

The Common Cause

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Notes and News.

The Women Teachers.

We publish on page 199 an article on the present situation of the women teachers in London with regard to salaries and bonus. Since the article was sent to us we learn that the London Education Committee has accepted the recommendations of its teaching staff sub-committee as to the war bonus. Our readers will, we believe, be particularly glad to read an article written by Miss Agnes Dawson, who has so long been known as a devoted and undaunted worker for Women's Suffrage in South London. The spirit with which the women teachers are carrying on their present struggle is the old Suffrage spirit that we know so well. For the moment the women teachers are not only leading the way in the struggle for equal pay for equal work, but they may well be regarded as the foremost combatants for feminism. For years the struggle for the freedom of women has centred in the demand for political franchise; it seems likely that in the years immediately ahead it will centre in the demand for equal treatment in the economic world. We wish all success to the women teachers, and we thank them for what they are doing for women outside as well as within their own profession.

The Education Bill.

The Education Bill was read a third time by the House of Commons on July 16th. It was introduced in the House of Lords by Lord Lytton on July 23rd. He said that for the first time the nation was asked to decide definitely that the claims of education should come before those of industry. The Bill, which was probably the last great legislative act of the present Parliament, was an essential measure of reconstruction. It would give us an education system superior to that of any

other country, but to ensure success it was necessary that the people should have faith in learning. On July 24th the Bill was read a second time by the House of Lords. The Committee Stage begins as we go to press.

Soldiers' Wives and Children.

We have this week to report an increase of separation allowances to wives and dependents of non-commissioned officers and privates in His Majesty's Forces, entailing an increased expenditure of fourteen million pounds. There is no increase in the rates for a wife alone, or for children over fourteen years of age, but where there is in the family one child under fourteen years the weekly allowance is increased by two and sixpence per week, and where there are two or more such children the weekly allowance is increased by four and sixpence per week. The separation allowance for a motherless child under fourteen maintained in a home is increased by three shillings per week, and for the second and subsequent motherless children by one shilling for each child. These altered rates will come into operation in October of this year.

Women on Juries.

The age of jury service for men has been extended by the Juries Bill to sixty-five years. An amendment to include women as jurors was ruled out of order. The whole question of women on juries could not well be raised on this bill, so the amendment dealt only with women between sixty and sixty-five years. The Chairman of the Committee, however, refused to allow "this interesting proposition," as he called it, to be discussed. Few acts of public service are made up of so much trouble and so little compensation as the work of a jury. Women want to share in it, however (or, at any rate, a good many of them do), because it is public service of which they are as capable as men, and because they believe that women prisoners have a right to be tried by their peers.

Moral Legislation.

The message from the Lords, inviting the Commons to join with them in forming a Select Committee to consider the Criminal Law Amendment Bill and the Sexual Offences Bill, met with vehement opposition in the House of Commons last week. Mr. John Burns, Mr. Dillon, and Mr. Chancellor made strong speeches on the difficulty of legislating on these complicated moral questions, and the extreme inadvisability of touching them before the women had had an opportunity of using their votes. The matter was pressed to a division, and the Government won by fifty votes to thirty-six. The Committee will, therefore, be appointed. It is to be hoped, however, that the narrow vote and all that was said (and truly said) about the watchfulness of the women's organisations will prevent any premature action. What women dread is not the appointment of a Committee, but panic legislation. The Committee, at the worst, can only waste time; at the best it will help educate members of Parliament, at least those who take part in it. But if it were to issue a hurried report and an attempt were made to push through a bill before the Recess, large numbers of women would undoubtedly regard it as an outrage. The more men and women of goodwill think and learn about this very difficult and intensely important matter, the more light is thrown on it by research and debate, the more hope there will be for the future. Such a Commission of Enquiry as that which the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene is initiating ought to do much good, and it is earnestly to be hoped that the Government will not take any further steps in the matter until this Commission

