to reprint below part of the text of "The Summer School Medley," entitled "The Flapper Vote," which was performed at the recent Liberal Summer School at Oxford.

Jix: In her ear he whispers slyly:
"Critics rage and times are hard;
Maiden, though it be but shyly,
Won't you come to Scotland Yard?
Fear not threats, nor veiled invective,
Come awhile, and talk with me —"
He is but a Park detective,
And a simple maiden she.

She replies: "If your Director
Bids me come, then come I must;
But these friends of yours, Inspector,
I can neither like nor trust."
Thus all day he sought admissions—
Tactful, fatherly, discreet;
He took down her depositions;
She took down his self-conceit.

Scotland Yard may gloat, but soon'll
Retribution's icy touch
Bring discussion, bring tribunal—
Public wants to know so much,
Public calls for regulations
(No escaping from the fix);
Bitterly at all the stations
They revile the name of Jix . . .

THE ARREST OF WOMAN SUFFRAGISTS AT PARIS.

We have been requested by the Six Point Group to publish the following:—A good deal of confusion appears to exist in the Press as to the actual meaning of the recent episode in Paris, when ten woman suffrage leaders, associates of Lady Rhondda, were arrested for endeavouring to present an Equal Rights Treaty to the signatories of the Pact at M. Doumergue's summer chateau at Rambouillet. It has even been suggested that this action was inspired by mere notoriety-hunting. The Six Point Group, of which Lady Rhondda is Chairman, is now able to explain the object of this move, for which excellent precedent exists. During the meeting of the Pan-American Conference at Havana in the spring, a deputation from the U.S.A. National Woman's Party,

(Continued at foot of next column.)

¹ Notes on the Political Situation in China, 1928 (price 2d.), and Notes on the Women's Movement in China, 1928 (price 6d.), both published by the Women's International League, 55 Gower Street, W.C.1.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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WOMEN MEDICAL STUDENTS.

The following letter was sent to Mrs. Corbett Ashby as Chairman of the meeting of the Women in the Service of Hospitals Committee with representatives of the Press held at the Hon. Mrs. Franklin's early in July:—

MADAM,—I read with interest the account in the *Manchester Guardian* of last Wednesday of the position of women medical students in London at the present moment. The report on your speech seemed to imply that there are some women medical students who are in danger of not being able to finish their training owing to the closing of the London hospitals as far as they are concerned. May I take the liberty of pointing out to you that we have a certain number of scholarships about which I enclose information, and that such scholarships are open to students of other Universities who have taken their 1st M.B. If you should know of any individual cases of women who will be obliged to transfer to another University, perhaps you could put them in touch with us. We are not in need of applicants, but at the same time we should welcome capable students from elsewhere, especially if we could be the means of helping them to complete their degree.

I am much in sympathy with the decisions of the meeting held in Porchester Terrace last Tuesday.—Yours faithfully,

P. E. CRUMP,
Adviser to Women Students.

Although there was not time to give publicity to this offer before the awards for the coming session were made, we believe it may be of interest to those contemplating studying medicine to know of the existence of facilities for continuing their studies away from London should the medical schools not reopen to women.

EQUAL FRANCHISE—A MEMENTO.

Readers will remember the photograph, reproduced in this paper, of a group of N.U.S.E.C. members outside the Houses of Parliament on the occasion of the granting of the Royal Assent to the Equal Franchise Act. This interesting group makes a clear and excellent picture printed post card size; at the same time a very delightful photograph was taken of Dame Millicent Fawcett, with her sister Miss Agnes Garrett, and her daughter, leaving Westminster in Mrs. Oliver Strachey's car. These two photographs form a very charming memento of a great and historic occasion; members desirous of obtaining copies (price 6d. each) may do so on application to Headquarters.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SIR JAMES AGG-GARDNER AND WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE.

MADAM,—The London daily Press has unaccountably forgotten to include Sir James Agg-Gardner's introduction of the Conciliation Bill in 1912 in its short list of the rare occasions on which he addressed the House. At the time it was generally believed that his being in charge of the Bill led to a considerable reduction of the adverse majority: for members of all parties had so real a regard and affection for him that they disliked the idea of going back upon their promises to support "his" Bill. An intensely shy man, he found it an ordeal to take a prominent part in debate; a quiet, courteous "English gentleman" of the old-fashioned school, he shrank with unspeakable distaste from "militancy" and all that it stood for. But so great was his devotion to the woman's suffrage cause that he triumphed over all these obstacles. His constituents had many a smile over the piquant contrast between their member and some of the fiery spirits with whom he found himself sometimes inevitably associated. I remember my own enjoyment of the exquisite fun of hearing a very eloquent militant lady, who was the chief speaker at a meeting of the Cheltenham Woman's Suffrage Society, promising him that when the vote should be won he should be our leader in new "crusades for righteousness". He was the last man in the world to want to lead a "crusade". But it happened more than once that he was one of the very first to take his place quietly in the ranks of some new "forward-looking" movement.

M. DOROTHEA JORDAN.
Cheltenham.

[We referred in our issue of 24th August to Sir James Agg-Gardner's help and are glad to print Miss Jordan's letter.—Ed.]

(Continued from preceding column.)

headed by Miss Doris Stevens, put forward a similar demand to that made in Paris for an Equal Rights Treaty for women with men. The result, however, was very different, for the suggestion was sympathetically received, and Miss Stevens was appointed Chairman of a special Commission set up to study the position of women in all the American states. What Lady Rhondda and her colleagues attempted in Paris was to obtain a similar hearing for the woman's standpoint with a view to the study of women's position in Europe in the hope of finding an international remedy for remaining injustices. Members of the Six Point Group express much surprise and disappointment at the refusal of the Pact signatories to listen even for a few minutes to the suffrage leaders, since the position of women in some European states is at least as backward as in certain American countries.

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