

THE

WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Women and the Eternal City.

Perhaps no municipal institution in the wide world has clung more tenaciously to its antiquarian traditions than the square mile of isolated administration which we call the City of London. Like an unbudging island in a changing sea it has survived several tidal waves of London Local Government reform. It has even, up till the present, weathered the tornado of feminism. But last week, in view of the December elections to the Court of Common Council, a Guildhall official assured the Press that "the question of the eligibility of women to the Court of Common Council has been discussed, and it has been decided by the General Committee of Aldermen that, provided women have the requisite qualifications they are entitled to appear on the list of voters. They might be nominated and elected, in which case the Court of Aldermen would have to give a decision on the matter according to law, as they have previously had occasion to do in the case of Common Councillors." Now Aldermen are elected from the Court of Common Council, and Lord Mayors are chosen from among Aldermen—so it appears that the City woman has, to adapt an old French saying, a Lord Mayor's chain in her *attaché* case!

Cost of Elections.

The cost of elections is often a difficulty to the woman candidate and the statutory return of the expenses incurred at the recent town council elections in Bolton is of interest. The cost to the ratepayers will be £1,176 11s. 3d., and the political parties spent £1,329 5s. making a total of £2,505 16s. 3d. Twenty-four candidates were returned, and the average cost per candidate was slightly under £105. The figures show that the Labour Party conducted its campaign most economically; they nominated fifteen candidates and paid only £324 4s. 8d., eight of the twenty candidates being elected at a cost of £40 10s. £668 0s. 10d. was spent among the thirteen Conservative candidates and the eleven councillors elected cost the party £60 14s. each. The eight Liberal candidates spent £296 19s. 3d., and the cost of the three Liberal councillors was £98 13s. each. The Liberal votes are calculated to have cost 7½d. each, the Conservative 6½d. each, and this was also the average cost of Mrs. Agnew's votes in Smithhills Ward; the Labour Party got its votes at a cost of 3½d. each.

More Women Town Councillors.

Recent by-elections have resulted in the return of three more women town councillors. At West Hartlepool Mrs. Wilson has been elected in place of the late Miss Elizabeth Vitty, who was the first and only woman member, by 43 votes. Mrs. Walton has been elected by a majority of 112 to the Twickenham Council, being the first woman representative, and in Acton

Mrs. E. A. Hewitt has been elected by 423 votes. The last two vacancies were caused by the appointment of aldermen.

Twenty-four to the Good.

It is now possible to state the number of women who are at present serving on Town Councils. Before the recent elections 168 women were serving on County Borough Councils and 144 on non-County Boroughs. After allowing for the various gains and losses, we find that 180 women are now members of County Borough Councils and 156 of non-County Boroughs. At Higham Ferrers (Northants), Mrs. F. J. Simpson has been re-elected as Deputy Mayor for the second time. Mrs. Simpson was Mayor from 1925-26, and at the recent elections she was returned head of the poll. Plymouth and Birmingham have elected their first women Aldermen, namely Mrs. Marshall and Mrs. Howes, J.P., respectively. Mrs. Howes secured a majority of 1,068 votes in the November elections.

Our Friendly M.P.s.

We commend the example of the Liverpool Women Citizens' Association to other organizations. As reported in another column, it recently organized an "Equal Franchise" Dinner to the Liverpool Members of Parliament who had promised support to the Government's proposal. Four Members were present, and cordial messages were received from five others. The dinner was an even more interesting occasion because the Press was represented among other guests of honour in the person of the Editor of the *Liverpool Daily Post*. Sir Leslie Scott, once in the distant past on the other side but for many years a good friend, made the principal speech of the evening, and spoke as a convinced feminist. Some of his words as reported in the *Daily Post* are well worth quoting. "In civic life a woman required 50 per cent more ability than a man to gain recognition and success. The sex handicap worked most unfairly against women, and in the professions it was still difficult for a woman to get on if not to get in." He knew a woman engineer and a woman solicitor both of whom were so well qualified that had they been men all would have been plain sailing, but, as it was, neither could get a real start on the ladder. "Girls . . . were impeded at the start by their sex." Women will be grateful for Sir Leslie Scott's candour. Such words come with more telling effect from a man of his standing than from a woman, and we hope they will sink into the consciousness of those who think that equality has been won. Such examples of friendly intercourse between Members of Parliament and their women constituents should be multiplied all over the country.

Punch and our "Flappers".

When the story of the long drawn out campaign for the vote is written, *Punch* will be found to have played an honourable part. True to the traditions of the past, the leading cartoon on 30th November defends the so-called "flappers". A group of short-skirted young women, some in factory overalls and caps, others with shawls over their heads, others again with business-like dispatch cases are sketched with a background of factories and warehouses and tall chimneys with the sign "British Industries" printed above them. "Flapper," says *Punch*, "is the popular Press catchword for an adult woman aged twenty-one to thirty, when it is a question of giving her the vote under the same conditions as men of the same age." Perhaps the artist will give us still another cartoon with women workers of maturer years, nurses, teachers, who though over the magic age of thirty are unenfranchised because they do not possess husbands or furniture.

Young Offenders Committee.

It is interesting to note that, in answer to a question in the House the other day, the Home Secretary indicated his acceptance in general of the principles laid down by the Young Offenders Committee. As much can now be done by Justices without further legislation they have been asked to review their procedure in the light of the suggestions made; and in London a small Committee to consider the organization of Juvenile Courts has been appointed. Already instructions have been given for the drafting of a new Children's Bill in which it is hoped to include not only many recommendations of the Young Offenders Committee, but also some of the suggestions of the Sexual Offences Committee concerning child welfare, and of the Child Adoption Committee relating to the registration of voluntary Homes. Unfortunately no indication is given as to when the Bill can be introduced, the usual stumbling block of finance being in the way. While Sir William expresses his approval of central remand homes, he pleads administrative as well as financial difficulties; but he proposes to examine the details of the scheme. The need is owned for one new Borstal Institution now—but, again, the financial situation necessitates postponement. With regard to the recommendations of the Committee to avoid imprisonment below the age of 21, the Home Secretary declares his intention of exploring the possibilities, but stated that there are some cases in which imprisonment is necessary. It is satisfactory to learn that every encouragement is being given to the development of the Probation System, including its possible extension by the use of Hostels on the lines suggested by the Committee.

Unnecessary Scruples.

Mrs. Greene, Mayor of Bury, has excited much criticism by her action on 8th December in refusing to pass sentence of imprisonment upon certain persons convicted in the local police court over which she as Chief Magistrate presides. She requested the senior male magistrate on the Bench to relieve her of this duty, explaining subsequently that her action was dictated not by any disbelief in our present system of justice but in deference to a general opinion that such sentences were better imposed by a man than by a woman. We cannot share Mrs. Greene's view of the matter. The very fact that women are now called upon to play their part in the administration of justice reflects a public opinion that they are capable of performing all the necessary and incidental functions attaching thereto. And they have as a rule shown themselves to be so capable. It is certainly not a pleasant job to condemn a fellow citizen to forcible incarceration, but it is a job which a duly qualified woman can carry out as well as a duly qualified man, and we greatly regret that any handle should be given to the allegation that women are not prepared to take the rough with the smooth in the performance of their public duties.

"The Physique of Women in Industry."

We propose to deal at greater length in a subsequent issue with the second report on "The Physique of Women in Industry" published this week by the Industrial Fatigue Research Board. It will be remembered that the Board includes one woman, Miss Mona Wilson, J.P. The first report published in 1925 dealt with "The Effects of Posture and Rest in Muscular Work" and was prepared under the direction of Professor Cathcart, F.R.S., of Glasgow University, who is also responsible for the second. The object of the inquiry was to discover what actual loads can be lifted or carried by women and young workers in industry without injury or discomfort with a view to the guidance of the Home Office as to the inclusion of possible provisions relating to this matter in the Factories Bill. The findings prove to our satisfaction that legal intervention is entirely unnecessary, for women and girls. They make remarkably interesting reading and should be read by all who are studying this subject.

Women's Franchise in Ceylon.

It is interesting to note that as a result of the inquiry of the Ceylon Commission into the constitution of the island, women have been stimulated to form a Ceylon Women's Franchise Union, whose programme includes the demand for votes for women over twenty-five who possess English or vernacular school-leaving certificates, and certain property qualifications. The existing franchise for men is based on similar qualifications but is granted at the age of 21.

Women and the Indian Inquiry.

We print elsewhere in this issue a letter which appeared in *The Times* of Monday. We have already on more than one

occasion pressed for the association of women with the work of the Indian Statutory Commission. It was stated in the House of Commons that the Commission had been given a free hand to do whatever will enable them to perform the task that lies before them. We hope they will carry out the suggestion made in the letter and attach to the Commission in some way or other women accustomed to public life and to the weighing of evidence who can see Indian problems with fresh eyes, unbiassed by preconceived ideas.

Jurywomen in France.

The question of the admission of women to jury service is before the French Chamber of Deputies. Opinion in legal circles appears to be on the whole favourable to the change, on the ground that women are less sentimental than men. Sex generalizations are notoriously inaccurate, but this is one which will probably corroborate the experience of any speaker accustomed to handling both male and female audiences. Meanwhile, a leading woman barrister, Mme Yvonne Netter, is quoted by the *British United Press* as being wholly favourable to the proposal, with the qualification that women jurymen "ought to be specially selected for their knowledge of life. Mothers of families, professional women, and those who have a good knowledge of the world should be selected for preference. Young women should not serve because they would not have the necessary knowledge to deal with complex situations." Given the substitution of "persons" for "women" this qualification would appear on the face of it to be sound enough. And yet it is of the essence of the jury system that no "special selection" should occur and that a microcosmic expression of the "general will" should be distilled from the deliberations of twelve ordinary people. And experience points on the whole to the astonishing success of this haphazard method of precipitating collective wisdom.

Religious Tests for Probation Work.¹

Two letters¹ appeared in our issue of 11th November, in reply to our paragraph in this column on this subject. It is made clear that Adult Probation Work in London is done on denominational lines, that is, probationers are entrusted to officers of their own denomination—Roman Catholic, Jewish, Nonconformist, or Church of England. Of these the C.E.T.S. Police Court Mission has by far the largest number of officers because, as Mr. Pearson points out, the C.E.T.S. has been working in this field for fifty-one years, long before the Probation Act existed. It has been publicly stated and not denied that every missionary working under the C.E.T.S. must be a communicant member of the Church of England, and this is not to be wondered at because Probation work is often only part of their duties, and they serve as missionaries of their Society. Many people feel that the time has come when probation officers should be the trained servants of the Court, rather than of a voluntary society; that they should undertake the supervision of any case entrusted to them; and that, when it seems right to do so, they should call in the assistance of the particular religious body to which the probationer belongs.

Women's Organizations.

In this issue we begin a series of articles on different British organizations mainly run by women which are playing a part in the "women's movement" of to-day. We begin with an article on the Open Door Council as it is among the youngest of such organizations. This will be followed by descriptions of other leading societies.

Ourselves.

We propose to make an important change in our arrangements for the coming year which will be divulged to our readers in our Christmas issue, 23rd December. In the meantime we must remind them of the great interest of our New Year number, which as in previous years will contain a summary of the work of women in different spheres of activity. This will appear on 30th December; it will be a twelve-page issue, and will, we think, be a very liberal pennyworth. We suggest that societies should help us and do some useful work on their own account if they order special quantities which may be had at special rates (see advertisement). These could be sold or distributed free, and would, we think, be very valuable as a form of stimulant for the activities of the coming year.

¹ See letter from Miss Maude Royden on page 363, which reached us after this note was printed.

WOMEN AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION.

A reader of *THE WOMAN'S LEADER*, who happens to be a member of the legal profession, has criticized our tendency to rejoice unduly over the entry of women examinees to her profession (which, she points out, is really a very easy achievement for persons of average intelligence), while at the same time devoting insufficient attention to the prospects which await them after entry has been secured. We will disarm further criticism by admitting forthwith that there is perhaps some force in this charge.

From time to time a woman barrister obtains a brief which brings her some small degree of prominence—largely because she is a woman, and therefore a somewhat rare phenomenon in the courts. But such briefs are few and far between, and the traditions and preferences of male solicitors, combined with the professional etiquette which precludes women from pushing one another, constitute a very difficult stumbling block to advancement. To some extent perhaps the remedy may lie with the feminist "consumer." We would suggest to any of our readers who contemplate buying a house that they might consult a woman solicitor—remembering, too, that there are now a number of able women conveyancers. In the United States it is the usual practice for feminist societies to brief women counsel. To quote a case in point, Mrs. Helena Normanton was briefed by the National Woman's Party to conduct a case in Washington in which certain matters relating to English Common Law were likely to arise. We commend this example to the notice of feminist litigants in this country.

This necessity of securing briefs is, of course, the first condition for the advancement of women barristers to important public appointments such as Recorderships. Five years at the Bar is the minimum qualification for appointment to a Recordership, and it is now more than five years since the first woman was called to the English Bar. But as a matter of fact most Recorders have practised for many more than five years before receiving such an appointment. Thus, in view of the fact that no woman has yet achieved real distinction as a practising barrister the demand for a woman recorder is a demand which must be relegated to the future. But it is a demand which feminist organizations must bear in mind, and which they must be prepared to make vigorously should any suitable woman emerge during the next few years. Otherwise experience convinces us that the claims of such women are unlikely to be considered.

There are, however, other public legal appointments which women could very well fill here and now. It will be interesting to see whether at the next election, with its preponderant female

electorate, any women will be appointed as Revising Barristers. Meanwhile on Royal Commissions both barristers and solicitors have an important part to play. There are occasions when the appointment of a woman with legal knowledge would be of outstanding usefulness. We are not aware, however, that their claims have ever been considered. In the case of the recent committee appointed to deal with street offences we have a glaring example of such omission—so glaring, indeed, that Mr. A. G. Gardiner was moved to write a letter of protest to the 26th October issue of *John Bull*, in which he refers to the affront offered to women barristers and solicitors by the omission to include a single one of them in this particular inquiry. Thus when the committee holds private sessions to assess its evidence and prepare its report, there will not be among its women members one who has the necessary technical legal training to put forward, in the interests of women, legal arguments as against those which may be urged by its male legal members. In addition there are numerous posts connected with prisons which make similar claims. The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship has from time to time urged the appointment of Prison Visitors and Commissioners. No such appointment has, however, been made.

Another opening for the appointment of women to legal positions is offered by the Widows' Pensions Act. During the passage of the Act, Miss Ellen Wilkinson initiated a discussion on the possibility of appointing women barristers to the panel of Assessors of Appeals from the decisions of local officials. It was generally agreed in the House of Commons that such appointments were both possible and desirable. But so far as we know, though one woman barrister at least is a referee under the Unemployment Insurance Act, none have been made. On the Magisterial Bench, too, it would seem that inadequate use is being made of the services of legally qualified women. The Home Office has had occasion to lament the small number of suitable women who can act as magistrates in Children's Courts or as Assessing Magistrates to the Stipendiary Magistrates in the London Children's Courts. But has the Lord Chancellor taken any steps to obtain particulars of women barristers who would be willing to act?

These are a few of the questions which should be borne in mind by individuals and organizations interested in the progress of women in the legal profession. Our critic is right in her contention that at this stage they are more important considerations than the mere tale of those who secure entrance through a door which now requires no pushing.

CHILD GUIDANCE.

By MRS. ST. LOE STRACHEY, J.P.

Though it would be an exaggeration to say that the British Child Guidance Council would not have existed if a certain little boy had not succeeded in burning a haystack to the ground after three determined attempts, yet the reaction to this exploit contributed its mite to the foundation of the Council. The boy appeared before a rural Children's Court and the Bench's determination to send him to a Home Office school was combated by an official who had something to do with the rates and by the child's own father. Fortunately the Chairman (who muttered *sotto voce* to his colleagues "He'll burn the baby next time!") was adamant. But it seemed to me so extraordinary that anyone should think that the country was saved expense by no inquiry being made into that child's mentality that I was more than ever determined when paying a short visit to America to see how the psychological problems involved in juvenile delinquency were dealt with on that side of the Atlantic. I was shown the Philadelphia Juvenile Court, where unfortunately only "domestic relation" cases were being tried on the day I was there, and then Mr. Murphy, the head of the Philadelphia Children's Bureau, said to me, "What I think would interest you most would be to see the Child Guidance Clinic at Philadelphia." There I saw in detail the system by which that very necessary item, "Information before the Court," which in rural England is chiefly conspicuous by its absence, was procured and handed on by a Child Guidance Clinic. Workers experienced in the study of the mind of a child, wise in their knowledge of how his environment affects him, doctors skilful in their diagnosis of the child's physical condition, all inquire into every fact of a case referred to them, compare notes at a staff meeting, and then advise the Magistrate, or Judge as he

would be in America, as to the best method of dealing with the case. Adolescents are also treated, and at the admirable Slade Farm School outside Philadelphia the Principal is able in any difficulty to refer back a child or girl who is giving trouble to the Child Guidance Clinic just as a case of physical trouble is referred back to a consulting physician or surgeon. Such Clinics have been founded by the Commonwealth Fund of America in many cities, and other organizations also practise the same methods. I believe the oldest of these is the celebrated Judge Baker Foundation at Boston, where Dr. Healey carries on his admirable work.

I spoke of the deep impression which these methods had made on me to the Head of the Educational Department of the Commonwealth Fund, and to my astonishment he said, "Why don't you ask them to give you a Clinic in England?" I asked how this was possible, and he replied that the Commonwealth Fund was established in 1918 "for the welfare of mankind" (the name of the founder was Mrs. Stephen Harkness), and I discovered that the Fund had been applied to various causes irrespective of nationality. Having still at that time the incomparable advantage of my husband's advice and guidance, I told him of this conversation, and, encouraged by him, went into the Chief Office of the Commonwealth Fund, where I was received by the Director, Mr. Barry Smith, and one of his able assistants, Miss Mildred Scoville. Naturally Mr. Barry Smith said that the Executive would not contemplate any such thing without investigation, and he suggested to me that if the Central Association for Mental Welfare and the National Council for Mental Hygiene would express any wish for such a Clinic he would see whether an Investigator could be sent to England to

inquire into the possibilities. He was delighted with my suggestion that the Magistrates' Association should also be approached in the matter, and on my return to England these three Associations, joined a little later by the Howard League, sent representatives to an informal committee, whose duty it was to draw up a memorandum to the Commonwealth Fund asking them to finance an experiment on the lines of the Child Guidance Clinic of America.

The upshot was that Miss Scoville was appointed as Investigator, and finally the Child Guidance Council was established, its aim being to bring before the public the need of making an individual study not only of juvenile delinquents, but of "children who are dull, backward, or 'nervous,' or who, though they do not actually commit offences against the law, cause anxiety to teachers or parents by anti-social tendencies."

Sir Humphry Rolleston consented to become President of the Council, and, to quote again from the first leaflets issued, its members include "physicians, magistrates, educationalists, psychologists, and social workers, members of Local Education Authorities, and Universities, while nominees of the Home Office, Board of Education, and the Board of Control have been appointed to act with it in a consultative capacity."

The Council has accepted the very generous financial aid of the Commonwealth Fund with the ultimate aim of establishing a Child Guidance Clinic at which may be demonstrated not only the value of trained help in individual cases, but where facilities may be provided "for the training of social workers in the understanding of the mental and emotional factors at work in the production of difficult children. At present there is little opportunity for such training in this country. It is hoped that Universities may establish suitable courses of instruction, and that students may do part of their practical work at the Clinic."

For the moment the Commonwealth Fund is "meeting the expenses of several well-known persons who have been selected for observational visits to the States, and also meeting the expenses of five social workers who have undertaken a year's training in America." Certain members of the Council, whose visits were not wholly connected with the work, have already returned to this country, and it was a matter of absorbing interest to hear the first impressions, given impromptu at a recent Council meeting, of Dr. Bernard Hart, Dr. Crowley, of the Board of Education, and the Rev. J. C. Pringle, of the Charity Organization Society. These competent observers were unanimous in their opinion of the usefulness of the methods developed and the interest of all that they had seen.

In order that the aims of the Council should finally be achieved, it is necessary to have the backing of all those interested and concerned with the welfare of children. Not the least of the problems before the Council is the education of public opinion on this vital question. Miss Fox, so well-known for her work in another department of children's welfare, i.e. that of the care of mental defectives, has become honorary secretary of the Council, which, indeed, owes much of the success of its inception and formation to her energy and powers of organization.

The Council is prepared to distribute literature and arrange meetings for the general public or for medical men, magistrates, teachers, probation officers, hospital almoners, or other social workers. Further information and literature can be obtained by all those interested by writing to Mrs. Beach, Secretary, Child Guidance Council, 24 Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W. 1 (Tel.: Franklin 6226).

I feel that the idea of research being instituted in this very difficult field of knowledge will specially appeal to readers of THE WOMAN'S LEADER, and that the Child Guidance Council can count with confidence on their support and sympathy.

CONFERENCE WITH MISS RUTH MORGAN.

The International Committee of the N.U.S.E.C. and the delegates to the Amsterdam Peace Conference had an opportunity of meeting Miss Ruth Morgan, Chairman of the Peace Committee of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, before her return to the United States. Miss Morgan was warmly congratulated on the inspiring effect of the Conference, and an interesting discussion took place as to future methods with regard specially to the passing of resolutions. The warm thanks of the N.U.S.E.C., the Freedom League, and St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, the three Auxiliaries, are due to Miss Morgan for giving this opportunity of meeting her during her very brief visit to this country.

THE OPEN DOOR COUNCIL.

"To secure that women shall be free to work and protected as workers on the same terms as men, and that legislation and regulations dealing with conditions and hours, payment, entry and training shall be based upon the nature of the work and not upon the sex of the worker. And to secure for women, irrespective of marriage or childbirth, the right at all times to decide whether or not they shall engage in paid work, and to ensure that no legislation or regulations shall deprive them of this right."

That official "Object" looks comprehensive and sufficiently clear to describe a body which is solely equalitarian—feminist in the sense that in every direction it combats the hydra-headed inequalities conditioning the status and work of professional and wage-earning women. It is not a case of believing in "equality up to a point" and then conceding modifications. It is a really single-minded practice of submitting every conceivable law, custom or proposal to one touchstone: Does it secure absolute equality of status, pay, opportunity, professional and industrial conditions as between men and women? In a word, it is an attitude of mind which invariably puts equality first and other desirable things second; and this from an innermost and unshakable conviction that without that solid foundation all superstructures are at their best insecure—so insecure, indeed, that at any moment they may shift, and from an intended good become an unmistakable evil—and at their worst a contemptuous implication that women are not to be regarded as reasonable adult creatures.

"Oh, yes, I do believe in equal status and all that," someone in the audience will say after an Open Door Council address, "but I don't think married women ought to be allowed to go on working for money when their husbands can keep them." Could middle-headedness further go? ("Keep," by the by, is a survival of most obstinate vitality. . . . Suppose the wife prefers to "keep" herself?)

The Council's plain and simple outlook is sometimes misrepresented. To assert that a woman ought not to be deprived by legislation of the right to choose whether she will engage in any work at any time is *not* to "push" her into this or that dangerous occupation. To strive unceasingly against the "protective" regulations which debar a woman from her paid employment for a given period before and after child-bearing is *not* to be callously indifferent to her welfare, and members of the Open Door Council challenge the advocates of this restrictive legislation to leave the working woman her freedom of choice and to concentrate their social zeal upon the provision of such adequate maintenance for the prospective or nursing mother as will no longer restrict that choice to the alternatives of injurious over-exertion or the mal-nutrition consequent upon the stoppage of her wages. To oppose *differential* restrictions placed upon women in industry is *not* to be "against all protection for the workers", but to insist that protection shall be based on the nature of the work and not on the sex of the workers.

And now for the work already accomplished by the Council in its brief existence. Its earliest activity was to get in touch, in Paris, with representatives of other countries and to help to establish an International Committee of women, as eventually only by international activity on sound lines can the unfairly restrictive tendencies of the Conventions adopted year by year by the International Labour Organization be countered.

Next came the efforts to save the women house-painters and decorators from the unfair restrictions contained in the Lead Paint (Protection against Poisoning) Act: Questions in Parliament, influentially signed letters to *The Times* and to the House of Lords, a meeting at the House of Commons between M.P.s and women decorators, followed by a circular letter to every Member of the House of Commons asking support for the Amending Bill introduced by Mr. Harney for the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. Meanwhile women decorators had made every effort to secure the widest freedom possible under the Departmental Orders required by Clause II of the Act, and had submitted to the Home Secretary a Memorandum of the work done by women painters and decorators and the oppressive effect of Clause II, which will prevent future apprenticeship and severely handicap women already in the trade. Three requests for a deputation to lay before the Home Secretary the case for a wide Order and the eventual repeal of the Clause as it affects women were met by a refusal. The women decorators therefore asked the Open Door Council to assist them in pressing for the repeal of the Clause, and the

first step to that end was the organization of a crowded Protest Meeting in the Caxton Hall on the coming into operation of the restrictive Clause.

On the Government's Factories Bill the Council, realizing that a wide and thorough education of the industrial women is necessary if they are to take the long view and to see that special treatment for women is inevitably incompatible with that real equality which is the only sure protection, distributed in May to all Groups affiliated to the Labour Women's Conference at Huddersfield a letter setting forth the equalitarian point of view. Later, about 1,500 copies of a fuller statement were sent out to Trade Unions and Divisional Labour Parties prior to the Trade Union Congress in Edinburgh and the Labour Party Conference at Blackpool. The latter meeting was attended by the O.D.C. Organizer. Arising out of this wide propaganda many requests for speakers have been received, and more are still coming in. Since April the O.D.C. has sent speakers to 66 meetings: 95 Trade Unions have been visited, and three deputations received by Trade Unions. They find the working women by no means unanimous for "protective" legislation. A special series of spring meetings is now being arranged.

The Congress of the British Medical Association in Edinburgh was the opportunity for some intensive work among the delegates on the subject of the dismissals of married women by Municipal Authorities. A public meeting, to which practically every Edinburgh women's organization sent delegates, was held. The B.M.A. Congress eventually passed a satisfactory resolution reaffirming the Association's policy in this connection. The occasion of the Municipal Elections was taken for special Press activity in those localities where dismissals of married women were known to have occurred, the National Union of Women Teachers co-operating helpfully. The dismissal lists were kindly supplied by THE WOMAN'S LEADER.

The Council is growing steadily; so is its Publication Department. Its new office at 3 Bedford Square, W.C. 1, will, it is hoped, be used by members as a centre of information and help. Its staff has all it can do in grappling with the amount of work which floods in. It is said that "new brooms sweep clean". Let us then thank heaven for this energetic besom searching out some neglected corners.

QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT.

5th December, 1927.

PEERESSES.—Lieut.-Commander Kenworthy asked the Prime Minister whether, in considering legislation to equalize the political position of men and women, he is considering the position, as hereditary legislators, of peeresses in their own right? *The Prime Minister*: No, Sir.

7th December, 1927.

MATERNITY CONVENTION.—Mr. Robert Young asked the Minister of Labour whether, now that the Government of the German Reich has ratified the International Labour Office Convention on Maternity Protection, he will expedite its ratification by His Majesty's Government?

Sir A. Steel-Maitland: The general reason which led His Majesty's Government delegates at Washington in 1919 to abstain from voting for the adoption of the Maternity Convention, and which led successive Governments to refuse to ratify, are that, in the British view, the benefits provided under the health insurance scheme and other social services already in operation in this country are in accordance with the policy of the Convention and are, indeed, in some respects in advance of those embodied in the Convention.

Mr. Young: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that maternity mortality has not decreased in this country during the past fifteen years, and is not that a reason for ratification of the Convention?

Sir A. Steel-Maitland: I will communicate the first part of the question to the Ministry of Health. As regards ratification of the Convention, this country has already in force a policy aiming at the same results, and it was considered that the adoption of the specific proposals made in the Convention would lead to serious administrative difficulties and that the benefits which might be so conferred additionally would be restricted to a more limited class.

A CHRISTMAS GIFT you must give yourself and your friends.

"The Life and Work of Josephine Butler," specially written for her centenary by Dame Millicent Fawcett. Ready 17th December. Price, in paper cover, 1s. 8d., in cloth cover, 2s. 9d. post free. Order now from The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, Orchard House, 14 Great Smith Street.

WOMEN AND THE INDIAN INQUIRY.

The following letter appeared in *The Times* of Monday, 12th December:—

To the Editor of "The Times".

SIR,—We write to urge that the Statutory Commission which is to inquire into the working of the Indian Constitution should have attached to it two or more women in the capacity of advisers or assessors (as is frequently done in League of Nations Committees) in order that the Commission may have some continuous link with that part of Indian life which is hidden behind the veil.

Profound interest has been aroused lately in that side of the subject, and without discussing the vexed question of whether and how far the statements made about it are true, it is obvious that problems relating to the health and education of women and children cannot be ignored by the Commission. Yet they will be unable to see the truth about these problems with their own eyes, since only women may see and talk with Purdah women in their houses and in any institution, for their benefit. No doubt the Commission will be able to obtain evidence from women engaged in various forms of social work in various parts of India. But it may be difficult to form out of these disjointed bits of evidence a broad, balanced, and impartial view of the problem as a whole if the Commission is hampered both in the selection of witnesses and the weighing of evidence by the lack of any direct and intimate contact with the facts through some continuous medium.

Since there are no women on the Commission itself, we suggest that the deficiency could best be remedied by attaching to the Commission some women accustomed to public life in this country and to the weighing of evidence, who can regard Indian problems with fresh eyes unhampered by preconceptions, as the Commission itself aims at doing, and can assist in those parts of its great task which specially concern women.

MARGERY I. CORBETT ASHBY.

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L. SORABJI.

H. M. SWANWICK, M.A.

National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.

15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.

9th December.

FORCED LABOUR: AN ADVANCE.¹

Last spring several British women's societies met at the office of the Women's International League and co-operated in preparing a memorandum on Forced Labour. This memorandum was sent to the International Labour Office for the attention of the Committee of Experts which sat for the first time in July last to consider this dangerous institution so near akin to slavery. At their first conference the women's societies received great help and stimulus from the presence and personality of Mr. Grimshaw of the International Labour Office. His presence at a further conference last week at Friends House brought together a keen body of people eager to hear how the fight was faring.

Mr. Grimshaw was optimistic. The Report of the Committee of Experts is on the point of publication and promises to be a document of first-class importance. It is to contain an analysis of existing systems: a digest of governmental and other opinions on the use of such systems: and finally a section on the principles which the Committee consider ought to be applied where any use of forced labour is resorted to. The British women's societies condemn the institution of forced labour and aim at its early abolition. They will therefore submit the final section of the report to serious scrutiny, but as broadly forecasted by Mr. Grimshaw it contains the promise of an important step in the right

¹ Contributed by The Women's International League, 55 Gower Street, W.C.

direction. The principle is laid down that forced labour should be requisitioned only for urgent and essential public service and only when voluntary labour is unobtainable: with safeguards concerning health, pay, conditions of work, hours, and length of service.

The task before us is to study, criticize, and create a public opinion on this document before it is discussed at the International Labour Conference in 1929. Those societies with international connections have a special duty laid upon them in stirring up interest in other countries with colonial responsibilities. According to Mr. Grimshaw public opinion in Europe is largely indifferent, as it appears to be also in parts of the British Empire. At home it has always been possible to win a response to a real humanitarian appeal. And as Mr. Grimshaw said, if we do not deal with the evil of forced labour still greater evils will surely follow.

Replying to the criticism that in the composition of the Committee of Experts there was no native and no woman, Mr. Grimshaw stated that he would welcome the presence of both: the difficulty was to find suitable experts. There were already four British members of the Committee so that any woman added must be, in present circumstances, of other nationality than British. As to the postponement of the discussion at the International Labour Conference till 1929 this was due to the fact that the 1928 agenda was already overcrowded with other subjects. The intervening year might prove useful in giving public opinion time to operate.

K. D.

EQUAL FRANCHISE.

"THE UNKNOWN QUANTITY."

The following Unionist Members of Parliament have during the past week signified their support of the Prime Minister's proposals with regard to Equal Franchise:—

- Fielden, E. B. Manchester Exchange.
- Fermoy, Lord King's Lynn.
- Locker-Lampson, G. (Govt.) Wood Green.
- Turton, Sir E. Thirsk and Malton.
- Warrender, Sir V. Grantham.

PEACE UNTIL THE VOTE IS WON.

We have been requested to insert the following on behalf of a small committee which has recently been formed.

Many of us regret the movement to raise at the next Council meeting, on the eve of the Equal Franchise Bill, questions involving the alteration of the object of the Union and its policy on Restrictive Legislation.

A small committee has been formed with the object of postponing such a discussion until after the passing of the Franchise Bill.

It has been suggested that if necessary for this purpose a Resolution might be put forward at the next annual Council meeting in some such terms as the following:—

"That in the opinion of this Council it would be disadvantageous to alter the object of the Union, or to change its policy with regard to Restrictive Legislation in fundamental subjects until the Equal Franchise Bill has been passed; or, should there be a premature dissolution of Parliament, until after the General Election." The Committee referred to would be greatly obliged if societies and individual members who are in favour of such a Resolution would notify their approval to the Acting Secretary, Mrs. Houston, 3 Edwardes Square, London, W. 8.

A WOMAN HIGH SHERIFF IN BELFAST.

Belfast has appointed a woman (Mrs. McMordie) as High Sheriff. This is the first time that a woman has held the office in Belfast.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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Parliamentary Secretary: Mrs. HORTON.
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SIGN POST SERIES HANDBOOKS.

We hope that all our Societies will order copies of the two handbooks *Civic Health and Welfare*, by Annie R. Caton and Marian Berry, and *Social Insurance* by Evelyn Martelli (price 2s. 6d. each). These handbooks, which deal with matters of Local and National Government respectively, in which all our members are interested, are written in so interesting a vein and are so delightful to look at and handle, that we suggest they would form good Christmas presents. The object of this series is to supply the ordinary citizen with handbooks which shall not merely summarize the facts relating to the subjects dealt with, but also criticize defects and suggest reforms. The following have been announced as future publications: *The Meaning of the Woman's Movement*, by Miss Eleanor Rathbone, *The Teaching of Citizenship*, by Mrs. Hubback and Miss Macadam, and *Family Limitation*, by Mrs. Stocks.

AN APPEAL FOR NEW SUBSCRIBERS.

We print in the Correspondence Column an appeal signed by the President and Treasurer and four Vice-Presidents, Dame Millicent Fawcett, Lady Astor, Miss Maude Royden, and Mrs. Wintringham, for new subscribers to the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. We are informed that many readers of this paper do not know that by becoming subscribers to the funds of the National Union they can help the objects for which this paper stands. We would gladly welcome them to our ranks, and hope that they will respond to the appeal which will be more widely circulated early in the New Year. Subscribers of £1 1s. and upwards receive monthly letters dealing with the progress of the work, and have other privileges of membership.

CONFERENCE OF MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON INFORMATION ON METHODS OF BIRTH CONTROL. Wednesday, 14th December.

In co-operation with other organizations interested in promoting the policy of information on methods of birth control being given at maternity and child welfare centres in receipt of Government grants, the N.U.S.E.C. has assisted in the organization of a conference of Members of Parliament, at which Lord Buckmaster is to be the principal speaker.

AN EQUAL FRANCHISE DINNER.

An Equal Franchise Dinner was held on Friday, 2nd December, to which all the local M.P.s who had promised to vote for the forthcoming Franchise Bill were invited. Sir Leslie Scott, Mr. J. H. Tinne, Mr. Sandeman Allen, Mr. Jack Hayes, and Mr. Gibbins accepted the invitation, and the first four managed to be present in spite of the fact that there was an important debate in the House on the same night. Regrets that they were unable to be present were received from Sir Burton Chadwick, Sir John Pennyfather, and Major Cohen.

The dinner was attended by 150 members of the Association and their guests, and after dinner there were speeches from the four M.P.s and from members of the Association. Sir Leslie Scott spoke strongly in favour of equal opportunities for women in business and the professions, and Mr. Jack Hayes gave some amusing reminiscences of his experiences when as a police reporter he was detailed to attend suffragist meetings.

None of the speakers attached any importance to the "anti-flapper vote" campaign, and the M.P.s clearly regarded Equal Franchise as being virtually on the Statute Book.

DEMONSTRATION NOTES, 8th March, 8 p.m.

The next practice of the songs to be sung at the Equal Franchise Demonstration will be held in the hall of Morley College, 61 Westminster Bridge Road, S.E. 1, on 20th December, at 6 p.m. Buses 12, 112, and 53 pass the door. Societies desirous of appearing under their own name-board at the demonstration are urged to apply at once, enclosing 1s. These boards will not only add to the spectacular effect but will give the general public some idea of the extent of the support received. Tickets are selling rapidly so that those who want seats which are at the same time good and cheap should apply at once.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

"RELIGIOUS TESTS FOR PROBATION WORKERS."

MADAM,—I am sorry to refer so late in the day to a correspondence which I believe has now been closed in your columns, but I still feel exceedingly troubled about the matter referred to with regard to probation officers associated with the London Police Courts. My uneasiness is due to the fact that I am myself a member of the Church of England, and therefore feel that I share our joint responsibility for the unsatisfactory state of affairs.

Whatever the authorities may say, it remains a fact that applicants are informed that, unless they are communicant members of the Church of England, they cannot be probation officers for adult work in London. The eight Roman Catholic officers and the one Jewish one are attached to courts but to several instead of one. There are also one or two Non-conformists sent through another mission to different courts. I understand, however, that probation officers attached to one police court permanently, having two-thirds of their salary and pension paid by a Church of England Society (the Church of England Temperance Society) must be communicant members of the State Church.

I know people who have the very highest qualifications and a deep sense of vocation in this matter, who are nevertheless prevented from securing the appointment because they belong to some other Church or perhaps are not attached to a Church. I feel bound to make most urgently to protest (1) as a citizen, against the supine attitude of the State which, in order to save itself a little money, sells the appointment to these State offices to a private society, (2) as a member of the Church of England, against the unfair discrimination used on our behalf, and (3) as a communicant member of that Church, at the degradation of our most sacred service to the position of a test for holding an appointment.

24 Roslyn Hill,
N.W. 3.

A. MAUDE ROYDEN.

AN APPEAL TO SUFFRAGISTS.

MADAM,—It is often assumed that, now that Equal Franchise is fully in sight, it will of itself bring a real equality of liberties, status, and opportunities between men and women, and that organizations such as the above Union will no longer be needed.

So far from this being the case, we believe that united action among women who believe in this object has never been more necessary. Recent events in Parliament have shown what a strong body of opinion, organized on non-party lines, can do to influence legislation, and we are convinced that the Union which took the lead in working for the vote and which has acquired so much experience and skill in the art of working politically should still watch over the interests of women.

We therefore ask your generous support for the work of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (formerly the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies). The enclosed statement¹ gives some idea of the work it has on hand. This work cannot be carried out without a well-equipped parliamentary department at headquarters and the organization of effort throughout the country. This requires money and its present funds are totally inadequate.

(Signed) ELEANOR F. RATHBONE, President.

- NANCY ASTOR,
- MILlicENT G. FAWCETT,
- A. MAUDE ROYDEN,
- MARGARET WINTRINGHAM,
- ELIZABETH MACADAM, Treasurer.

The National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship,
15 Dean's Yard, S.W. 1.

¹ The statement referred to is called "our winter's work" and can be had on application.

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