

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

Vol. XX. No. 30. One Penny.

REGISTERED AS
A NEWSPAPER.

Friday, August 31, 1928.

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Annual Subscription for Postal Subscribers: British Isles and Abroad, 6/6.

Common Cause Publishing Co., 4 Tufton Street, Westminster, S.W. 1.

NOTES AND NEWS.

"Si Vic pacem para pacem."

The Kellogg Peace Pact is now signed. The statesmen who gathered in Paris over the week-end brought with them the hopes and will to peace of all the peoples represented. It was like a glorious sunrise. The duty remaining on each one of us is to see that clouds do not arise later, as during so many of these August mornings and shroud the sky. We still await news of the form of the Anglo-French "compromise," but we cannot help feeling distrustful of any arrangement with one power which appears to exclude others. For what we now have much thanks, but a great deal remains still to be done before universal peace can be assured.

Women and the Pact.

The French Cabinet has received a request from the Women's Party of the U.S.A., suggesting that the plenipotentiaries now meeting for the signature of the Kellogg Pact should receive a deputation and hear its views on the position of women as considered from an international point of view. As we go to press we learn that an international deputation consisting of representatives from England, France, Germany, Italy and the U.S.A. made an unsuccessful attempt to obtain an audience with the Peace Pact plenipotentiaries, while they were being received by President Doumergue.

Birth-rates and Death-rates.

The Registrar-General's report for the second quarter of 1928, published last week, shows an increase both of births and of deaths as compared with the corresponding quarter of 1927. Births totalled 171,241, as compared with 171,080, deaths totalled 114,748, as compared with 107,608. Thus an increased birth-rate coincides with a decreased survival rate. The natural increase in the population of England and Wales during the June quarter of 1928 was 56,493; during the June quarter of 1927, with a lower birth-rate and a lower death-rate, it was 63,472. It is somewhat regrettable that the Press does not make it easier for the public to grasp the significance of the survival rate as opposed to the birth-rate as a factor governing the increase or decrease of population. In the Press notices of this above-mentioned report, the insistence, as shown by headlines, was in almost every case upon the increase of the birth-rate. To the superficial reader, already erroneously convinced that the depopulation of France is due to an abnormally low birth-rate, and that the high birth-rate of the year last connotes an abnormally rapid increase of population, a glance at last week's

Press paragraphs must have left the impression that our rate of increase has taken a leap forward, and that to secure a further leap a further increase in the birth-rate is alone necessary.

The Indian Age of Consent Committee.

Two women have places on the Committee to consider the age of consent, recently appointed by the Government of India: Mrs. M. Beadon, Superintendent, Victoria Government Hospital, Madras, and Mrs. Brijhal Nehru. There are four male members, all Indians, so that Mrs. Beadon is (judging by her name) the only European.

The Place of Women in Indian Agricultural Improvements.

The maxim that the pace of a nation is set or limited by that of its women receives some recognition from the Linlithgow Report, which is not only "firmly convinced of the grave importance to rural development in India of the spread of literacy among women" and that "female teachers should be provided for small children," but shows a real fervency of conviction in its various statements of the truth that "a change in the surroundings and in the psychology of the peasant" is "of all the factors making for prosperous agriculture by far the most important." The establishment of women's institutes is one of the means recommended towards this end. The necessity of some limitation being set to Indian procreancy is discreetly hinted at.

Reaction in Ireland.

All persons interested in the liberty of the Press and of the individual will await with interest the fate of the Irish Free State Censorship Bill, which has now been printed and which will be before the Dail in October. The vital clauses of the Bill aim at the creation of a censorship board appointed by the Minister for Justice, whose function will be "on complaint from a recognized association," to advise the suppression of any book or periodical which is obscene or "subversive of public morality." It is specifically cited in the Bill as unlawful to print, sell, or distribute, "any book or periodical which might reasonably be supposed to advocate the unnatural prevention of conception." This prohibition is also extended to advertisements. It seems clear that the Bill is primarily aimed at the public discussion and advocacy of birth control, and would, if passed and rigorously enforced, cut at the Irish circulation of any paper (such, for instance, as THE WOMAN'S LEADER), which chose to open its columns to such discussion. But, as Senator W. B. Yeats has pointed out to a *Manchester Guardian* representative, it threatens all literature and thus might "inflict a dangerous wound on the Irish intellect." It would, indeed, open the possibility of giving legal validity to the whole Roman Index Expurgatorius, on which may be found most of the works of Anatole France. We hope that none of our readers will credit us with a sympathy for obscene and indecent literature if we associate ourselves very heartily with the views expressed by Senator Yeats, and with a cause which was very dear to Liberal thinkers of a generation ago: the cause of free speech. A twentieth century equivalent of Darwin's *Origin of Species* might fare ill under the operation of the Irish Censorship Bill. A scientific and medically expert treatise on the technique of birth control, would inevitably be driven underground. Intellectual vigour would suffer from the substitution of political wire-pulling for hard reasoning because it would seem easier to gag an opponent than to meet and beat him in honest argument. We fear that Mr. Yeats is right when he suggests that its passage would degrade Ireland in the eyes of the modern world.

Unofficial Censorship.

The withdrawal by Messrs. Jonathan Cape of Miss Radcliffe-Hall's novel at the request of the Home Office seems to us regrettable. An unofficial censorship of this kind represents a whittling away of that freedom to publish anything which is not obscene or blasphemous, which is one of the cornerstones of our liberties. We agree with those who hold that the subject-matter of the book in question—love between women in all its manifestations—is not one which can be classified under either of the headings which should make it taboo. We did not consider it a good book, although some of the writing was beautiful. But the weakness of the book lies not so much in the abnormality of the heroine, but in her sickly sentimentality and her complete absorption throughout her life in her personal emotions.

Domestic Service in Switzerland.

In Switzerland, as in other countries, the question of domestic help is a difficult problem. An interesting pamphlet on the subject has recently been written by Mme Hausknecht-Derendinger, of Zurich, who has made an inquiry into the prevailing conditions. The Swiss girl is no more anxious to take up domestic work than her English sister, and she is often replaced by German or Austrian girls in need of employment. The official figures issued by the Labour Bureaux show that the places available are largely in excess of the servants wanting work. In 1925, 5,821 maids were registered and 10,749 posts, and in the following year the figures were 6,309 servants and 9,420 employers. In the course of her investigations Mme Hausknecht made an inquiry of the girls in the two senior forms of the elementary schools in St. Gall and in the fifteen communes of the canton. Answers were received from 709 girls—362 from the town and 347 from the country. Only 29 per cent of the village girls desired to enter domestic service and 32 per cent in the case of the towns. Wages vary with the various cantons, the highest rate being paid in Geneva and the lowest in Tessin and the Obwald. In Geneva a good cook earns from 80 to 120 francs a month with full board. The law in Switzerland requires the employer to maintain and care for her maid during illness, but there is no system of Health Insurance such as prevails in Germany and Austria. The need for some scheme of Insurance is great, and Mme Hausknecht has placed one before the Insurance Committee of the National Union of Swiss Women's Organizations. Various proposals are made for raising the status of domestic work and also of improving the workers. The present teaching in the elementary schools is considered inadequate

THE MIDDLE CLASSES AND THE COST OF LIVING.

The threatened reduction in the Civil Service bonus owing to an alleged fall in the cost of living, gives special interest to the publication of a paper on the cost of living of middle-class families, read by Mr. D. Caradog Jones (lecturer in social statistics at the School of Social Science of the University of Liverpool) to the Statistical Society last May. The 250 families who had filled in his questionnaire all had an expenditure of under £700 a year. The number in the family varied from 2·1 to 4·5, reckoned in terms of adult males. The results were classified according as to whether the families lived in London, in large towns, or in small towns, and according to the amount of their expenditure.

Some interesting facts emerge. As might be expected, rent, rates, housekeeping, and service barely increase in proportion to increases of income, while clothing, holidays, recreation, medical attendance, and education increase more than in proportion. Living in London is, on the whole, more expensive than elsewhere, but this excess is due entirely to higher rents and travelling expenses. With regard to most other items—food, etc., the amount spent is greatest in the small towns. The larger towns, outside London, come off best all the way. An interesting comparison with working-class budgets for the purpose of showing a percentage distribution of expenditure gives the following results:—

	Working-class (semi-skilled).	Middle-class.
Food	54	32
Rent	13	14½
Clothing	17	11
Fuel and light	6	4½
Miscellaneous	10	38

and it is suggested that a form of apprenticeship under good mistresses would secure better results.

A Woman Preacher at the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

It will interest our readers to hear that on the occasion of the meeting of the "World Union for Progressive Judaism" in Berlin in August, the Hon. Lily Montagu, J.P., preached the sermon on Sunday at the Reform Synagogue. She dealt with the subject of public worship and personal religion and the effect of both on life. The meeting was a very full one, and many expressions of admiration and gratitude were given vent to during the successive days of the Conference.

Two Women Swim the Channel.

Two successful Channel swims by young women in one week! Both these women are young, Miss Ivy Hawke 25 years of age, and Miss Hilda Sharp only 18. Both are working girls, one a typist and the other a nursemaid, and this feat reflects great credit on the energy and determination that can bring a leisure time occupation to such a pitch of perfection as to enable them to qualify for such an effort of endurance. One of the happiest features of modern life is the development of sports formerly confined to the classes which if not exactly "leisured" can afford long holidays. In a recent visit to a small seaside town we had the pleasure of seeing the young people who spent their working days behind the counters enjoying a polo match on early closing day.

Another Woman Mayor on Tour.

Mrs. Welch, the Mayor of Southampton, landed in New York from the *Leviathan* on August 21, dressed in full robes of office, and greeted with naval and civic honours by the City of New York. We hope that she will have a successful and enjoyable visit, and that she will symbolize in the towns which she visits both the advancing public dignity of woman and the cementing friendship of two Great Powers.

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.

It is when we examine middle-class expenditure on food as shown by Mr. Jones' tables that our astonishment arises. This has been worked out per adult man and varies according to the total amount spent in each of the five divisions into which the replies to the questionnaire have been divided. These amounts vary from £278 to £671. A woman is presumed to eat '83 as much as a man, while a child eats from '5 to '83 according to age. The average sum spent on food per week per man varies according to the nature of the locality and the size of the income from 12s. 6d. to 21s. 3d. These figures seem to us to call for further investigation. It was ascertained only last year by Professor Mottram, Professor of Physiology at King's College for Women, that the amount it is necessary for a full-grown man to spend at retail rates on foods in general use (not therefore a diet of haricot beans and lentils!) is 6s. 1d. The lowest estimate given by Mr. Jones represents double that amount. Is this explained by sheer waste through careless cooking and lack of knowledge of food values or by lazy or self-indulgent acquiescence in conventional standards? In the incomes of all families who spend at any of the rates quoted, there is evidently a large potential margin available for other forms of expenditure at present wasted.

The cure for this wastage is not that suggested by Mr. Bernard Shaw! Equal distribution of incomes would in all probability have the result that every one would spend an unnecessary amount in food instead of the middle and upper classes only as at present. It is a change of heart of all those whose incomes are such that these large amounts can be spared, which is demanded. We believe this is a subject which calls for serious attention, and we invite the opinions of our readers on the weekly amounts on which in their opinion, the members of their households could and should be fed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS.

By BERTHA MASON.

THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS CONTINUED.

In our articles of 20th July and 3rd August we considered the Government proposals for the Reform of Local Government in so far as they affect the Poor Law and Highway Services and the position of women.

In this our third article we propose to outline as briefly and simply as may be possible the *Financial Proposals* of the new scheme.

(1) The most important effect of the derating proposals as defined in the Rating and Valuation (Apportionment) Act, 1928, on the position of the individual local authorities is clearly the narrowing of the basis of taxation available to that authority.

(2) To meet this loss of rateable value caused by the derating of agriculture, industry, and transport, it is proposed to widen materially the scope of Exchequer grants to local services and to adopt a larger area of local administration.

(3) To attain the object in view, the Government propose to abolish as from 1st April, 1930, certain of the existing grants in aid of local services which are obtained from several sources and are variable, and to substitute one block-grant based on a definite formula, stabilized for a period of five years, and variable in amount only at the close of the quinquennial (5 years) period.

(4) The grants which it is proposed to abolish are as follows:—

(i) Assigned Revenue Grants.
(ii) Grants under the Agricultural Rates Acts, 1896–1923.
(iii) The Percentage Grants in aid of Health Services:—Tuberculosis, Maternity and Child Welfare, Welfare of the Blind, Venereal Diseases, Mental Deficiency.

(iv) The Classification Grants for Class I and Class II roads in London and County Boroughs, and the Grants for the maintenance of scheduled roads in county districts.

The *Formula* on which the new Exchequer grants are to be calculated is complicated. "It is based," we are told, "on general characteristics independent of actual expenditure." In other words, the amount of the Exchequer grant is calculated on a figure of "weighted" population, based partly on the proportion to the total population of the number of children under five years of age, and partly on the rateable value of property in a given area.

The population so increased is further "weighted" for (c) unemployment and (d) for sparseness of population.

It should be specially noted in considering (c) that the number of unemployed insured "men" only is used as a percentage of total estimated population.

(5) With regard to the distribution of the new Exchequer grant it is proposed that the whole of the grant in aid shall be in the first place apportioned among counties and county boroughs. This apparently will not come into force at once. For the five years beginning 1st April, 1930, the Government grants will be paid direct to each county borough council and county council, and to each borough and district council in the county:—

(a) County Boroughs will receive a grant equivalent to 75 per cent on the existing distribution and 25 per cent in accordance with the formula.

(b) Borough or Urban District Councils will receive a grant at a uniform figure per head of actual population.

(c) Rural District Councils a grant per head of actual population at one-fifth of the above uniform figure.

Such in brief is the financial part of the scheme. In our next and concluding article we propose to give a summary of the main points of our articles on the Government proposals for Local Government Reform.

WOMEN UNDER ENGLISH LAW.

The second edition of Mrs. Crofts' invaluable little manual, *Women under English Law* (Butterworth, 5s.) has just been published. Although it is not three years since the first edition appeared, so considerable have been the legislative changes affecting the position of women since that date, that many sections of this edition are necessarily new. Mrs. Crofts has to be congratulated in that in ninety-four pages she has given a lucid account and readable description of laws specially affecting women under the chapter headings: "Women as Citizens," "Women as Wives," "Women as Mothers," and "Offences and Actions relating specially to Women." A chapter by Miss Escreet, formerly H.M. Deputy Superintending Inspectors of

Factories (and well known to our readers) on "Women in Industry"; one by Miss Margaret Kidd on "Scots Law". As Mrs. Crofts states, in the Preface, her aim has been to give a short general outline of the legal position of women in a form which will be understood by readers who have had no legal training. It is not for the expert nor for those requiring legal advice.

It fulfils its purpose admirably. Before it appeared, anyone who wished to study in however elementary a fashion any of the subjects dealt with in this book had no option but to delve for herself in various legal tomes—for any earlier books of the same kind are now ludicrously out of date. So up to date is Mrs. Crofts, moreover, that no books at all have been published as yet on some of the more recent of the measures referred to by her. Not only do we find in her book accurate and useful information with regard to acts regulating the status of women, but those who are full of zeal on the question of Restrictive and Protective Legislation but do not know exactly where Factory Legislation differs between men and women, will here find enlightenment. So will those who, while realizing with one part of their brain that women are now enfranchised on the same terms as men, somehow cannot bring themselves to believe that domestic servants are also included!

The chapter on Scots Law makes an English reader feel jealous in some respects and superior in others. If the best laws of each country could be applied to both, how excellent it would be! Scotland leads with regard to testamentary provision, for example, whereas England is ahead as regards Adoption of Children, procedure with regard to Affiliation Orders, etc. It would, by the way, have been convenient if in the list of Acts given in the index it could have been indicated which referred to Great Britain and which to England and Wales, or Scotland respectively. Mrs. Crofts has produced an admirable piece of work; every woman interested in public affairs and in the woman's movement should not be without this invaluable handbook. E. M. H.

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DEMOCRACY IN ITS RELATION TO POLITICS, INDUSTRY, AND THE HOME.

We append the Time Table of lectures to be given at the Summer School, at St. Hilda's College, Oxford, from 4th–11th September:—

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 4th Sept. | Reception to students at 8.30 p.m. |
| 5th Sept. | Women in the Professions, Miss Vera Brittain; Representative Government—Its possibilities and Limitations, Mr. W. R. Blanco-White. |
| 6th Sept. | Women in Industry, Mrs. Blanco-White; The Ideals of the Conservative Party, Miss Marjorie Maxse; Economic Aspects of Marriage, Mrs. Blanco-White and others. |
| 7th Sept. | History and Meaning of the Woman's Movement, Miss Eleanor Rathbone; The Ideals of the Liberal Party, Mr. Walter T. Layton; Security and Disarmament, Mr. Walter T. Layton. |
| 8th Sept. | History and Meaning of the Woman's Movement, Miss Eleanor Rathbone; The Ideals of the Labour Party, Mr. Pethick Lawrence; Family Allowances, Miss Eleanor Rathbone. |
| 9th Sept. | Discussion on Matters of Special Interest to Women Magistrates; Symposium on Philosophy and Future of the Woman's Movement. |
| 10th Sept. | Survey of Prospective Legislation, Miss Eleanor Rathbone; Local Government including Rating Reform, Mr. W. A. Robson. |
| 11th Sept. | The Legal Status of Wives and of Mothers, Mrs. Crofts. |

Full particulars with regard to the School Fees and the charge for board and lodging may be obtained on application to Headquarters.

NEW LITERATURE.

Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell's speech on Equal Franchise on the occasion of the Queen's Hall Demonstration last March is now available in leaflet form, price ¼d. each, or 3s. per 100 copies, postage extra.

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Women's Service House will be closed entirely for the whole
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