

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Concessions on the Widows', Orphans', and Old Age Contributory Pensions Bill.

Exceptionally interesting discussions have taken place during the last three days of this Bill's committee stage this week, and big concessions have been made on points which we have had occasion to criticise. The plea put forward over and over again on behalf of the insured woman who could not continue in industry until the age of 65 have been met by an amendment moved by the Minister of Health providing that where a woman of 55 or a man of 60 has been continuously insured for 10 years, he or she shall be able to become a voluntary contributor, gaining all the benefits under both this Bill and the Health Insurance Act on payment of 20 contributions per annum. In the case of women this works out at a weekly payment of something under 6d. This will open the door of voluntary contribution to a very large number of those to whom it would otherwise have been prohibitive. A further concession on the same subject was put forward by Mr. Neville Chamberlain to meet the next hardship to which women's organizations have drawn attention: the position of a woman, insured up to the time of her marriage with an uninsured man, who then loses all chance of getting any benefits for which she has been contributing if she leaves her work. It will be remembered that under the Bill a married woman is not allowed to become a voluntary contributor. The new proposal, which offends our feminism, but nevertheless blunts the edge of the grievance, is that when such a woman marries her husband shall have the right to become a voluntary contributor by virtue of her former contributions. Gilbertian as it may sound, it must be remembered that benefits which accrue to the wives (insured up to the time of their marriage) of insured men are paid for out of their joint contributions. Moreover, the difficulty of meeting this grievance by allowing the wives concerned to become voluntary contributors for the purposes of this Bill only was complicated by the fact that under the National Health Insurance Act they are not allowed to become voluntary contributors. From the point of view of the debate the most sensational triumph was the withdrawal of the subsection which provides that if a widow is convicted of an offence in a Court of Law her pension may be cancelled or suspended by the Minister. Miss Wilkinson in a very able but moderate speech, pointed out the obvious difficulties and injustices involved in this proposal. The House rose almost like one man to support her. Ten or twelve Members were on their feet at a time from all sides of

the House. The Minister, after stating that he had waited in vain for one Member to support him, said he was bound to yield to what could only be considered a "demonstration." At the time of writing we do not know when the Report Stage will be taken, but presume that it will be next week. When it does come, it will be the occasion of new efforts to repair the omissions of Committee stage.

To Whom the Praise ?

To those who have anxiously haunted the lobbies of the House during these long discussions of a highly complex and technical problem of administration and finance, two facts stand out. One upon which we have already commented is the persistence, ability and good feminism which Lady Astor and Miss Wilkinson have contributed to the business and the extent to which these qualities have affected the issue. The second is the spontaneous tribute which has been paid by members of all parties to the parliamentary work of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. The traditions of 1918 appear to be in safe hands.

The "Dole".

The Government's Unemployment Insurance Bill, which passed its second reading last week, and is now in Committee, is a curiously mixed affair. We intend it no disrespect by this phrase. Its own parent has described it as a stop-gap. It aims in the first place at securing for the insurance fund a saving of some £6,500,000, by the twofold device of extending the "waiting period" of qualification for unemployment benefits, and by re-investing the Minister with such powers of discretion as shall enable him to rule out certain categories of unemployed persons from the receipt of extended benefits. It is these two clauses which draw upon the Bill the heavy fire of Opposition abuse. It remains, of course, to be seen to what extent the insurance fund's gain will be the ratepayer's loss. That the Poor Law Guardians will feel the pinch of this latest economy there can be little doubt. The remaining clauses of the Bill are less controversial. Clause 2, with whose necessity all are agreed, continues until 30th June, 1926, certain rights to uncovenanted benefit which would otherwise have expired automatically on 1st October, 1925. Clause 4 foreshadows as from 4th January, 1926, certain readjustments in the rate of contribution whereby the burdens of employer and employed are lightened at the expense of the National Exchequer. The whole thing, however, carries us forward only till 30th June next, when the Government will have to undertake a complete overhaul of the whole machinery of unemployment insurance. We believe that there are still persons in this country who regard the so-called "dole" as some form of public charity rather than as a sum analogous to what they themselves might receive from a Fire Insurance Company in compensation for a burned-out house. To such persons do we most emphatically recommend careful study of this Bill and of the conditions which discussion of its concluding stages will reveal.

A Married Woman Teacher Shows Fight.

We have had occasion over and over again during the last few months to deplore the consistent persecution by public authorities of their married women employees. This week we are happily in a position to chronicle the case of a married woman who has hit back. Mrs. Short, assistant certificated teacher under the Poole education authority, has brought an action against the Corporation of Poole for wrongful dismissal on the ground of marriage. Mr. Clausen, in developing the case for the plaintiff, on Tuesday of this week, argued that considerations of the domestic and financial conditions of teachers were "wholly

alien and irrelevant" to the statutory duty of an education authority to "maintain and keep efficient" the schools within its area. As we go to press the case is still *sub judice*. We will therefore delay further comment until judgment is given, contenting ourselves only with the expression of hearty congratulations to Mrs. Short on her courageous action, and all good wishes for the prosperity of her cause—and ours.

A Triumph for Lady Astor.

On Wednesday, 8th July, Lady Astor introduced the Bill drafted by the Association of Moral and Social Hygiene, previously described in our columns. This Bill, under the title of Public Places (Order) Bill, consists of three clauses. The first clause repeals existing legislation directed against the class of women described as "common prostitutes." Clause 2 applies the same law to all persons, men or women, who wilfully cause annoyance in public places, and clause 3 provides that nobody can be taken into custody for causing an annoyance except upon complaint by or on behalf of the person who is annoyed. In her speech Lady Astor pressed the importance of a Select committee on the subject, which could take evidence from Chief Constables, magistrates, social workers, and others with experience of the problems of the streets. The repeal of the present solicitation laws framed in 1824 and 1847 is long overdue. In the light of modern ideas they are not only grossly unjust to women but they utterly fail to attain their object. And the chorus of applause which greeted Lady Astor's speech was an emphatic symptom of the movement of public opinion. We are grateful to Lady Astor for raising this subject and believe that now that the sympathy of the House has been aroused reform will follow swiftly. In this issue in our column "The Law at Work" we deal more fully with the subject.

The Unsocial Socialists.

A curious tangle seems to have arisen recently in the Belgian Chamber over the question of granting votes to women in connexion with the forthcoming provincial elections. The Government is, it appears, assured of Socialist support provided it respects the Ministerial declaration, which contains no reference to women's suffrage. It is reported that, after a violent debate on the subject, the Government made it clear that its Catholic members would be left free to vote in favour of women's franchise if the issue were raised. This attitude on the part of the Belgian Socialists pains though it does not surprise us. It involves a very obvious conflict of interest which arose in this country and which arises in a far more marked degree in countries where the Catholic Church plays a definite part in the arena of party politics. The anti-clerical Belgian Socialist is faced with a choice between the abstract justice of a democratic principle which has always inspired the lip-service of Socialism, and the inexpediency of enfranchising a new class of persons whose ranks are likely to contain (for the immediate future at any rate) a relatively high proportion of persons who profess faithful adherence to Church teaching in social and political as well as in spiritual matters. In our own country, and with our own Labour Party, the antithesis was very much less strongly marked since no clerical issue has ever been involved. But many members of our Labour Party believed before 1918 that new voters, and especially politically uneducated voters, tend to be Conservative voters. That belief, though it had, doubtless, a damping effect upon the enthusiasm of some ardent members of the party, did not deter the party as a whole from making women's suffrage in its unpopular days a plank in the party programme, nor from reaching the momentous decision to oppose all franchise reforms from which women were excluded. We commend this example of disinterested political consistency to our Continental neighbours.

A Woman Delegate at the League of Nations?

We sincerely hope that the rumour in the *Yorkshire Post* that the Duchess of Atholl will be the woman delegate at the League of Nations is true. We are not always in agreement with her views, nor she with ours, but we are convinced that she would, if appointed, take pains to ascertain the views of the various women's organizations on the questions which specially concern them, and that she would in all respects be a worthy representative of this country. Mrs. Swanwick last year, Dame Edith Lyttelton, and Mrs. Coombe Tennant, have each in turn earned our gratitude, and we believe that the Duchess of

Atholl would follow in their steps. As the only woman Member of the Government, it seems peculiarly fitting that she should represent the country in international affairs.

Women and Juvenile Employment.

The Freedom League has written to the President of the Board of Education and to the Minister of Labour urging them to see that suitable experienced women should be appointed to a new inter-departmental Committee to be appointed "to inquire into and advise upon the public system of education in England and Wales in relation to the requirements of trade and industry, with particular reference to the adequacy of the arrangements for enabling young persons to enter into and retain suitable employment." The Freedom League points out that the interests of girls require attention as well as those of boys, and that at the present time the figures of unemployment are roughly 32,000 unemployed girls to 36,000 unemployed boys. It would be easy to mention names of women who have special knowledge and personal experience on this subject, and we sincerely hope that the new Committee will have a fair proportion of women members.

Another Franchise Anomaly.

In a question in the House a Private Member the other day called the attention of the Home Secretary to the fact that inmates of almshouses under private benefactions in Birmingham are denied the right of being registered as either Parliamentary or Local Government electors. The reply was that the registration officer takes the view that the male inmates are entitled to registration as Parliamentary electors on the residence qualification, but that as the inmates are not occupying owners or tenants they are not qualified for the Local Government franchise. This reminds us once again of a fact too often forgotten, the insecurity of the woman's vote. The loss of her husband by death or the deprivation of her own home and furniture through poverty deprives her at the same time of her rights of citizenship.

Questions in Parliament.

NATIONALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN.—Sir W. de Frece asked the Prime Minister on 8th July whether the Government will consider an amendment of the British Nationality Act to provide that a British woman shall not lose her British status by marriage until by the law of her husband's country she has acquired his nationality. The Under Secretary of State for the Home Department replied that the question will be further considered when the views of the Dominions have been ascertained. In reply to a further question, the Under Secretary stated that he was in correspondence with the Dominions on the matter.

MATERNITY BENEFIT.—Colonel England asked the Minister of Health whether his attention has been called to the statement of the late principal Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health attacking the administration of the maternity benefit by the approved societies, and whether the preference expressed for its administration by local public health authorities is entertained by his present advisers. Mr. Chamberlain replied that the statement referred to had been made by the former Medical Officer of the Local Government Board, and that the question was within the purview of the Royal Commission on National Health Insurance.

STATE PUBLICATIONS (ADVERTISEMENTS).—Lady Astor asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury whether the Government intend in future to allow advertisements likely to stimulate the consumption of spirits to be published in State publications. The Financial Secretary replied that it had long been the practice to admit advertisements of manufacturers and distributors of alcoholic liquors to Government publications subject to exceptions in certain cases.

MIDWIVES (REGISTRATION).—Mr. Bennett asked the Minister of Health on 13th July whether representations had been made to him, and if so by whom, in favour of the elimination of unregistered practising midwives and the likelihood of obtaining an adequate number of registered midwives. Mr. Neville Chamberlain replied that he had received many such representations from local supervising authorities and other bodies, and that he is in favour of the elimination of unregistered midwives. He does not anticipate any difficulty in obtaining an adequate number of registered midwives. He proposes to deal with the matter in a Bill to amend the Midwives Act, which he proposes to introduce when other commitments allow.

ALMSHOUSE INMATES BIRMINGHAM (FRANCHISE).—See note above.

WHAT IS FEMINISM?

Readers of the *Morning Post* were provided last week with a first-class diversion in the shape of six articles, three by Lord Amphil and three by Miss Rose Macaulay, on the thesis "Is Feminism a Failure?" Lord Amphil said it was; Miss Macaulay said it wasn't. Lord Amphil led off down one side track after another: suffrage, free love, bobbed hair, and Oxford trousers. Miss Macaulay followed him down each and smote him on every count. Then Lord Amphil turned round and complained that Miss Macaulay had led him astray on a devious "butterfly hunt"—a clear and patent lie, since she had but followed where he led. Lord Amphil said, quoting with appreciation the works of an unnamed author more masculinist than himself, that the advancement of women is conducive to the decline of the civilization under whose aegis they advance. In which connexion he most unaccountably forgot that neither the Turks nor their "hundred per cent he-men"² allies, the Germans, were victorious in the late war. This last point was not made by Miss Macaulay, but all others necessary to the unanswerable confutation of Lord Amphil were. Let us only add that in these articles, as in all her other works, Miss Macaulay's keen and merry wit continually provokes the reader to laugh aloud—and the devastation of Lord Amphil's case can be imagined without more words being wasted on it.

And now to a more serious aspect of the matter: Miss Macaulay's definition of Feminism. Lord Amphil opines at the outset of his thesis that it is unnecessary "to attempt a definition of feminism." In this he assuredly errs; for, as Miss Macaulay points out, if you are going to argue about the merits or demerits of a thing it is clearly necessary to define exactly what it is you are arguing about. This oversight she therefore attempts to rectify by defining feminism very lucidly and precisely as "*attempts of women to possess privileges (political, professional, economic, or other) which have previously been denied to them on account of their sex.*" Now this, in our opinion, is not enough. It is true that feminism involves these things *en passant*, and their denial is anti-feminist. But the mere throwing open to women of all privileges, political, professional, industrial, social, religious, in a social system designed by men for men is not going to carry us all the way to our feminist ideal. And what that ideal is, becomes clear when we define feminism as "*the demand*

of women that the whole structure and movement of society shall reflect in a proportionate degree their experiences, their needs, and their aspirations." For example, the feminist is not profoundly concerned with securing such modifications of the National Sporting Club's rules as shall enable her to put a woman into the ring against Kid Lewis; though if a woman arose who felt herself capable of beating Kid Lewis at his own game it would be an abominable piece of masculinist tyranny to prevent her from trying to do it. She is, however, profoundly concerned with readjusting the current standard of social values in such a way as to secure due recognition in deed as well as in word of an occupation—the occupation of motherhood—in which most women are at some time or another engaged, and which no man, however lengthy and strenuous his period of training, is capable of performing. Thus feminism has not merely a negative side, it has also a positive side. And as one by one the old barriers fall, and the old male monopolies are broken, the negative side becomes less important, the positive side more important. It was a long and painful business clearing away the barrier of disfranchisement and securing for women an equal voice and an established position in the counsels of the great political parties which determine the trend of legislation and the character of administration. And it is a job which is not finished yet. But it was, and is in the sense we have indicated, a manifestation of the negative aspect of feminism. It will doubtless be a still longer and more painful job to convince those parties that women are not satisfied with the standard of human values which they find there, that the kind of work which is amenable to factory legislation and eight-hour days is not the only kind of work that is being done in the world, and that human life, though it cannot, like output of exchangeable property, be valued in money, has an equal claim, if not a superior claim, to be economically produced and legally protected. But such a job is, again in the sense we have already indicated, a manifestation of the positive side of feminism. But positive and negative are not quite the right words after all. There is not a feminist whose record dates back to pre-suffrage days who is not well aware of the positive and constructive side of that greatest of feminist campaigns. Shall we substitute for "negative" and "positive" the words "preparation" and "fulfilment"?

THE PUBLIC HEALTH BILL.

By W. J. WOMERSLEY, M.P. for Grimsby.

The Public Health Bill, which has passed its third reading in the House of Commons, marks a new period in the history of local government in this country, and even in these days of keen political antagonism enjoys the support and blessing of all parties.

The Bill is really a Consolidating Bill, and consists of a collection of clauses which have been commonly allowed in local Acts passed since the last Consolidating Act of 1907, but an attempt has been made to simplify the clauses and to bring them into a more suitable form for general legislation.

The Bill gives a wide range of powers to local authorities to deal with health matters, and many of the clauses are of special interest to that self-sacrificing band of women who are giving devoted service upon local committees dealing with the health and welfare of the women and children of the country. In the section relating to streets and buildings, local authorities are given power to provide drinking fountains and seats.

The sanitary provisions give extended powers for dealing with many nuisances and also with offensive trades and businesses, whilst very drastic powers are conferred upon local authorities for dealing not only with verminous premises but also with verminous persons. Medical opinion is very decided in the fact that many infectious diseases are spread by vermin, and Medical Officers of Health will have power to deal effectively with this danger to the common good when this Bill becomes law.

A clause which has received general approval gives county councils and local authorities power to make such arrangements as they may think necessary for assisting in the prevention

¹ We have not taken out a patent in this word, but we call our readers' attention to the fact that it is our own invention.

² We did not invent this phrase. We learned it from the Cinema.

of blindness. Already powers to assist blind persons are in operation, but on the principle that prevention is better than cure these further powers are granted.

This is a most important matter, and if the local authorities throughout the country avail themselves of the privilege and carry out the scheme as outlined in the Bill many children will be saved from the terrible affliction of blindness.

Clauses for dealing with the scourge of tuberculosis are also included in the Bill and the medical members of Parliament have given unqualified support to these.

Clauses empowering local authorities to lay out grounds for sports and recreation grounds have had the powerful support of the Commons and Open Spaces Association.

These clauses are regarded as good for the health of the people, as they will give to all local authorities power to provide healthy outdoor recreation and entertainment for the people.

Clauses which were inserted at the request of the Royal Sanitary Institute allow local authorities to arrange for the publication of information on questions of health or disease, and for the delivery of lectures and the display of pictures in which such questions are dealt with, and to defray the whole or a portion of the expenses so incurred.

Power is also given for the inspection and regulation of premises upon which the manufacture or sale of foodstuffs is carried on. The idea of this provision is to prevent such businesses being carried on on dirty and insanitary premises. There are many other health matters dealt with in the Bill, and I am proud to have had the honour of introducing the same into the House of Commons. Many of the clauses are adoptive and not compulsory, and I appeal to all those who have the interest of the health of the people at heart to urge the local authorities in their areas to adopt these provisions when the Bill becomes law.

TWO SPRING VISITS TO PALESTINE, 1921, 1922.

By MILLICENT GARRETT FAWCETT, G.B.E., J.P., LL.D.

CHAPTER XXVII.—WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

This question is very much of a conundrum at present, and no one whose whole experience of the situation is limited to two short visits, can pretend to be confident how it should be answered. One is rather tempted, in lieu of a reply, to quote the words of Banquo:

"If you can look into the seeds of time,
And say which grains will grow and which will not,
Speak!"

There are optimists and pessimists everywhere and I know I have to be on guard over my own unquenchable optimism, but I do think it is encouraging to find that optimism as to the future of Palestine under the British mandate is much more frequent than pessimism among those who are actually engaged in the hard and difficult task of setting up a civilized system of government and carrying it through all the perils of its infancy; and this in a country which, for 400 years, has been under the corrupt and barbarous Turkish rule, and for more than 2,000 years has had a series of military conquerors, and therefore none of the education and training which self-government affords.

The grounds of optimism have been indicated in what I have already written but I am tempted to try to draw up a sort of balance sheet and try to consider dispassionately the chances of a prosperous and happy future for a land which is so much beloved and revered all over the world.

Cr.

1. The substitution of an honest and upright administration based on the principles of representation, thus displacing the corrupt and corrupting tyranny of the Turks.

2. The high qualifications for the task they have undertaken shown by the High Commissioner and his chief advisers.

3. The very great mental capacities of the Syrians as a race, whether Jew, Christian, or Arab, added to the fact that racially they are, speaking generally, identical.

4. The natural resources of the country, at present undeveloped.

5. The genuine demand for education among the Arabs as well as among the Christians and Jews.

6. The growing improvement in the position of women.

I shall have something to say about the items in this balance sheet, but it is obvious at a glance that the overthrow of the Turkish Government and the substitution of an administration such as the present strengthens every item on the Credit side of the account and at the same time diminishes some of the most important items on the Debit side.

I have never met anyone with experience of Turkish rule who does not regard its overthrow as a good in itself. The crying material need of Palestine is for wisely used capital to develop its natural resources. The Turkish Government cut at the root of the accumulation and use of capital by depriving its owner of reasonable security that he would be allowed to enjoy its results. As Mr. Bailey says of Turkish methods in a recent volume¹ of essays: "Anyone who was visibly rich was instantly despoiled by the Government. . . . Capital has not been accumulated because of the probability of its being confiscated, consequently the trading and manufacturing operations by which not merely the traders but their whole country would have been enriched have not come into existence." Mr. Bailey

¹ *Political Ideas and Persons*, p. 242.

is here not writing specifically of Palestine but of all the regions of Western Asia where, prior to 1917, the Turkish Government was in power. There is no exaggeration in this statement. It is a simple narrative of facts, the accuracy of which receives endless testimony in Palestine. I can give one example, told me by a resident of twenty-five years' standing. A native Syrian farmer, the possessor of a good olive orchard, receives a visitation from the tax collector, who informs him that he will be taxed on the possession of 120 olive trees: the farmer expostulates that he has not 120 but only 80—the tax gatherer can come and count them. This prosaic suggestion meets with no response, except a repetition that the owner will be taxed on 120 trees, and that the collector and his retinue will squat on his land and live at his expense until the sum demanded has been paid. The farmer sees no possibility of escape, not only from the unjust tax but from a large indefinite increase of the cost to himself, and he has recourse to usurers to enable him to pay the sum demanded, palpably unjust as it is, to enable him at any rate to get rid of his unwelcome guest.

In the place of this monstrous system of pillage, modified by baksheesh and other forms of corruption, a civilized Government has been established. It is not always remembered how young this Government is. It came into existence on 1st July, 1920. The High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, almost immediately, i.e. from October 1st, 1920, had the assistance of an Advisory Council consisting of ten members of the Administration, and ten unofficial members of whom four were Moslems, three Christians, and three Jews: the non-official element was afterwards increased, the aim being to prepare the way for the ultimate goal, an elective representative Government. Nothing further in this direction could be done pending the confirmation of the Mandate of Great Britain in Palestine, and for almost exactly two years all the open and covert hostility to the National Home for the Jews was concentrated on preventing, or at least delaying, this confirmation. The opponents of the National Home succeeded in carrying a resolution in the House of Lords against it by 60 to 29 votes, on 21st June, 1922. All Lord Balfour's prestige was not able to prevent this, although it being his first appearance in the Upper House and the subject one with which he was specially identified, this defeat could not be regarded as otherwise than a slight to him. However, the House of Commons quickly redressed the balance, and approval of the British Mandate in Palestine was carried there on 4th July on a division by 292 to 35 or more than 8 to 1. A big majority in the House of Commons forms a sound foundation for further building, and the confirmation of the Mandate by the Council of the League was adopted unanimously just three weeks later.

GERMANY'S ADMISSION TO THE LEAGUE.

By A. G. MACDONELL.

A question which was often asked at the time of the German Presidential Election was: "Will Hindenburg's election make Germany less likely to join the League of Nations?" and it is a question which is very difficult to answer. During the Presidential Election neither party put forward the League as a plank, either in favour or against it. Hindenburg therefore is not pledged against the League. The German Government did not change with the new President, and presumably its attitude is the same as it was before. It is fairly safe to say that while the election of Hindenburg has not increased the chances of Germany's applying to join, yet it has not decreased them. The position of course will be altered if the old Field Marshal comes out with some rash and reactionary policy or speech. But, so far, he has hardly opened his mouth in public. He will certainly be well advised to behave as Lord Kitchener always behaved, as a plain, blunt soldier who does not wish to interfere in politics.

This brings us back to the question why Germany has not already joined the League. When the League was first formed the Allies would not allow her to join. She had to show that she was going to carry out the Treaty of Versailles before she could apply to join. After two or three years it became clear that it would be to everyone's advantage if Germany joined. The difficulty then arose that the League cannot invite a country to join, while Germany was afraid to apply if there was a chance of being refused. She also would not apply until she was certain of being ranked as a Great Power with Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, and given a permanent seat on the League Council. The result of this was long diplomatic negotiations in secret until all the

ten States represented on the Council had definitely promised not to oppose Germany's admission to the League or her right to a permanent seat on the Council. Then the way seemed clear, but yet another complication appeared. One of the articles of the Covenant pledges all members of the League to assist another member if it is attacked. Germany put up the following argument: "If Russia attacks Poland we should have to go to help Poland. We could not do this because we have been disarmed by the Treaty. Therefore we could not fulfil our duty to the League. Furthermore, if French soldiers crossed Germany to help Poland we could not guarantee their safety from our people who dislike the French." So Germany asked to be excused from the duty of helping another member if attacked. But it is obviously impossible for the League to make exceptions. All members of the League have equal rights and equal duties. It is for this reason that the Allies in their last note to Germany stressed the impossibility of concluding a Pact with Germany until that country has joined the League and is shouldering the obligations of the Covenant. The world is now awaiting Germany's answer. Will she accept the Protocol and register another milestone on the path of sanity? Or will she refuse and with her refusal allow Pact, Security, and Europe to go tumbling back into the Slough of Despond?

THE LAW AT WORK.

EQUAL MORAL STANDARD.

The Bill which Lady Astor introduced into the House of Commons last week, and the promise of a committee to inquire into the subject of solicitation, recall to our minds the question which forms the title of this article. It formed also the subject of a Conference of the British Commonwealth League last week at which speakers from various countries in the Commonwealth dealt with it from different points of view. It is right that we should look at the equal moral standard from an international standpoint so that we may keep in mind that we need to apply the principle in the case of the coloured women of all nationalities just as strictly as we aspire to apply it in the case of the white.

The position in Great Britain was dealt with by Miss Alison Neilans, who stressed the point that if there is to be an equal moral standard it is important that it should be a high one. Most people would agree that we were getting nearer to a single standard in this country: there is less professional prostitution; in the streets of London at night there is less obvious and glaring immorality than there was 20 or 30 years ago. This may be due partly to the fear of venereal disease which has been pressed upon the public mind by means of propaganda to such an extent that many men are reluctant to consort with regular prostitutes; partly it may be due to a higher degree of comradeship between men and women which causes men to shrink from the sheer materialism of prostitution and to find greater satisfaction in irregular intercourse with women with whom they have some mental companionship. It is probable, too, that a woman who resorts to occasional prostitution is less an outcast to-day than formerly, and therefore the line between the amateur and professional is less strictly drawn. Prostitution is an essential feature of the double standard, and as we assimilate the standard of men and women it tends to diminish. Most people would agree that no price was too high to pay for the lessening of so terrible and cruel a feature of social life, but at the same time we must urge how essential it is to see to it that we tend towards a high single standard and not a low one.

Some cases were quoted at the Conference to show how great is the temptation in all countries to treat a woman who is a prostitute with less than common justice, and this always with a total ignoring of the men who to serve their own selfish ends have made her what she is. In Canada, for example, the age of consent is 18, but this protection is not extended to common prostitutes. When the age of consent was made 16 in this country there was the same attempt (happily unsuccessful) to exclude the child prostitute under that age from the protection of the law. Again, in some British Colonies the rule is that no affiliation order shall be granted to a woman who is a prostitute even though she may have proved the paternity of her child. We know how in this country prostitutes are fined or sent to prison for street offences committed by them, and are in fact condemned as prostitutes though no such offence is known to the English law.

But the public conscience is aroused to-day against the unfairness of condemning these women for "soliciting to the

annoyance of passengers" without any evidence being produced from the person who is said to have been annoyed. As a result of this disapproval the numbers so charged are decreasing every year. In Mr. Waddy's book *The Police Court and its Work*, which was reviewed in these columns recently, the figures for London are given as follows:—In 1921, 2,504 arrests for soliciting prostitution; in 1922, 2,183; and in 1923, 538. This is not because in the last two years the state of the streets has so greatly improved, but because magistrates, stiffened by the opinion of the public and the Press, are reluctant to convict a woman on the sole word of a policeman, and the police either cannot or do not produce an independent witness. This is no remedy for the social evil, but it is a beginning in the work of securing to the prostitute the common justice which is her due and which she has never yet received.

REVIEW.

THE LITURGY IN ROME.

A new and revised edition of this book¹ (which forms part of *The Handbook to Christian and Ecclesiastical Rome* by M. A. R. Tucker and Hope Malleson), has appeared in time for visitors to Rome in the "Holy Year". Those whose summer or autumn wanderings take them to other parts of Italy, to France, or Spain, will find it equally helpful and informing when they attend church functions in those countries. The reviewer had lately the experience of being asked half a dozen questions in a day which this book would have answered. Moreover, though planned so as to be a suitable handbook for use during the ceremonies, the scholarly tone and the wealth of historical knowledge shown in the treatment make the volume excellent reading for all who are in any way interested in liturgical matters. The Oriental rites to be seen in Rome are described, and in the appendix there is a list of the earliest accounts of the Christian liturgy, followed by special notes on the Ambrosian and other Western rites, and on those of Syria, Byzantium, and Alexandria, and by carefully compiled comparative tables. The excellent index completes the usefulness of a volume which comprises within its 300 pages the well-ordered results of learning. Not less evident than the scholarship is Miss Tucker's close familiarity with the actual ceremonies described. F. DE G. M.

WOMEN POLICE.

We would like to know more about the revolt at the Sheffield City Council over the question of women police. Apparently at a recent Council meeting Councillor Mrs. Longden had succeeded in passing a motion in favour of four more women police in the teeth of the opposition of the Chairman of the Watch Committee. The Watch Committee, with two dissentients, ignored this decision, and stated that the Police Force Sub-Committee were of opinion that no additional police women were at present required. In moving the adoption of the minutes, the Chairman claimed that the Watch Committee had statutory authority to reject the recommendation of the Council. The Town Clerk, when asked for a legal ruling, stated that the Watch Committee had certain statutory powers over police control on which their decision was final. Ultimately, after a heated discussion, the minutes of the Watch Committee were rejected as a protest against their high-handed action.

GRANDMOTHERLY LEGISLATION.

A storm which has arisen in the Liverpool War Pensions Committee beautifully illustrates the danger of certain clauses in the present Pensions Bill, against which so much criticism has appeared in these columns. It appears that the Committee or Sub-Committee which deals with delinquent war widows has for some time been protesting against the practice of the Ministry of Pensions of notifying the police of any complaint received, anonymously or otherwise, of a widow's conduct and requiring them to investigate the charge. The result is that a perfectly innocent woman becomes subject to the annoyance of a police visit and inquiries as to her relations with her meal lodgers or neighbours. The Liverpool Committee considers that its women members or women visitors are far more capable of investigating this sort of charge in a discreet and sympathetic fashion than a male policeman. Further, as was pointed out

¹ *The Liturgy in Rome*, by M. A. R. Tucker. (A. & C. Black, 7s. 6d.)

to a Press representative by a member of the Committee who is a magistrate, the practice of confiscating a widow's pension because of a moral lapse sometimes results in the widow living upon the children's pension, to the detriment of the latter. Opinions differ in the Committee as to whether forfeiture of pensions is justifiable in such cases, but there seems general agreement that the present procedure is objectionable. This is significant, as clauses 6 and 21 in the present Bill are obviously modelled on war pensions procedure. Incidentally, the fact that the police are being used for such purposes all over the country—including the parts of it where there are probably no efficient committees with adequate representation of women—greatly strengthens the already overwhelming case for women police.

THE METROPOLITAN ASYLUMS BOARD AND WOMEN COOKS.

We congratulate the Metropolitan Asylums Board on an innovation which will tend to dignify the science and art of cooking into a profession worthy of educated and highly qualified women. We read in *The Times* that the Board, holding the view that the inferior status in which domestic service is held is responsible for the dearth of domestic servants, proposes gradually to replace cooks and assistant cooks at its larger hospitals by kitchen superintendents and assistant superintendents. A kitchen superintendent will be paid a salary of £200 a year, rising to £220, and will be granted four weeks' annual leave. We hope to hear more of this scheme. We hear a good deal of criticism of the food served in certain hospitals and the supplementing from patients' private resources which is sometimes required. In view of the importance of diet in the cure of disease this has always appeared to us unfortunate. This action on the part of the Metropolitan Asylums Board may have results which will spread beyond its own institutions. Every hospital, every residential institution indeed, and, not less, boarding schools of all kinds, should have properly qualified and adequately remunerated kitchen superintendents. We believe that in the long run such appointments would be actually measures of economy.

ARBITRATION CAMPAIGN AND PETITION TO THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

TEXT OF THE PETITION.

"We the undersigned, with the Sixth Assembly of the League of Nations in view, urge the Government to accept forthwith the principle of Arbitration in all international disputes and, as a first step, to sign at once the Clause for the obligatory submission of certain classes of disputes to the Court of International Justice."

Readers of the WOMAN'S LEADER will remember that the National Council for the Prevention of War and the League of Nations Union have been engaged upon a special Arbitration Campaign during the past two months, and in connexion with this a Petition, of which the text is given above, has been circulated and is being widely signed. The idea of the Petition came originally from the President of the Women's International League, Mrs. H. M. Swanwick, and the W.I.L. has undertaken responsibility for getting into touch with women.

The work has been encouraging—even inspiring—and has proved that there is a large and growing body of opinion in this country that supports the principle of pacific settlement of international disputes and is ready for a decisive step forward on the road to peace. Workers who at first hesitated to take petition forms, and doubted whether they could get the 25 signatures needed to complete one form, have found so ready a response that they are soon back for an additional supply.

The problem has been how to establish contact with the vast number of individuals necessary to make a Petition of effective proportions, and the ready help that has been given has been invaluable. On all hands we have come across the enthusiasm and enterprise that marked the later stages of the Suffrage movement, and it is interesting to find that so many of the keenest workers for peace served their apprenticeship in the suffrage cause. The same devotion, hopefulness, and confidence in the righteousness of the cause they are advocating animates them, and we are again using the same methods of reaching the people. Where we have branches we hear of open-air meetings, Petition shops are open, and door-to-door canvass is in progress. In country towns where there are isolated members a stall in the market is engaged, and buyer and seller pause in their business to give a thought to the question of peace. A worker in Darlington writes that she secured 600 signatures in less than a week, that the people were deeply interested in the Petition, that they read most carefully the posters with which the stall was decorated, took away leaflets, and in many cases went away to think about the matter, coming back later in the day to sign. Others carried forms back to their homes in the country, intending to bring back completed forms the following week.

There are yet ten days in which this particular phase of the work can be done, for the form must be returned to the National Council for the Prevention of War or to the League of Nations Union by 31st July. We will gladly send Petition forms and specimen of literature to any readers who apply to The Secretary, Women's International League, 55 Gower Street, W.C. 1.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

President: Miss ELEANOR RATHBONE, C.C., J.P. Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. SODDY.
Parliamentary Secretary: Mrs. HUBBACK.

Offices: 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.
Telephone: Victoria 6188.

GARDEN PARTY IN HONOUR OF DAME MILLICENT FAWCETT, G.B.E.

Among those who have promised to speak at the Garden Party to be held in honour of Dame Millicent Fawcett at Aubrey House on Thursday, 23rd July, are Viscountess Astor, M.P., the Lady Frances Balfour, Viscount Cecil of Chelwood (Parliamentary duties permitting), Mrs. Creighton, and Mrs. Oliver Strachey. Among the old friends of Dame Millicent's who will be present are Captain Wedgwood Benn, M.P., Lady Beilby, Dr. Janet Campbell, Mrs. George Cadbury, Lady Trustram Eve, Lord and Lady Emmott, the Right Hon. and Mrs. Arthur Henderson, Major Hills, J. Holford Knight, Esq., Lady Pollock, the Viscountess Rhondda, Dame Louise Samuel, D.B.E., Lady Shelley Rolls, Dr. Ethel Smyth, Mrs. Philip Snowden, and Dame Muriel Talbot.

The Entertainments Committee will be very grateful for any contributions of cakes, biscuits, etc., towards the tea. Will those who kindly contribute in this way specify the nature of their gift before 20th July, to Mrs. Claude Taylor, 1 Pembroke Studios, W. 8, and send cakes, etc., to Aubrey House, 11a Aubrey Walk, Kensington, W. 8, on the morning of 23rd July. Tickets, price 2s. 6d., may be had from Lady Pares, 32 Belsize Park Gardens, N.W. 3, Mrs. Clement Davies, 11 Vicarage Gate, W. 8, or the Secretary, 15 Dean's Yard, S.W. 1.

SUMMER SCHOOL.—25th AUGUST—8th SEPTEMBER.

The following is a time-table of lectures to be held at the Summer School at St. Hilda's Hall, Oxford. We should like to draw the attention of our readers to the exceptionally interesting subjects to be discussed. Application should be made to the Secretary, 15 Dean's Yard, S.W. 1.

FIRST WEEK.

- 26th Aug.—Legal Aid for Poor Persons, Mrs. Rackham, J.P. Abolition of the Solicitation Laws, Mrs. Bethune-Baker, J.P. Liquor (Popular Control) Bill, Viscount Astor.
27th Aug.—Treatment, Classification, and Psychology of Criminals, Mrs. L. Mesurier, R. Roper, Esq., Dr. Hamblin Smith. Capital Punishment, Miss Margery Fry, J.P.
28th Aug.—Recent Legislation on the Maintenance of Wives and Children, Miss Eleanor Rathbone, J.P. The Criminal Justice Bill, W. Clarke Hall, Esq., J.P. The Right of Private War, W. Arnold Forster, Esq.
29th Aug.—Smoke Abatement, Miss Marion Fitzgerald. The Licensing Laws, G. A. Bryson, Esq., J.P. Family Allowances, Miss Eleanor Rathbone, J.P.
30th Aug.—Women and the Ministry, Miss Picton-Turbervill. The Work of the International Labour Office, H. B. Butler, Esq., C.B.
31st Aug.—The Problem of Population, Professor Carr Saunders. Mrs. Stocks. Penal Reform and Experiments in other Countries, Mrs. Barrow Cadbury, J.P., Miss Margery Fry, J.P.

SECOND WEEK.

- 1st Sept.—Moneylending, Miss Caton. Women in Industry, Miss Constance Smith.
2nd Sept.—Restrictive Legislation of Women in Industry, Miss Helen Ward. The Function of Parties under Representative Government, Professor J. L. Stocks.
3rd Sept.—Birth Control, Dr. Marie Stopes (in favour), Dr. Isabel Pulteney (against). The Ideals of the Conservative Party, Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, D.B.E.
4th Sept.—Social Insurance, J. L. Cohen, Esq. Widows', Orphans', and Old Age Contributory Pensions Bill, Mrs. Hubback. The Ideals of the Liberal Party, W. T. Layton, Esq.
5th Sept.—The Dawes Report and International Finance, W. T. Layton, Esq. Training for Social Work, Miss Macadam. The Ideals of the Labour Party, H. N. Brailsford, Esq.
6th Sept.—Security and the Pact, Mrs. W. T. Layton.
7th Sept.—The Carlisle Scheme of State Management of the Liquor Trade, Captain Reiss. Housing, Captain Reiss.

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THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE CONFERENCE.

Although the B.C.L. for Equal Citizenship is still in its extreme youth—about two months old, as a matter of fact—it is a remarkable testimony to its infant vigour that one of the most interesting conferences of recent years was held under its auspices on 9th and 10th July at the Caxton Hall. Vital questions appertaining to the Equal Citizenship of Women in the British Commonwealth of Nations were dealt with, and both British and Overseas women realized more and more as the conference proceeded how much they could learn from each other and how usefully they could cooperate to help where help is needed and to work together for our common aims. Mrs. Corbett Ashby, President of the I.W.S.A., to whose able leadership the new League owes so much, presided at the opening session on the 9th, and a specially hearty welcome was given to that great statesman and old ally of the women's movement, Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, who gave the conference a most able address on Imperial Co-operation. "Political Equality"—the subject of the following session, brought interesting speeches from Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., and representatives from New Zealand (Miss Kane), Kenya Colony (Mrs. McGregor Ross), Irish Free State (Mrs. Despard), India (Mrs. Sen and Atiya Begum Fyze Rahamin), Australia (Mrs. Jones), Bermuda (Captain Misick), South Africa (Mrs. Johnstone Scott).

The afternoon session, presided over by our good friend the Viscount Astor, saw the conference discussing "An Equal Moral Standard," and from Miss Alison Neilans (Secretary of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene) came a most interesting and comprehensive survey of such questions in the British Commonwealth, followed by contributions from India (Miss Lotika Basu), New Zealand (Miss England), Bermuda (Miss Seon), West Australia (Miss Birt). On the 10th, under the presidency of Mrs. Britomarte James, the conference considered "The Nationality of Married Women."

The afternoon session, on "Economic Equality," presided over by Viscountess Rhondda, brought contributions from Mrs. Oliver Strachey, Mr. Joshi, Miss Hamel Smith, Miss Collinson, and Lady Chatterjee.

A very well attended luncheon was held between these sessions at the Criterion Restaurant, with our greatest leader, Dame Millicent Fawcett, G.B.E., in the Chair—the Guest of Honour—and speakers being the Rt. Hon. J. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P., the Viscountess Astor, M.P., Lord Meston, and Lady Chatterjee. Miss Collinson, to whose unwearying work and organizing ability the undoubted success of the conference is due, rounded up the proceedings by an explanation of the aims and objects of the B.C.L., and an earnest appeal for support.

The office of the B.C.L. is at 17 Buckingham Street, Adelphi, W.C. 2 (Telephone, Regent 4375).

On Monday a very successful garden party was held in the beautiful grounds of Bedford College for the members of the conference and friends, the speakers being Dame Millicent Fawcett, G.B.E., the Duchess of Atholl, M.P., and Miss Collinson.

CORRESPONDENCE.

STATE PURCHASE AT CARLISLE.

MADAM,—Having been absent from home, this is the first chance of replying to letters by R. L. Reiss and Mrs. Rackham, which appeared in your issue of 26th June.

In regard to the former's inquiry—my knowledge comes not only from Government statistics, but also from friends—three of whom have made careful inspections of the State-owned houses at Carlisle this year, visiting many of the less well-known, and mingling unnoticed with the ordinary customers during evening hours. People on the spot are apt to merely compare their own area with itself in former days, and hastily conclude that the improvement made is unique, not being aware of the greater progress towards sobriety that has been made by other towns, and, when deputations are personally conducted on a tour of inspection, they are likely to see the most favourable houses and form their opinion accordingly—hence the advantage of informal and unexpected visits to those less often seen during evening hours.

Now that Government statistics for the past few years tell against Carlisle, they are scornfully put aside by advocates of State Purchase, but Mr. Arthur Sherwell was formally reported as saying (when figures were more favourable to Carlisle): "Taken over a term of years for a particular town where no change has been made in the policy of the Watch Committee, or of the Chief Constable, or of the Magistrates, the convictions for drunkenness do give an approximately true indication of the increase or diminution of drunkenness," and so long as it was thought they favoured nationalization they were confidently quoted by Sir Edgar Sanders (late General Manager of the Control Board) and other advocates.

As for the large profits, in spite of fewer houses, the accommodation in others has been increased, and large profits mean large sales, whether obtained from few or many houses, which confirms the statement that the sale of drink and drunkenness resulting is not necessarily lessened by closing some public-houses in an area if the others are made more attractive and apparently more respectable (especially as in the case of Carlisle, with its added prestige of State ownership). The Trade realized this fact when they offered to "improve some houses and scrap many others." It is just a business proposition. The more perfect the spider's web, the more flies it is likely to catch.

No doubt meals are supplied at a few of the Carlisle improved public-houses, but Councillor Irving, of Workington, reported last year that he specially tested this point and found only eleven out of the fifty-seven actually provided food. When he inquired for it at the others, he was always referred elsewhere, and on 25th April this year the Rev. Jeans Courtney, of Wigton, visited the St. Nicholas Arms (formerly Denman House, and then used by Trade Union and Temperance bodies, free from intoxicants, but turned into a drink shop by the Control Board), and when he asked for food, was only offered cheese and biscuits! Is it because the profit from food is less than from alcohol that the supply of the former has gradually dwindled in the majority of houses that started by supplying it under Government ownership in Carlisle?

In spite of assertions that the sale of drink is not pushed under State management, it is clear from the late General Manager's letter of 3rd July,

1919, that sales have been a leading consideration, supplies to clubs of spirits and beer far exceeding the allowance nominally permitted, and it shows the sale of beer was pressed by this gentleman with all the keenness of an ordinary brewer.

Mrs. Rackham dwells much on the density of population in Carlisle as being a handicap for sobriety, but of the other county boroughs of England and Wales at least fifty-four of the more sober boroughs were more densely crowded than Carlisle, yet a lower percentage of women were convicted of drunkenness for the three years 1921-23. "Young men and women are apt to forget," as the Rev. Jeans Courtney remarks, "that sitting on a seat with G.R. marked on it does not make alcoholic liquors less intoxicating."

A. SCOTT.

MAISONS TOLÉRÉES.

MADAM,—In reply to Miss F. K. Powell's letter, may I point out that Fiaux's book on the *maisons de tolerance* was published nearly 40 years ago and that, so far as I am aware, there are no "closed" houses allowed in France to-day. Nor do I believe there is any evidence that France "permits young girls to be shut up in these licensed houses." So far as Strasbourg is concerned, the women, far from being shut up in the houses, were rushing out, half-clad, into the streets telling the waiting queue of boy gymnasts (mostly aged between 16 and 18 and some of 13 to 15) to be "patient." That is what the State officially recognizes and permits when it allows *maisons tolérées*. Does it greatly matter whether the women in these houses are French or English? The Abolitionist Federation is an international body and it gives us no particular satisfaction to know—if, indeed, it is true—that in French licensed houses there are now only Frenchwomen allowed.

Miss Powell seems to have missed the main point about the Strasbourg scandal. May I emphasize it again? By the French regulations, which lay down the conditions under which *maisons tolérées* may exist, no man under 18 is allowed to be received in such a house. The morals police were specially begged by citizens to enforce this order at Strasbourg, yet for three nights not one policeman came near the street. Certain people have devised a new regulation—to prohibit the employment of foreign women in these houses—and France has accepted it. Does anyone who really knows the licensed house system suppose that this regulation is any more likely to be enforced than the one mentioned above if it proves inconvenient to any of the interests concerned? Even if the regulation were effective, does Miss Powell seriously think that the exclusion of a few foreign women from licensed houses will destroy the houses? France has gracefully yielded a point of no practical importance, but she has kept the licensed houses and the regulation system. To Abolitionists that is a defeat and not a victory.

I may add that the WOMAN'S LEADER has kindly promised to publish next week some notes and a letter from this Association which deal in more detail with the question of the "foreign women" regulation, which Hungary, Belgium, and France have adopted.

ALISON NEILANS,
Hon. Sec., Association for Moral and Social Hygiene.

WOMEN'S HOLIDAY FUND.

MADAM,—Our appeal for the Women's Holiday Fund this year is a very special one, as we are trying to raise enough money to buy a house in which to carry on efficiently that branch of our work which has hitherto been so eminently successful—the Seaside Home for Mothers and Babies. This means an outlay which cannot be reckoned at less than 14,000.

If all those who are enjoying a holiday, or are eagerly looking forward to the moment when they can do so, will spare a small percentage of the money they propose to spend on themselves for the sake of those who without their help will get no holiday at all, the money will soon be collected.

All contributions, great or small, will be gratefully acknowledged by our Secretary, Miss Cooper, Women's Holiday Fund, 76 Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W. 1.

Yours faithfully,
A. F. LONDON. F. H. CHAMPNEYS.
MANUEL J. BIDWELL. HELEN A. POWNALL
J. SCOTT LIDGETT. (Chairman of Executive Committee).

The Faith of a Modern Churchman.

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COMING EVENTS.

GUILDHOUSE W.C.S.

JULY 20. 3 p.m. Visit to Westminster Abbey.

INTERNATIONAL PRISON CONGRESS.

AUGUST 3-8. International Prison Congress in London. For particulars, apply Secretary to the Prison Commission, Home Office, Whitehall, S.W. 1.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

JULY 23. 3.30 p.m. Garden Party in honour of Dame Millicent Fawcett, G.B.E., at Aubrey House, 11a Aubrey Walk, Kensington, W.8 (by kind permission of the Misses Alexander).
AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 8.—Summer School for Magistrates and Citizens at St. Hilda's Hall, Oxford. For particulars apply Secretary, N.U.S.E.C., 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.
Croydon W.C.A. JULY 29. 3 p.m. Miss Beaumont on "All-in Insurance."

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