

# THE WOMAN'S LEADER

## AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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### NOTES AND NEWS.

#### Wills, Intestacies, Family Maintenance Bill.

This Bill, which will be coming up for its second reading in charge of Miss Eleanor Rathbone (Independent Member for the Combined English Universities), on Friday, February 20, is being backed by Members of Parliament of all Parties, including several lawyers. A considerable body of support of the principles embodied in the Bill has been made evident both in the Press, among associations of lawyers, and among Members of Parliament. Both the Prime Minister and Mr. Lloyd George, on previous occasions, have expressed their support. The Bill, it will be remembered, provides that a Testator must leave the interest of one-third of his property where there are children, and one-half where there are no children, to the surviving spouse, provided that in no case that a share shall bring in an income of more than £2,000 a year of the spouse. The Bill further provides that one-third of the life-interest of the estate where there is a surviving spouse, and one-half where there is none, shall be left to the dependent children, that is to say, children for two years after they leave off having a full time education, or are physically or mentally incapable of earning a living. In any case, however, the share for one child is not to exceed £300 a year. All those interested are urged to ask their Members to be in their place on the day—as our readers will appreciate that the danger to a Private Member's Bill during a second reading is absence rather than opposition.

#### The Registrar-General's Report.

The Annual Report of the Registrar-General for 1929 has just been published, and contains many points of extreme interest. Thus, in 1929 the marriage-rate was higher than at any time since 1921, and was even higher than the general level of pre-war days. At the same time the average age of marriage is rising, which is, of course, one of the factors accounted for in the birth-rate, which, at 16.3 per 1,000 of the population is .4 per 1,000 less than has ever been recorded. The Registrar himself gives expression to the opinion that we have reached the bottom of the trough as regards the birth-rate. We see no reason to share this view, in that we know only too well that a considerable section of the married women of the country are still not possessed of effective knowledge on contraception. Infant mortality had risen to 74 per 1,000 from the record figure of 65 in the year before.

This was undoubtedly accounted for by the influenza epidemic of last February, when that disease was followed in so many instances by pneumonia and many other troubles. This epidemic is the chief single factor accounting for the increase in the death-rate on the previous year. The rise in the average age of the population is shown by the increase in the death of numbers of people over 70; in fact, during 1929, nearly 100 centenarians died.

#### Living Wage Bill.

On Friday, 6th February, Mr. Maxton moved the second reading of the Living Wage Bill, which provides for the payment of a minimum wage to all workers. The Bill, which was extremely vague and obviously only introduced for purposes of propaganda, would have allowed a far more valuable discussion if it had been couched in more definite terms. Thus, as was pointed out by Miss Rathbone, no mention was made in the definition of a minimum wage as to how many the wage was to support. She proceeded to show along lines familiar to supporters of Family Allowances that a minimum wage sufficiently large to support a big family could not be paid to all workers out of the present National Income; that it was essential, therefore, that the children of the workers should be provided for by allowances, leaving any minimum wage that might be arranged to cover the needs of a man and his wife only. Although Miss Rathbone, along these lines, and other speakers using other arguments, tried to bring the discussion down to solid earth, they did not succeed, and it was felt that those who desired to raise the standard of living of the workers by this method, missed a valuable opportunity of more effective propaganda.

#### Thunder on the Left—

Storms continue to play round the unbowed head of the Minister for Labour. Stalybridge, it appears, is still unconvinced that it is not the business of the National Exchequer to confer perpetual pensions upon young women who do not wish to leave home when suitable work is available outside their own area and none is available within it. Accordingly the Mayor, strongly supported by the local Council of Christian Congregations, has repeated his objections to the stoppage of unemployment benefit to women who are unwilling to accept canteen work; nor does the unanimous verdict of a committee of independent women investigators that such work is eminently suitable, shake his faith in the right of young women to remain at home, if need be, at the Government's expense. Nobody, of course, has questioned their right to remain at home at their own or their parent's expense. In her reply to such representations, Miss Bondfield expresses the view that it is "a matter for regret that only two young women out of fifty in Stalybridge, for whom there is little prospect of further employment in their own occupations, should have been prepared to make the journey to Manchester at no cost to themselves in order to consider with representatives of the institutes the possibility of obtaining agreeable and eminently suitable employment." We must confess that we, too, find it "a matter for regret." There was a time when Lancashire mill girls boasted a certain independence of character. It is strange that they should now share the view of the Stalybridge Council of Christian Congregations that the moral dangers of economic independence outside the locality of their birth, require that they shall be kept at home in enforced idleness at the public expense.

#### —and Thunder on the Right.

Meanwhile, in her efforts on behalf of overworked and underpaid employees in the catering trades, Miss Bondfield has met with an unexpected check from the Judiciary. Last week the King's Bench Divisional Court upheld the objections made by certain catering firms and employers' organizations to her

proposed Order under the Trade Boards Act, to regulate wages in that trade. In giving judgment on behalf of the employers, the Lord Chief Justice held that the Minister had, in her draft Order, "created a trade by definition," and that it was not within her competence under the Act to do this. In the draft Order the catering trade was defined as "all work performed in or in connection with a catering establishment." In other words, whatever might be the occupation of the individual employed, he came within the Order if he performed work in connection with a catering establishment. But even if it be assumed that there was a trade called the catering trade, this draft Order offended in two respects, because it did not refer to the whole of the catering trade, but only to certain parts, and secondly, that it might include much that was not catering at all. To the outsider, this legal objection to the Minister's definition of the catering trade may appear to be strangely inconsistent with the acceptance of certain industrial categories to which trade board machinery has already been applied. That varying views may be held even by those who are not outsiders is demonstrated by the determination of the Minister—acting presumably with the support of the Ministry's legal advisers—to appeal against this judgment. We shall follow the fortunes of this appeal with the deepest interest, for the health and happiness of many hundreds of inarticulate women workers hangs upon its result.

#### Death Penalty and the Expectant Mother.

Miss Picton-Turbervill introduced a Bill on Wednesday, the 4th, under the Ten Minutes' Rule, in order to abolish the passing of the death sentence on expectant mothers convicted of murder. Miss Picton-Turbervill pointed out that under the present law the expectant mother so convicted cannot be hanged until after the child is born, and that in point of fact her sentence is practically always commuted to that of imprisonment for life; the death sentence in such a case having not been carried out for seventy years. Miss Picton-Turbervill based her plea mainly on the shock to the mother and on the possible harm to the unborn child. The Bill was passed unanimously, and there is every hope that it will pass into law. While we share the hope that this will happen, we feel that this Bill only deals with one small aspect of the question of the abolition of capital punishment. There are many arguments, as our readers know, in support of the abolition of the death penalty in a multitude of cases, of which the expectant mother's is one. Should, however, the smaller reform be carried out, and the larger one be delayed, the law would be open to the charge of inviting any woman who wished to commit murder and not to pay the ultimate penalty, to become pregnant. We hope soon to publish an article on the whole question of capital punishment, but in the meantime we would congratulate Miss Picton-Turbervill on her having seized the psychological moment to ensure the success of her Bill.

#### The Case of Mrs. Wise.

In the meantime we hear that Mrs. Wise, the murder of whose child was the occasion of Miss Picton-Turbervill's Bill, has given birth to twins. In the various morals which have been drawn from her pitiable case we have never seen reference to what appears to us the most important of all, viz., the curious fact that no question appears to have been raised as to why her husband and the father of the murdered child were not contributing to the support of the children. Surely if ever a responsibility for a crime rested on shoulders other than those of the one who perpetrated it, it is in a case like this where the woman was left to struggle single-handed with the problem of the support of her children.

#### Women Candidates.

We watch with great interest the fight at East Islington. The fact that there are two women candidates makes it fairly possible that one will be returned. Both have had experience of public work, Mrs. Manning as President of the National Union of Teachers, and Miss Cazalet as a member of the London County Council. Both are interested in many of the causes for which this paper stands. What calls for comment, however, is the fact that not once in the Press relating to this by-election have we seen reference made to the sex of the candidates. This, indeed, means that the presence in Parliament of women as Members of Parliament is now accepted, and that the candidates will, no doubt, be judged on the merits of their respective policies, and that they will neither lose nor gain votes on account of being women.

#### Birmingham Women Police.

The report of the activities of the Birmingham Women Police was presented at a meeting of the Watch Committee last week,

when many tributes to their work were paid. The report stated that of the six police women, one was a full-time Court matron, and another was the relief matron at the lock-up; of the others, they had helped with over 4,000 cases, either visiting girls on complaints of their parents or friends; finding work for women and girls and taking people who were ill and destitute to institutions; providing food and clothing; finding missing girls, and in general, giving much wise advice. How excellent it would be if the Birmingham Chief Magistrate could convince the Home Office Police Council, who are at present holding up the appointment of women police being made compulsory, of the need for their activities.

#### Woman Hours.

All those who care for the well-being of working mothers will follow with interest and sympathy the experiment of the Manchester Jewish Hospital in organizing a system of appointment bookings for out-patients. Perhaps because it has no money valuation, the time of the working mother is habitually treated as a negligible factor, and the number of fruitless and tedious "woman hours" spent in the waiting-rooms of out-patient departments has never yet been seriously regarded as an element of national waste. But the Manchester Jewish Hospital has, at any rate, decided so to regard it, and last year, largely, we understand, on the initiative of Mr. F. Barnes, the General Superintendent, a system of booking was instituted. It involves the organization of an appointments bureau, by which tickets are issued, in accordance with a booking plan based on the estimated speed at which patients will be dealt with. A *Manchester Guardian* correspondent reports that the system is working with unqualified success, that time spent by patients in waiting their turn is being saved at the rate of over 200,000 hours a year, and that if the system could be extended to all hospitals in the Manchester area alone, an annual saving of something like 2,500,000 hours might be effected. Clearly here is a matter on which women's organizations might take up arms; for the worst sufferer from out-patient department delays is, as a matter of fact, the working mother, who is often airily invited to go herself, or take a child for treatment, with little or no reference to what may happen to her work at home during her absence.

#### ITEMS OF INTEREST.

##### Equality in Holland.

Dutch women are to be heartily congratulated on having succeeded in getting their Parliament to pass a Bill by which wives are entitled legally to a proportion of their husband's earnings for the upkeep of the household. The status of women in Holland has thereby been considerably improved, and English wives who still have to register themselves as of "no occupation" or "married" may well envy their Dutch sisters who can count themselves among the number of those professionally occupied.

##### Votes for Women in Japan.

We are glad to note that national suffrage for Japanese women appears to be in sight. The Government has introduced a Bill to grant women of 25 years of age equal rights with men in elections for the city, town, and village assemblies, and its speedy passage into law is expected.

##### Medal for Miss Johnson.

Miss Amy Johnson has been awarded the president's Gold Medal by the Society of Engineers for her paper entitled "The attention that I gave to Jason's engines during my flight."

##### Resignation of Mdlle Bonnevie.

We regret to note that Mdlle Bonnevie, who had represented Norway at the Committee of Intellectual Co-operation of the League of Nations since 1922, has resigned, which leaves Madame Curie the only woman on the Committee.

##### Amanda in Real Life.

Mr. Bernard Shaw has familiarized us with the idea of a woman Postmaster-General in the nineteen-sixties, but in the present year of grace we hear that a Turkish Woman, Madame Server Ali Hanom, has been appointed Directress of the post offices of Stamboul. She is the first woman in the world to occupy such a position.

**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.

#### WHAT MANCHESTER THOUGHT LAST WEEK.

A significant resolution stands on the agenda paper of the forthcoming Council of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. It stands in the name of the Executive Committee, and takes the place of the resolution which in previous years has called upon the Minister of Health to allow local authorities to give advice on birth control to married women whose health renders it desirable. This year, however, the Executive proposes that the Council shall "note with satisfaction the change in the policy of the Minister of Health . . ." and urges affiliated Societies of the Union to "bring pressure to bear on their local authorities to make use of their powers and to send up suitable schemes."

The resolution refers, of course, to *Memo. 153, M.C.W.*, issued last July, in which the Ministry of Health outlines the conditions under which it is prepared to sanction schemes for the provision of birth control advice by local authorities. The point is, of course, that now at long last it is prepared to sanction them. The discreet but persistent agitation by women's organizations, both party and non-party, during the past few years, has done its work. A step forward has been made, and once again a familiar resolution drops from the agenda paper of the N.U.S.E.C. for the best possible reason: that its purpose has been served.

But what next? The new resolution answers that question in the only possible way. The Ministry of Health was asked to take certain action in order that local authorities should be free to act. Well—now they are free to act, and it is up to the organizations which demanded that freedom, to see that it is used. The struggle has been transferred, as it were, from the national front to several hundred local fronts. Moreover, it has become more concrete. Operating on the local front it is not merely a question of propaganda and general argument in favour of the desirability of making certain advice available to certain people—though that may still be necessary where local authorities are reluctant to move—it is also a question of considering administrative possibilities and framing definite schemes within the somewhat vague terms of *Memo. 153*. Shall the information be given through the machinery of the existing Maternity and Child Welfare Centres, "at a separate session and under conditions such as will not disturb the normal and primary work of the Centre?" Or shall it be given under the Public Health Acts, which empower local authorities "to provide clinics at which medical advice and treatment would be available for women suffering from gynaecological conditions?"

It appears that different local authorities have different views on this administrative question—views which are doubtless governed by different local conditions and personnel. But the fact remains, that already a surprisingly large number of local authorities are getting to work on the matter, and have at any rate determined to do something. The danger is, of course, that unless there is a well-informed and active body of opinion in their area, it may stop at that, and practical administrative problems may never be seriously tackled. Hence the urgency of the N.U.S.E.C.'s call to its constituent societies. Meanwhile, among those authorities which have taken, at any rate, a

#### NOTES FROM WESTMINSTER.

Agriculture not only *should* be a tranquil subject. It is a tranquil subject—in Parliament, nowadays. I suppose that in the stormy days of the Corn Laws it may have been otherwise. But now, notwithstanding dumped cereals and Danish butter and the "diabolical fertility of the Chinese hen," something of the atmosphere of the English countryside seems to diffuse itself over the House of Commons when it settles down, as it has done for most of the days of this week, to discuss the closing stages of the Agricultural Land (Utilization) Bill or the opening stages of the Agricultural Marketing Bill. Whether this is due to the genial personality of the Minister (Dr. Christopher Addison), with his usually smiling countenance and thatch of thick silver hair, or to the nature of the subject, I do not know; but even the names of the Members who take part seem to fit their rural constituencies as though Anthony Trollope had invented them for the purpose. I open at random my Hansard of a day's agricultural debate and there I see the Arcadian reflections of Colonel Lane-Fox, Sir J. Lamb, Sir E. Shepperson, Mr. Perry, Mr. Alpess, Colonel Ruggles-Brise and so forth. The very humour becomes bucolic. There is one of these county gentlemen who has a way of pronouncing "beer" ("Bee-ah") which

preliminary decision, we find Bethnal Green, Brighton, Gillingham, Edmonton, Leicester, Lincoln, Oldham, Poplar, Portsmouth, Rotherham, Salford, Shoreditch, Warwickshire, and Worthing. But the list is not complete, for every day new decisions are being taken and new plans laid. And one such decision, taken on Wednesday of last week, seems peculiarly worthy of note, for it concerns one of the largest county borough areas in the United Kingdom, and is notable first for the practical precision of its terms, and secondly for the crushing force of opinion by which it was endorsed. We refer to the adoption by the Manchester City Council, with a majority of 71 votes to 18, of a report drafted by the Medical Officer of Health recommending the establishment of two birth control clinics under the auspices of the Health Committee. The report definitely rejects the possibility of doing this work through the machinery of the Maternity and Child Welfare Centres on the ground that it would expose them to adverse criticism. It is admitted that such criticism may not be justified, but "uninformed criticism would be as detrimental as intelligent opposition." The M.O.H., therefore, recommends that such work be done by the obstetrical and gynaecological departments of two large hospitals administered by the Health Committee under the Local Government Act, 1929. The "provision now recommended will thus not stand out definitely as a birth control clinic, but will be a proper and integral part of the medical aid at these hospitals." The clinics thus established would, the report adds, "be fed from the maternity and child welfare centres and the maternity and child welfare department generally, and also from general medical sources—practitioners and hospitals." But here follows a limitation about which we feel certain qualms. "No patient would be dealt with who did not come from medical sources." It is true—at least experience at a voluntary birth control clinic in the Manchester area suggests that it is true—that, in fact, most women seeking birth control information on medical grounds do in fact come from medical sources. But not all. There are some who come on their own initiative, suspecting that all is not well with their health. Others have been treated by doctors or midwives, who by reason of ignorance or conscientious objections (the two are often strangely confused) would be unlikely to give such a medical recommendation. It would be defeating the ends of the Manchester M.O.H. if such cases were to elude the scheme. Therefore, we feel that this particular limitation is redundant. It should be for the medical officer at the municipal clinic to determine whether or no a particular married woman is suitable for treatment, irrespective of how that woman manages to find her way to the source of expert and disinterested advice. For it must always be remembered that in so doing she has in all probability run the gauntlet of much advice which is neither expert nor disinterested, but which is readily open to her if other channels are closed.

But it is perhaps invidious to mingle a note of criticism with our cordial acclamation of a bold and business-like scheme. May we venture to hope that what Manchester thought last week, Birmingham, and many another timorous local authority, may think the day after to-morrow.

has taken the fancy of the Labour Members and in the smallest hours of Wednesday's all-night sitting they could be heard chanting the name of this favourite or of another whom they have dubbed "the Ploughboy", till the Speaker gave in to their desire. I rather like the House when it is in this rollicking mood, though I suppose it would shock a serious critic of Parliament. It has something of *V adorable jeunesse* about it.

On Friday the green benches were more thickly populated than is usual on Private Members' days to hear James Maxton propound his Living Wage Bill. Nothing bucolic about him, no plodding over homely mother earth; rather a beating of dark wings against a stormy sky. The Bill presented by his group seems a gallant attempt to assert the right of the workers to a decent standard of life as a first charge on the national income. It can be, and was, supported by many respectable economic arguments and if it flung a defiance in the teeth of Treasury experts, it could claim the authority of some leaders in all parties as well as of some economist experts for the view that the difficulty of the moment and the chief source of unemployment is to be found in lack of spending power in the hands of the people, rather than in lack of capital available for enterprise. Mr. Maxton





## COMING EVENTS.

## B.B.C.

*Tuesdays*: 10.45-11 a.m. "Family Budgets," by representative Housewives. 17th February: A Professional Woman.

*Wednesdays*: 10.45-11 a.m. 18th February. The Week in Westminster, Miss Lloyd George.

*Wednesdays*: 7.25 p.m. The Health of the Worker.

*Fridays*: 6 p.m. "Yesterdays and To-days." 13th February: Mrs. Creighton.

*Fridays*: 8.30 p.m. "The Treasures of Persia." 13th February: Leigh Ashton.

*Saturdays*: 10.45-11 a.m. Mrs. Oliver Strachey: "Books about People."

## BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE.

*25th February*. 5.15 p.m. 50 Porchester Terrace, W. 2 (by permission of Hon. Mrs. Franklin), Mrs. Underhill (Mrs. Starr): "Medical Work in Kashmir, Lesser Tibet, and Afghan Frontier." Lantern lecture. Tickets from 17 Buckingham Street, W. C.

## LITTLE THEATRE.

8.30 p.m. "Happy and Glorious," a Suffrage play.

## MORLEY COLLEGE FOR WORKING MEN AND WOMEN.

61 Westminster Bridge Road, S.E. "Science To-day and To-morrow." *17th February*. 8 p.m. Joseph Needham, Esq.: "Biology."

## NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL HYGIENE.

*19th February*. 5.15 p.m. 11 Chandos Street, W. 1. Professor Marcourt: "Psychology of Education."

## NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

*11th-12th-13th March*. Annual Council Meeting, King George's Hall, Great Russell Street, W.C. 1.

*Wednesday, 11th March*. 2-5 p.m. Business Session. 8.45 p.m., Reception King's College for Women, Campden Hill.

*Thursday, 12th March*. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Business Session.

*Friday, 13th March*. 10 a.m.-12.45 p.m., Business Session. 1 p.m., Public Luncheon, Criterion Restaurant. 3 p.m.-5 p.m., Townswomen's Guild Conference. Tickets from 15 Dean's Yard. All sessions open to the public.

## Edinburgh W.C.A.

*18th February*. 8 p.m. 116 George Street. Miss Spence Allan: "Social Insurance and What it Means."

## Kensington and Paddington S.E.C.

*19th February*. 4 p.m. Pembroke Lodge, Pembroke Gardens, W. 8. Lady Trustram Eve: "Work of the L.C.C."

## Petersfield S.E.C.

*24th February*. 7 p.m. Sandylea, Heath Road. Miss Nina Boyle: "Slavery."

## PERSIAN ART EXHIBITION.

*To 28th February*. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Royal Academy.

## WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

*19th February*. 4.30 p.m. Minerva Club, Brunswick Square. Miss Grace Ellison: "The Awakening of the Jugo-Slav Woman."

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**VEGETARIAN** Guest House;  $\frac{1}{4}$  hour by tram from centre of Bath; central heating; large garden; fine views; boating and bathing in River Avon.—Misses Tollemache, Batheaston, Bath.

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**WESTMINSTER** (146 Ebury Street).—To Let, two first-floor Rooms, unfurnished; own bath, etc.; rent £85 per annum inclusive.—Apply, Messrs. Ray & Cheny, Estate Agents, 23 Ebury Street.

**COMFORTABLE** Apartments near sea; sheltered valley; every convenience.—Gregory, "Lynwood," Combe Martin, Devon.

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**MRS. HUBBACK** recommends furnished house, beautiful part Skye coast; 5 bedrooms, 2 sittingrooms; bathing, fishing, walking; very low rent.—Write Campbell, Table View, Cudmore, Hartosh, Dunegan, Skye.

## POST WANTED.

**AU Pair**.—Mrs. Corbett Ashby would like to hear of English family willing to take French girl (18) for three months (June-August); Professor's daughter; anxious to learn English; French in exchange.—Write, Mme Professeur Laville, Lycée Perier, Boulevard Perier, Marseille.

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## FOR SALE AND WANTED.

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## MISCELLANEOUS.

**RECOMMENDED** by Mrs. Oliver Strachey. Swiss family receives paying guests. Large comfortable house and garden near Lake of Geneva. French lessons arranged if desired. Mile Reitzel, le Prieuré, Tour-de-Peilz (Vevey).

## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

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**FELLOWSHIP SERVICES**, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 15th February: Miss Maude Royden.

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