

# THE WOMAN'S LEADER

## AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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particularly in places where women are largely employed, as in Lancashire and the West Riding. This point had escaped women's societies absorbed in their anxiety as to the effect of the proposals on Poor Law reform and the abolition of the percentage grant and we are grateful to Mr. Pethick Lawrence, always a loyal friend, who deserves the tribute paid him later in the debate by Lady Astor, for calling the attention of the Minister of Health to this flaw in the Bill. We understand that Mr. Chamberlain has agreed to make the necessary changes in the formula for weighting or put in non-technical language will take into consideration the full extent of unemployment among both sexes in estimating the financial needs of the locality.

#### A Report from the Ministry of Health.

The extent of the distress was again raised in the House on Monday at question time and later before adjournment. The Minister of Health stated that he regarded the situation as the most serious he had known since he entered politics. He believed co-ordination of existing appeals was essential, and announced that a thorough investigation of the South Wales area is at present being carried out. For ourselves we can't help wishing that the proposal of a Parliamentary Committee representative of all parties might be accepted by the Government. Such a committee would lift this matter outside the range of party politics and would concentrate attention at the same time on constructive solutions and the better organization of existing relief-schemes.

#### The Distressed Areas:

Much uneasiness is being caused among those with any knowledge of the extent of the distress in the mining areas. We are told that the sum already collected by the Lord Mayor's and other Funds, is only touching the fringe of the problem. *The Times* has repeatedly called attention to the terrible state of affairs, and in a leading article on Tuesday of this week, states that the country at large can not adequately realize the position or there would have been a more adequate response to the appeals for help. "Against the hardships the sufferers are almost helpless. Employment has left them. No other employment is within reach . . . Homes are bare, clothing and boots are outworn, bedding is scarce, neighbours are reduced to sharing their meagre cooking appliances. There has been no industrial distress to match it since the days of the cotton famine. Whole communities are stricken." But we are not certain that the Press all over the country is giving the matter the same prominence. We earnestly hope that the conference of Lord Mayors and Mayors at the Mansion House which is to take place just after we go to press may lead to more definite results, possibly in the direction of "adoption" of particular towns and villages by towns not already overburdened with the burden of unemployment. In another column we publish appeals from two women's societies in the stricken regions. Means of salvage must surely be found, but while that is delayed, relief of their distress cannot be denied to our sorely tried fellow citizens.

#### Party Women Revolt.

The recent action of the executive committee of the women's branch of the South Kensington Conservative Association in refusing by a vote of 15 to 9 to support the resolution of confidence in the present member of Parliament, Sir William Davison, which was passed by the general executive committee, shows that women do not intend to follow the lead of men blindly now

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

#### God Save the King.

Anxiety over the progress of the King's illness forms a bond of union between all sections of the community. We hope and believe that the widespread evidence of the respect and affection in which he is held by his people may in some degree lighten his hours of weakness and discomfort.

#### The Local Government Bill and Maternity and Child Welfare.

So determined an effort will be made by those interested in Maternity and Child Welfare to ensure that the service at least shall remain on a percentage grant basis that we cannot fail to hope for victory. At the same time it will not help to present the situation as more hopeful than it really is. The reference to the services in Mr. Neville Chamberlain's opening speech on the second reading of the Bill have led many, including *The Times* itself, to be under the impression that he stated himself to be prepared to reconsider the question. We have searched his speeches and those of his lieutenants in vain, and have found no such undertaking. What he did promise to consider was any improvements which might be suggested to make more effective the famous clause 86 which gives the Minister power to reduce the grant for these authorities who have failed to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of efficiency in the discharge of their functions relating to public health. Lady Astor has put down an amendment providing that for the first quinquennium Maternity and Child Welfare should be omitted. This if carried would be far better than nothing, but we feel that no stone should be unturned to get the service left out altogether. Should the Ministry know that at the end of five years, Maternity and Child Welfare are to be brought within the block grant on the basis of the expenditure on the service during the fourth year, there is a grave risk that, out of notions of economy, it will discourage any considerable development in the meantime.

#### The Bill and Unemployed Women.

During the debate last week on the Bill, Mr. Pethick Lawrence introduced another point which had been overlooked. He pointed out that in weighing the population the degree of unemployment of men was taken into consideration, but unemployment of women is ignored. This works out very unfairly,



that they have acquired political power and responsibilities. This is a significant incident whatever its immediate results may be.

#### Graduates Still Ineligible to Vote!

We are horrified to find that there is apparently considerable uncertainty whether women graduates under 30 of some of the Scottish Universities will be placed on the parliamentary register in time for the General Election next year. It is understood that the matter is under discussion with the Secretary of State for Scotland. We hope as much influence as possible will be brought to bear on him to recommend to the Universities the addition to the University registers of those women qualified by the 1928 Equal Franchise Act in time for them to exercise their vote at the 1929 Election.

#### Women Doctors May Not Apply.

There is still, unfortunately, need for a strong struggle to secure for qualified medical women equal opportunities for gaining experience in their profession. A few days ago two hospitals in London, both of which treat women patients only, advertised for *male* resident assistant medical officers. Surely it is time that such arbitrary distinctions should be done away with; not only do the women in these hospitals lose an opportunity of being attended by doctors of their own sex, but the choice for the best candidates for the posts is unnecessarily and unjustly narrowed.

#### Ban on Women at Manchester College, Oxford.

A retrograde step is being taken by the authorities of Manchester Unitarian College, Oxford, who have decided to admit no more women students. An official of the college said that the ban was only temporary, and on account of lack of proper accommodation for women, but it might be some years before it was reversed. Commenting on the exclusion of women, the Rev. Joyce Daplyn, who lived for three years under the rules of the college, says she fails to see anything which makes it impossible for women to be trained at Manchester College. "A college which has received nine women into the ministry cannot take that position."

#### More Hygienic Offices.

We hope the much-needed Offices Regulation Bill which has just been introduced by Miss Ellen Wilkinson, will receive staunch support from societies. The measure provides that offices should be ventilated in a sufficient manner, adequately lighted by day and night, and provided with a supply of pure drinking water. We know that the lack of these elementary health conditions in offices is not nearly as rare as is supposed. Mrs. Hoster, chairman of the City of London Society for Equal Citizenship, has already given much time to furthering the Bill, and her personal knowledge of conditions that prevail in the city is of great value. Industrial workers are protected. Surely some protection should extend to clerical workers.

#### Helga Gill.

Dame Millicent Fawcett writes: I am grateful to Mrs. Corbett Ashby for having recalled, as she has, the delightful personality of the late Helga Gill. She threw herself into our Suffrage struggle many years ago and the N.U.W.S.S. engaged her as one of their regular organizers: the district allotted to her in the 1890's for systematic canvassing included the town of Arundel. She interpreted quite literally the instructions from Headquarters to canvass every householder in the town, and walked up the stately avenue leading to Arundel Castle and rang the bell. A butler appeared and asked her what she wanted. When she replied revealing that she wished to ask the Duke to sign a memorial in favour of votes for women, he repelled her with considerable discourtesy. She replied that she could well understand her request being refused but considered it quite unnecessary that it should be refused "with rudeness". As she uttered these words the Duke himself passed through the Hall and exclaimed "What is this that I hear? A guest at my door charging my servant with rudeness?" and he gave the man a rebuke which he was not likely to forget, at the same time explaining to Miss Gill that he did not support the enfranchisement of women. She proceeded to expound the aims and methods of the N.U.W.S.S. and her gentle courage and perseverance must have made some

impression on him, for he then, as described in your article of to-day, offered himself to act as her guide to the various art treasures in the castle. I like this story, which I think reveals both Miss Gill and the Duke in a very attractive light. She as a faithful and courageous worker for our cause, and he as a good specimen of an English gentleman. What splendid people we have had working for us all along.

#### More Women County Councillors.

Two more women have been elected as members of County Councils, bringing the number of women serving on County Councils to 148. Mrs. Chuter Ede, who has just been returned to the Surrey Council, by a majority of 422, was the nominee of the undivided Labour party. Her opponent was the former chairman of the Urban District Council. She is the first woman to represent the Mitcham Division, and the fifth on the Council. The Duchess of Richmond and Gordon has succeeded Colonel Hankey on the West Sussex Council, and is the fourth woman to be returned to this Authority.

#### A Woman Relieving Officer.

We are glad to report that the Derby Board of Guardians has appointed Mrs. Dowler as a relieving officer. For some years the Board has employed the services of a woman assistant relieving officer for work among women and children, but there are very few unions having women relieving officers acting in the full capacity. It was in 1897 that the first woman, Mrs. Price, was appointed as a relieving officer, owing to the fight made on her behalf by the Oswestry Guardians and the Women's Local Government Society.

#### "Take care of the pence and the pounds . . ."

The subject of the new Irish Free State coinage, whatever be its artistic merits, and they are considerable, will not appeal especially to the readers of this paper. But the lecture of the Director of the National Gallery, on the inner history of the coins, contained one passage which will surely strike a sympathetic chord in every woman's heart. After explaining that the designs on the coinage are typical of the agriculture of the country, for instance, the horse and the bull, Mr. Bodkin said:—"To the penny we gave a hen and chickens. This, we considered, would be the coin most frequently used by the women of the house and by the children; and it seemed part of our duty to cater for their pleasure. Moreover, the size of the coin called for the representation of one of our most important national industries." Irish women and children will appreciate this thought for their gratification. They will also recognize that the humble scale of expenditure allocated to them is another instance of that carefulness inculcated by the proverb.

#### Organized Anti-Feminism.

We learn with interest from the *Glasgow Herald* of the existence of an organization called the Fifty-Fifty League, whose object is the repeal or amendment of laws which in the opinion of its members confer special privileges upon women. Unfortunately, however, its interpretation of the "fifty-fifty" policy appears to lack precision; for it is opposed to the admission of women into the professions and to the extension of their activities either in sport or in public affairs. We have no information concerning either the quantity or the quality of its membership; and we are inclined to think that its conception of "fifty-fifty" is analogous to that of a certain vendor of rabbit pies who confessed reluctantly to an admixture of horseflesh. To the question: "What proportion of horse?" he replied: "Well, fifty per cent." On being further pressed he explained: "Well—one horse, one rabbit."

#### The Future of THE WOMAN'S LEADER.

On page 340 our readers will find an important announcement concerning the future of THE WOMAN'S LEADER, which we urgently beg them to read with attention and consideration. Its most immediate content is the announcement that the price of the paper will be raised, as from 1st January, from 1d. to 2d. The reason for this change is duly set forth, and we sincerely hope that it will command the sympathy and support of those who will in future be asked to pay an extra 1d. per week.

#### COMPROMISE WANTED.

It is difficult in the short space at our disposal to give an adequate idea of the currents and cross-currents which are going on in connection even with the limited number of points in the Local Government Bill which fall within our own particular scope. Immense interest is shown everywhere. In these, as in many other aspects of the Bill, suggestions, counsels of many kinds, moves for compromises, increase daily.

As regards the substitution of block for percentage grants, discussions took place on many occasions during last week's four days' debate. As a rule the case of maternity and child welfare was given special prominence, though Mr. Sidney Webb referred to the urgent need for removing all the health services from the Bill. In the meantime women's organizations are backing his demand, though they admit the peculiarly urgent claims of maternity and child welfare. They feel that the advantage of the percentage grants as a stimulus towards active work on all health services, but more especially on account of maternity and child welfare is overwhelming, and that its place should not be taken by a block grant with provision merely for reduction of the grant where a Local Authority has grossly failed in its duty. The fact that redistribution of exchequer contributions to Local Authorities will be taking place under the Bill reduces very considerably the one drawback to the percentage grant system, viz. that poorer areas find it difficult to put up even 50 per cent of desirable expenditure, as the poorer areas will in future be better off relatively than before. They realize that the total Government grants for all the public health services amount to £3,800,000 only, of which maternity and child welfare claim £1,052,000, tuberculosis £1,760,000, mental deficiency £634,000, venereal diseases £306,000, and the welfare of the blind £129,000. If this combined sum, and still more if the relatively small sum for the maternity and child welfare service were removed from the total of over £45,000,000 which constitutes the Government pool for redistribution between Local Authorities, the effect on the scheme would be small. It is realized that the case for the percentage grant will be even stronger under the new scheme than at present, as there is no doubt but that the Bill itself is going to result in real relief for the poorer areas. After the passage of the Bill, therefore, these will be better able to take advantage of the stimulus offered by the percentage grant than they are now. The

unanimity with which all those interested in public health work are opposing the block grant must, we hope, eventually wring some concession from the Minister. The battle wages fiercest round the question of maternity and child welfare, partly, perhaps, because there are those who feel that it is more politic to ask for a small compromise, and that to grasp all might lead to complete failure; partly because those interested in this work seem either to be more numerous or to be more articulate than those engaged in other aspects of health work; partly because it is generally recognized that maternity and child welfare have a special claim to remain on the percentage basis in that the services they include tend to be less stabilized than those of the other health services. Lady Astor, anxious to have all that is possible, has thought it best only to ask for maternity and child welfare, and even then to limit her request to its being taken out of the Bill for the first five years only. Though we appreciate the tactical motives with which this request is being put forward, we feel it is too modest. If granted it will be something, certainly, but there is a danger that if the Ministry of Health looks forward to including maternity and child welfare in the block grant in five years' time, it might take care that the percentage grant does not work too satisfactorily in the meantime.

Unless Mr. Chamberlain can be induced to give some concession before the Committee Stage, the real struggle on the block grant will be delayed until after Christmas. A more immediate matter is the personnel of the new public assistance committees and other sub-committees, the discussion on which it is just conceivable, but only just, might be dealt with before Christmas. Some amendments are already down to provide for the compulsory co-optation of members on public assistance committees, and the question of the increase in size of County and County Borough Councils is also being put forward behind the scenes for Government consideration. The question of election of members by proportional representation is also being canvassed, and has the support of many women's organizations, in view of the fact that the adoption of this scheme is bound to result in the election of more women candidates.

We hope that women's organizations and our readers will do anything they can to press forward all or some of these points as soon as possible.

#### WHISPERS FROM WESTMINSTER.

By GREEN BENCH.

#### DUBIETY.

The struggle over the two big Bills of the Session has begun. The Bill for the reform of Local Government in England and Wales with its appended financial resolution, has received its second reading, and we are to take the Scottish twin measure<sup>1</sup> this week. The debate ran for four days, of which one was given to finance. Mr. Neville Chamberlain spoke for two hours and a half, and added to his reputation as a master of clear and lucid statement. It was a fine exposition of a difficult and complicated subject, but I can hardly describe it as luminous, for his illustrations of the effects both of the block grant and of the working of the formula were necessarily hypothetical, for the standard year to which everything in the Measure is anchored is 1928-29 and will be affected by the new valuations now being made under the Act of 1925. There are great disputations in all parts of the lobbies about the validity of the Minister's arguments about the effect of block grants on the Health Services and as to the elements of the now famous or infamous (according to the viewpoint) formula. The House was full but not crowded, and one evil effect of the size and scope of the Bill was that it

was not possible in any one speech to deal with all the issues involved, and therefore speeches tended to length. The attack was led from the Labour benches by Mr. Arthur Greenwood, who had a difficult task in following a speech of two and a half hours and, for once, failed to master his opportunity, for his speech consisted mainly of general observations. Mr. Ernest Brown, who spoke from the Liberal benches, included in a speech which attempted to analyse the major issues, a statement about women's work on Boards of Guardians which should be of interest to my readers; he also pointed out that the idealism of an improved medical service was inconsistent with the stabilization of health grants. As my readers know, I regard Miss Susan Lawrence as the ablest woman debater in Parliament. She got her chance on Tuesday, and took it with both hands. Her speech made a big impression, and it was unfortunate that in analysing the effect of the new proportionate guarantee she failed to detect in the words of Capt. Cazalet "a simple linear equation," but worked at the problem as if it had been a ratio of a ratio, and so laid herself open to the damaging retort of the Minister that she had made no less than nine errors in three sentences. In fairness to the Member for East Ham (North)

<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Bill received its second reading on Tuesday, 4th December.



I would ask those who are following the controversy closely, to look up her speech and they will see that when making her statement Miss Susan Lawrence hinted that while she had not been "idle" she might have been "stupid" about that paragraph. Among other outstanding speeches was that of Mr. Sidney Webb, although many Members were scornful of his statements about the effects of rates on overhead charges. The Member for Seaham, however, came into his own on the Poor Law provisions, and caught Mr. Neville Chamberlain tripping on the repayment Clause 59. It is a pity that Mr. Webb's voice is not as clear as his pen. It was impossible to hear whole passages if a Member was four or five places away on the flanks or in the rear. The best speech from a back bench supporter of the Government came from Mr. Oliver Stanley, who once more revealed a polished irony and a potential first-rate style.

Mr. Harney, the Liberal Member for South Shields, spoke well in the metaphysical strain in which Members like best to hear him, and his speech was impressive as he had prepared it against the background of positive policy. Sir Kingsley Wood summed up on Wednesday night, but while he was competent as always, his admirers wished he had for once forsworn the cuter debate points and addressed himself seriously to the major issues raised. When the division was taken not one-fifth of those Members who desired to speak had caught Mr. Speaker's eye. The debate on the financial resolution was disappointing, for the Parliamentary Secretary refused to budge from his brief, and while Mr. Snowden's speech was able, a good many Members felt it did not really grapple with the difficult position of the derated local authorities. Unfortunately several members who desired to raise the great issue of the separation of the reimbursement of the loss of rates from that of the loss of grants were unable to get called, so they must wait for a later opportunity to hear that major issue debated. There is a feeling of relief among supporters of the Government that so clear a case could be made out for the Measure, but as the financial statements are all "illustrations," I think I can fairly sum up a mass of opinion by saying that it is one of dubiety.

It is a pity that Lady Astor, with so many gifts, has not the gift of making a consecutive and closely reasoned speech, for her case as to the effect on the Maternity and Child Welfare Services was a great one, and the Minister, I should judge from the indications, will probably concede it in Committee Stage.

It was during her speech that we got this week's smile.

Viscountess Astor: I am glad the Hon. Member (Mr. Dunning) compared the Measure to the Book of Exodus, for it is the story of a great leader leading a people from the land of bondage to the land of freedom.

Mr. Ernest Brown: But he did not get there! (Laughter.)

#### BRITISH-AMERICAN WOMEN'S CRUSADE.

The first of a series of deputations to all the political parties took place at the House of Commons recently, when Mr. Ramsay MacDonald received members of the British-American Women's Crusade, an Association of twenty-seven organizations formed in March of this year, which has been working in co-operation with a similar group in the U.S.A. for the acceptance of the renunciation of war and the peaceful settlement of all international disputes. Lady Parmoor introduced the deputation, and the hon. secretary, Miss K. D. Courtney, spoke of the active campaign for the acceptance of the Kellogg Pact without reservations by Great Britain. The Crusade was now working to make the Pact a reality. Miss Bondfield and Mrs. Swanwick also spoke. Mr. MacDonald said that people must not sit down and think that everything was done because the Kellogg Pact was signed. Europe must be guided from a military mentality to a pacific mentality and he believed this was possible. The Crusade was doing a magnificent work, and a large part of the success of the politician depended upon how far it succeeded in forming a public opinion which would be behind any Minister who was working along these lines.

#### OUR LEASE OF LIFE.

It is doubtless well known to readers of THE WOMAN'S LEADER, that like most periodicals which set out to lead public opinion rather than to follow its foibles, the paper is run at a loss. For the past six years that loss has been met not by any single wealthy individual, but by a group of from forty to fifty persons sufficiently interested in the cause for which the paper stands, to guarantee annual sums varying from 2s. 6d. to £100, to meet its inevitable deficit. With the help of these financial guarantors, offered in the first place for a period of three years, and renewed in the spring of 1926 for a further period of three years, with the help too, of a generous body of unpaid contributors, THE WOMAN'S LEADER has ploughed its furrow. Whether it has ploughed well and truly it is for our readers to judge. *And we now ask them very seriously to bend their minds to that judgment.*

For in the spring of 1929, that second guaranteed lease of life expires. Unless it is renewed, THE WOMAN'S LEADER will cease publication on 31st March, which is the close of its financial year. Some of its guarantors have for various reasons dropped out. Will new friends fill their places? Will old friends be prepared during the coming three years to renew the solid and burdensome pledges of their friendship?

We do not know. We know well enough that we ourselves do not wish to cease publication, that we are convinced that if we did, the paper would leave a gap which no other periodical would adequately fill, that the future tasks of the woman's movement no less than the accomplished tasks, will require the service of vigilant criticism and constructive suggestion from what one might call the "Suffrage" point of view. But we do not know whether the readers and guarantors of THE WOMAN'S LEADER are sufficiently convinced of its value in this respect to share our desire for its continuance.

Therefore we are putting the following proposition before them: We believe that if the price of the paper is raised to 2d., its annual working loss can be reduced to £500 a year. This step therefore we propose to take at the beginning of the New Year. At the same time we ask those of our friends who share our own view of the paper's potential usefulness, to come forward with conditional guarantees of annual contributions, large or small, for a further period of three years. These guarantees are conditional in that those who offer them will not be called upon to discharge their promises unless the total sum guaranteed reaches or exceeds the necessary £500 a year. Moreover, we ask our friends not only to come forward, but to come forward immediately—in order that we may know our fate before the end of January—by communicating their intentions to us at 4 Tufton Street.

We believe that it is an unusual thing for a periodical to take its readers into its confidence to the extent of giving precision to running expenses and financial prospects. But it is also an unusual thing for a propagandist paper to depend for its financial existence upon so wide a circle of friends. When it places its future in the hands of those friends therefore, complete frankness is their due.

**A CHRISTMAS GIFT for an Unconverted Friend or a newly Enfranchised Woman Voter.**

*Why not a YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION to*

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Beginning on 1st January with its annual survey of the progress of women during the preceding year in various aspects of political life and public service.

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A detailed syllabus and tickets for these lectures (price 2/6 each) may be obtained from the Secretary, Women Sanitary Inspectors' and Health Visitors' Association, 92 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

#### WOMEN GRADUATES: CLAIM YOUR VOTES!

We give below information relating to Universities which was not included in our article last week. This article is now published as a leaflet by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, and should have a wide circulation.<sup>1</sup>

##### CAMBRIDGE.

The conditions of registration for women who have fulfilled the conditions necessary for titular degrees are the same as those for men graduates, viz. a graduate prior to 6th February, 1918, is required to make a claim to the Registrar, but graduates since that date are automatically placed on the Parliamentary Roll having filled in the necessary form in proceeding to their degrees. No fee is payable by a woman. The register may be kept open to within a short time of the Election.

##### UNIVERSITY OF WALES.

Graduates in and prior to 1926 are required to make a claim for admission to the Parliamentary Register, and to pay a registration fee of 5s. Graduates in and after 1927 are automatically placed on the Parliamentary Register on admission to their degrees and on payment of a fee of 1 guinea. The register is revised every year for the qualifying periods ending on 15th April and 15th October.

##### SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES.

*Aberdeen.*—All graduates on obtaining their degree are required to pay a registration fee of £1 which automatically places them on the Electoral Roll on obtaining the necessary age. It is not yet certain whether women graduates under 30 will be placed on the register in time to vote at the next General Election.

*Edinburgh.*—The names of all graduates are placed on the University Register which closes on 30th November of each year so that all who have obtained a degree by that date appear on the register which is published on 1st January annually. No claim need be made therefore. As the new Equal Franchise Act does not come into force until 1st May it may be that women graduates under 30 will not be eligible for the University vote during 1929.

*Glasgow.*—When a student graduates for the first time, he or she pays a fee of £1 and is registered as a member of the General Council. This registration involves that the graduate is to be entitled to vote as an elector in the Parliamentary Election for the Universities Constituency for Scotland provided that he or she is subject to no legal incapacity. The attainment of the franchise is thus quite automatic. No claim need be made to be registered and no fee is paid for apart from the registration as a member of the General Council.

*St. Andrews.*—When a student graduates for the first time, he or she pays a fee of £1 and is registered as a member of the General Council. This registration involves that the graduate is to be entitled to vote as an elector in the Parliamentary Election for the Universities Constituency for Scotland provided that he or she is subject to no legal incapacity. The attainment of the franchise is thus quite automatic. No claim need be made to be registered and no fee is paid for apart from the registration as a member of the General Council.

##### QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, BELFAST.

The position with regard to women graduates is a little complicated at present, but in 1929 they will be practically on the same footing as men, viz. on graduation each year and on payment of 10s. registration is automatic; graduates of previous years must make a special claim on or before 1st October.

##### COMBINED ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES.

*Reading.*—A woman graduate must apply to the Registrar of the University for a claim form. This when filled up must be received by the Registrar on or before 31st December, 1928. No fee for the present will be charged for registration.

<sup>1</sup> This leaflet may be had from the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, price 1d. post free, 1s. 2d. per dozen, and 5s. per hundred.

*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.

#### QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT.

26TH NOVEMBER, 1928: LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND RATING.

*Mr. Hammersley* asked the Minister of Health whether, in determining the formula for arriving at weighted population in the Local Government Bill, he will take into consideration the number of unemployed insured women as well as the number of unemployed insured men.

*Sir Kingsley Wood*: The proposals contained in the Bill, which take account of unemployed insured men only, were adopted after careful consideration, but the point raised by my hon. Friend will, no doubt, be discussed on consideration of the Bill in Committee.

WEDNESDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER: DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES (YOUNG PERSONS).

*Viscountess Astor* asked the Home Secretary what steps have been taken to carry out the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Sexual Offences against Young Persons, which reported in December, 1925, and also those of the Departmental Committee on the Treatment of Young Offenders, which reported in March, 1927, other than those covered by the Home Office Circulars issued on 30th September, 1927, and 20th July, 1928.

*Sir W. Joynson-Hicks*: It would be impracticable in the course of an answer to a Parliamentary question to refer in detail to the various matters dealt with by the two Committees, which as my Noble Friend is aware, cover a very wide field. A new Report of the Children's Branch will be issued in the course of a few days and this will give some account of the progress made. The two Circulars mentioned dealt fully with many aspects of the subject of young offenders, including the important questions of the organization of Juvenile Courts and the use of hostels and homes in connection with the probation system as an alternative to imprisonment, and showed how much could be done by the Justices under their existing powers. I understand that in many places the Justices have carefully considered these Circulars and have arranged to modify their practice in accordance with the recommendations. A Circular was issued to Justices on 17th September, 1926, as regards the recommendations of the Sexual Offences Committee, and I am considering, with the aid of the best advice I can obtain, whether it would be right at a suitable opportunity to propose changes either in law or in the practice of the Higher Courts in some of the many directions indicated by the Committee. As to those recommendations which cannot be carried out without legislation, the Government are most anxious to introduce a Bill to amend the Children Act as soon as Parliamentary time can be found.

*Viscountess Astor* asked the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps are being taken to carry out the recommendations contained in the Report of the Departmental Committee of Inquiry into the Treatment of Young Offenders, which has recently been printed under the title: "Protection and Training."

*Sir J. Gilmour*: This Report has been receiving careful consideration by the various Departments concerned, and it is proposed to issue at an early date Circulars dealing with such matters as do not involve legislation. Many of the recommendations involve legislation and these are being considered in conjunction with the legislative recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Sexual Offences against Children and Young Persons in Scotland, with a view to the introduction, when Parliamentary time permits, of legislation amending the Children Act, 1908, and dealing with probation and other matters.

#### LADY GODWIN'S RECOLLECTION OF JOSEPHINE BUTLER.

An interesting reminiscence of Josephine Butler by Lady Godwin, J.P., has been received by Dame Millicent Fawcett, G.B.E. Lady Godwin writes: "I well remember as a young girl going to Liverpool College to see my brother receive prizes, and the central, outstanding figure was beautiful Josephine Butler in a scarlet shawl and black hat with a surging ostrich feather, and even then her name was mentioned with bated breath. She was a splendid pioneer." Dame Millicent is asking the Women Magistrates to join in helping Baroness Ravensdale's appeal for £40,000 to raise a National Memorial to Josephine Butler.



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS.

By BERTHA MASON.

## THE BILL AND ITS EFFECT ON THE POSITION OF WOMEN.

The first round of the fight over the Local Government Bill began on 26th November, when the Minister of Health expounded to a crowded House in a speech which lasted 2½ hours his proposals for the reform of Local Government.

The Bill, said Mr. Chamberlain in his introductory remarks, was not easy to understand. It offered certainly a wide field for misrepresentation, but a still wider field for one of the greatest measures ever presented to any Parliament. Our present system of local government was in many respects obsolete; there had been no serious advance in legislation since 1894. The present system suffered from various defects and weaknesses, the most important of which he classified under the following five heads:—

- (1) The survival of Boards of Guardians with functions and areas overlapping those of other authorities.
- (2) The heavy charges on rural districts for the maintenance of roads.
- (3) The rigidity of local government area boundaries.
- (4) The inequitable system of local rates.
- (5) The chaotic relations between national and local expenditure.

Mr. Chamberlain dealt in turn with the defects classified under the above five headings, and the proposed remedies as set out in the Bill. The interest of our readers will probably centre on those parts of Mr. Chamberlain's speech which dealt (1) with the provisions for Maternity and Child Welfare and other Health Services, and (2) with the proposals for the Abolition of Boards of Guardians and the transference of their functions to the councils of Counties and County Boroughs.

With regard to the first point, viz. the danger to Maternity and Child Welfare work owing to the substitution of a block for the existing percentage grants. Mr. Chamberlain, while not admitting the danger, made it clear that any amendments which would still further protect the maternity service would receive his consideration. An amendment with this object has already been tabled by Lady Astor for committee stage.

With regard to the second point, i.e. the Minister's remedy for defect 1 of the five classified under separate headings, the abolition of Boards of Guardians and the transference of their powers to County and County Borough Councils. "How," asked Mr. Chamberlain, "were the transferred functions to be administered?" Mainly through the medium of "Public Assistance Committees" of the Councils, and for purposes of out-relief or home assistance, by sub-committees of the Public Assistance Committees, which are to bear the name of "Guardians Committees," one of each must be established in each area into which each county is to be divided.

## WOMEN'S PART UNDER THE SCHEME.

"I am counting very largely," said Mr. Chamberlain, "upon the assistance of women in the carrying out of the new functions which will devolve upon the County Councils and County Borough Councils in the future. The work in connection with the administration of the Poor Law is work for which women seem to me to be peculiarly fitted. There are substantial numbers of them who have not only the ability but also the leisure to deal with it. I believe that many of them will only be too glad to give their services. Some no doubt will stand for election and become elected members of the new Poor Law authorities. Others may not care, at any rate in the first place, to face the turmoil of an election. In such cases they may have an opportunity of being co-opted, and I daresay it will be found that many of these co-opted members, when they become more accustomed to the work and the publicity will be prepared to take their share of the work and to stand for election. Their help will be particularly valuable upon the "Public Assistance Committees," which are going to be important bodies, because to them will be transferred many of the functions of the Councils, except the power of borrowing money or levying a rate."

We believe that Mr. Chamberlain is sincere when he says that he is "counting upon the help of women to carry out the new functions which will devolve upon County Councils and County Borough Councils." But on what women? Throughout this part of his speech Mr. Chamberlain, if he is correctly reported, seemed oblivious to the facts (1) that for fifty years women have been engaged in ever-increasing numbers in the work of Poor Law administration; (2) that to-day there are 2,300 elected women serving on 525 of the 625 Boards of Guardians,

women of experience, with first-hand knowledge of Poor Law work; women who having "faced (and survived) the turmoil of contested elections" with spirit and courage, are now "accustomed to the work and publicity" and are taking their full share of that work side by side with men as elected members of Boards—women who are willing if the opportunity is not taken from them, to face more elections and to continue the work to which they have put their hand.

The Minister must surely know that the immediate effect of his proposals, if carried into law, will be to reduce very considerably the number of experienced women now serving as elected Poor Law administrators. It cannot be otherwise, and for these reasons.

Under the Bill those committees must consist of County Councillors to the extent of two-thirds of the total number. The remaining one-third may—but only if the Council adopts a system of co-option—consist of co-opted members. The number of elected women serving on forty-eight of the sixty-two County Councils in England and Wales is only 140, of whom twenty-four are serving on the L.C.C.

There are still fourteen counties which have no women members. It would seem, therefore, that if even a few of the elected women now serving as Poor Law administrators are to continue their work on the new "Public Assistance Committees" they must depend largely upon the method of co-option, a method highly unsatisfactory. This is admitted by the Minister himself.

Again, take the composition of "The Guardians Committees," whose main duty will be the administration of out-door relief. The committees are to consist of not less than twelve and not more than twenty-four members, composed of (1) County Councillors, representing electoral districts in the areas; (2) members of the councils, i.e. borough or district councils in the area; (3) co-opted persons, including women, up to one-third of the total number of the committee. How does this work out? In committees of twelve, the co-opted members would number four; in committees of twenty-four, the number would be eight. Again, it is not likely that all the co-opted persons would be women.

As already pointed out, fourteen County Councils have no women members. Further, approximately 140 out of 255 Borough Councils, 604 of the 785 Urban District Councils, and 370 of the 646 Rural District Councils are still composed solely of men.

It is obvious from the figures given and in view of the composition of the new committees that the majority of the 2,300 women now taking an active share in Poor Law work will be debarred from serving on the new committees, no matter how willing they may be to continue their present service. On whom does Mr. Chamberlain rely to do the work now being carried out by elected women guardians? If correctly reported, mainly on co-opted women—who may not care to face the turmoil of election at present, who when they become more accustomed to the work and to the publicity of Poor Law administration, may be prepared to take their share of the work. Some women, he hopes, will stand for election to the County Councils.

Mr. Chamberlain ignores the difficulties which stand in the way of women securing seats on County Councils under the present system of election, and the Bill makes no provision for the removal of these difficulties. But this is another story to be dealt with in another article.

The object of our present article is to remind our readers that if the proposals in regard to Poor Law administration become law, there will be lost to the destitute poor (including about half a million of children) and to the country an effective, trained, and entirely voluntary force now serving as Poor Law administrators.

After a three days' debate, the division was taken. The Second Reading was carried by 179. Immediately after the division a great number of amendments were tabled.

## HOOVER PROHIBITION VICTORY CELEBRATION.

THURSDAY, 13th DECEMBER, at 8 p.m.

in the HAWKSTONE HALL, Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, S.E.

## PUBLIC MEETING

When a Congratulatory Resolution will be moved by LADY LAWSON, supported by Dr. Wm. C. Poole, the Rev. Thos. Nightingale (Nat. Free Church Council), and others.  
Chairman: GUY HAYLER, Hon. President, World Prohibition Federation.

## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

President: Miss ELEANOR RATHBONE, C.C., J.P. Hon. Treasurer: Miss MACADAM.  
General and Parliamentary Secretary: Mrs. HORTON.  
Offices: 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.  
Telephone: Victoria 6188.

## THE PARLIAMENTARY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGISTER, 1929.

Now that the qualifying period for the 1929 register has expired, it is urgent that all electors should be ready to examine the lists when they are published next month, so that all who are qualified may be included. The leaflet issued some little time ago by Headquarters, giving the qualifications required by voters, may be obtained on application, price 1½d. post free. As a result of the notices regarding this pamphlet which have appeared in the papers all over the country, we have had innumerable requests for it, a sure proof that it has supplied a badly felt need.

## CONFERENCE ON LORD ASTOR'S BILL.

We are greatly indebted to Lord Astor for arranging for us the very successful conference on the 27th November to discuss the provisions of the Wills and Intestacies (Family Maintenance) Bill, which he is proposing to reintroduce in the House of Lords this session. Readers will find in another column a report of this conference at which Sir Benjamin Cherry, who drafted the Bill, gave a most lucid explanation of its various provisions.

## UNJUST WILLS.

We have just issued a leaflet outlining briefly the present law regarding testamentary provision both in this country and in Scotland and the Dominions. The need for a change is outlined and the main provisions in Lord Astor's Wills and Intestacies (Family Maintenance) Bill. We shall be very glad to supply copies (price 1½d. each post free) on application being received at Headquarters.

## WOMEN GRADUATES—CLAIM YOUR VOTES!

The article which appeared in last week's issue under this title, complete with a summary of the regulations for registration for all the Universities electing representatives to Westminster, has been reprinted in leaflet form, and may be obtained on application to Headquarters (price 1½d. post free. Reduction for quantities.) We hope that all our readers will assist in bringing this to the attention of their friends who are graduates and who may not yet have taken the necessary steps to ensure their registration in time to vote for the next General Election. No time whatever must be lost, as in the majority of cases the registers close at the end of the year.

## LONDON AND NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE.

The Society's Christmas Sale will be held in the new premises, 25-27 Marsham Street, on Thursday, 13th December, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m., and on Friday and Saturday, 14th and 15th December, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The portrait of Dame Millicent Fawcett, painted by Mr. Lionel Ellis, will be on view at Women's Service House during the three days of the Sale.

## OUR SOCIETIES IN THE DISTRESSED AREAS.

## EBBW VALE.

The sufferings in Ebbw Vale were severe enough without the additional calamity of the recent flood, which rendered hundreds homeless. We have been asked by the Secretary of the Ebbw Vale Women Citizens' Association to appeal to other societies more happily placed for help for our unfortunate fellow citizens in this afflicted area. Clothes or money either for the sufferers from the flood or for the distress among the unemployed, should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Miss Gwen Lloyd, The Cottage, Ebbw Vale.

## ABERTILLERY.

The President of the Abertillery Women Citizens' Association, Mrs. H. B. Dolman, Dunmore, Oak Street, asks us to appeal for warm clothing for men, women, and children, in that town situated in the midst of the distressed area. We sincerely hope this appeal will be also responded to. Donors can feel assured that their gifts will be distributed with full local knowledge.

## BOOTS FOR CHILDREN.

By E. Picton-Turbervill.

A conference called by the Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organizations was held on Thursday last week. In spite of the fact that it was convened at short notice, delegates of more than twenty national organizations were present. The occasion was unique. A non-party effort is to be made to get a "Boots for Children" Bill passed to operate, with safeguards for twelve months, as a non-party measure in the House of Commons. Lady Astor, Lady Iveagh, and Mrs. Hilton Phillipson are supporting the Bill. Every one now knows—or should know—the pitiable condition of the children in the mining districts and amongst the host of the unemployed. The Standing Joint Committee has started this campaign of Boots for Children after making searching inquiries. There are many relief funds, it is true, yet still there are children under 5 years of age who in this cold weather possess no boots at all. All are grateful for what the Lord Mayor's Fund has achieved, yet one fact alone will reveal what remains to be done. In a certain district, no less than 2,800 pairs of boots were provided by the Fund, a great number, but there were 11,000 children who needed them.

It is difficult for the well shod to imagine what it is to be without boots or shoes. Hitherto boots have been distributed chiefly through the education authorities. That leaves the child under 5 untouched. As one speaker graphically put it, a child without boots is a child in prison. Although the inquiry is not complete, yet the figures that have been ascertained reveal much suffering. In thirty countries 5,000 children were absent from school because they had no boots, and over 30,000 were at school with bad boots. There were days and days of torrential rain last month; it is both difficult and painful to think of the discomfort and misery of thousands of children in the poverty stricken areas of our country to-day. Every bit of party political feeling should be dropped in this matter and efforts we hope will be made to enlist all the human feeling that is possible to get the Bill passed. Miss Bondfield introduced the Bill under the ten minutes' rule on Tuesday. It is hoped that it will be backed by all parties, and adopted by the Government.

## UNJUST WILLS.

Conference on 27th November, at 4 St. James's Square, S.W. 1.

The great interest which is being aroused among women's organizations in the Wills and Intestacies (Family Maintenance) Bill, which Lord Astor will be reintroducing this session, was shown by the large attendance at the conference called by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship on 27th November, at 4 St. James's Square (by kind permission of Lord Astor). The Chair was taken by Lord Astor himself, who referred to his reasons for introducing the Bill, and to the evidence he has been given of the support of public opinion since he first raised the question in the House of Lords. The provisions of the Bill were explained by Sir Benjamin Cherry, the legal expert on testamentary provision in this and other countries who drafted the Bill. In a clear and detailed speech, he explained the considerations which had led to the drafting of the Bill in its present form, and met the various criticisms which had so far been levelled against it. His speech was followed by questions, criticisms and discussions. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following organizations:—British Commonwealth League, British Federation of University Women, Catholic Women's League, College of Nursing, Conservative Women's Reform Association, Girls' Friendly Society, Joint Parliamentary Advisory Council, Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, Midwives' Institute, Mothers' Union, National Council of Women, National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship:—Birmingham N.C.W., Citizenship Sub-Section; Cambridge Standing Committee for Equal Citizenship; Croydon W.C.A. and N.C.W.; Dulwich W.C.A.; East Lewisham W.C.A.; Hampstead Group for Equal Citizenship; Hendon W.C. Council; Hornsey N.C.W.; Kingston, Malden, Surbiton and District W.C.A.; Lewisham Junior Citizenship Society; Maidstone Local Correspondent; Sutton Women's Local Government and Citizens' Association, National Union of Teachers, National Union of Women Teachers, National Women Citizens' Association, St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, Women's Freedom League, Women's Guild of Empire, Women's International League, Women's National Liberal Federation, Women Sanitary Inspectors' and Health Visitors' Association.



## COMING EVENTS.

## ETHICAL UNION (WOMEN'S GROUP).

DEC. 8. 3 p.m. 1 Little George Street, Westminster. Mrs. E. Abbott, "The Wage-earning Woman: National and International Control."

## FABIAN SOCIETY (WOMEN'S GROUP).

DEC. 11. 8 p.m. Caxton Hall. Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., "Women in Politics."

## LONDON AND NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE.

DEC. 13, 14 and 15. 11-8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 10-4. 25-27 Marsham Street, S.W. 1. Christmas Sale. Tea 1s. at Women's Service House.

## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN (BIRMINGHAM BRANCH).

DEC. 14. 3 p.m. Medical Institute, 154 St. Charles' Street. Miss Monica Whately, "The Oxford Liquor (Popular Control) Bill."

## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

Edinburgh W.C.A. (Jointly with Edinburgh Juvenile Organizations and Scottish Branch Howard League for Penal Reform). DEC. 12. 8 p.m. Gattshore Hall, 116 George Street. Public Meeting. "Protection and Training." Speaker: Geo. Morton, Esq., Sheriff of Forfar. Chair: Rt. Hon. Lord Murray, C.M.G.

Gillingham W.C.A. DEC. 10. 7 p.m. Oddfellows' Hall. Social Evening.

St. Pancras S.E.C. DEC. 12. 8 p.m. 27 Grove Terrace, Highgate Road. Miss E. M. Pye, "The Woman's Movement in China."

## TYPEWRITING.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

LONDON AND NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE, 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. Secretary, Miss P. Strachey. Information Bureau. Interviews, 10 to 1, except Saturdays. Members' Centre open daily. Restaurant open to 7.30. (Not Saturdays.)

EDUCATED HOME HELPS BUREAU, 100 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W. 1, requires and supplies educated women for all domestic work. Holiday engagements. Registration: Employers, 2s. 6d.; workers, 1s. Suiting fee: Employers, 10s. 6d.; workers, 2s. (Victoria 5940.)

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 9th December, 6.30, Rev. J. Binns, M.A., "The Inner Witness of the Spirit."

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