

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

The Age of Marriage Bill.

After a magnificent fight Lord Buckmaster was beaten in a debate in the House of Lords on 12th March by 37 votes to 29 on a motion moved by Lord Darling that the Age of Marriage Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. This proposal inevitably spells delay and renders *nil* the chances of the Bill's passing this session. Arguments in support of a Select Committee were brought forward partly by those who disliked the raising of the legal minimum age of marriage as high as 16, and partly by those who honestly—though mistakenly—thought the issue involved complicated and difficult. In vain did Lord Buckmaster and his supporters point out its simplicity. "All that this bill was attempting to do," said Lord Reading, "was to enact that that which was already a criminal offence should not be rendered an act for which no punishment, no penalty, could be imposed if it was cloaked by marriage." There is no doubt at all that this Bill will pass in time, probably next session, but it is unfortunate that a combination of ill-will and of muddled thinking should lead unnecessarily to an additional number of about 30 spoilt lives, and to this country's still being open to the taunt of the whole world that as regards our minimum legal marriage age we are found in a group with Greece, Poland, Siam, and Cuba, and are even well below Turkey.

Nationality of Married Women.

We are grateful to Miss Wilkinson for having raised the question of the nationality of married women in the House of Commons by means of the Aliens Bill, which she introduced under the Ten Minutes Rule on 6th March. The Bill provides that a British woman who marries an alien should not thereby lose her nationality unless she wishes to do so. The same applies to a foreign woman marrying an Englishman. The Bill is retrospective as regards British women who would automatically resume their British nationality if they had been married to aliens, unless they made a declaration to the contrary. The Home Secretary stated that he was the Chairman of a sub-committee on nationality of the last Imperial Conference, on which all the Dominions were represented, and that the Home Government and all but one of the Dominions were entirely in favour of the proposal. Because this one Dominion had stood out, the sub-committee had come to the conclusion that, as it was undesirable to have different nationality laws throughout the Empire, the matter should stand over until the next Imperial Conference, when it was hoped that this Dominion would fall into line. The Government, he stated, were entirely in favour of the Bill. The following day, the Home Secretary had to admit that his memory had played him false, and that there had been considerable divergence of view on the Nationality Committee

of the Imperial Conference, as the result of which the whole matter had been referred to a Committee of Experts which had not yet presented its report. We should remind our readers that the question of the nationality of married women is also to be discussed at the forthcoming Conference on the Codification of International Law. We hope that it will not be very long before not only the British Empire but also all members of the League of Nations will recognize the justice of allowing a woman to retain or to change her nationality as if she were a man.

The Local Government Bill.

In the House of Lords the question of the substitution of the block for the percentage grant for maternity and child welfare was once again raised. Able speeches in defence of the change were made by the Bishop of Southwark, Lord Buckmaster, and Lord Arnold. But all in vain! The specious but now only too familiar arguments were brought forward on the other side by Lord Onslow, speaking on behalf of the Government, and the amendment was defeated. Next week our local government correspondent will bring the situation with regard to the Bill up to date.

The Wills and Intestacies (Family Maintenance) Bill.

The above Bill referred to in our columns last week was introduced into the House of Lords on Wednesday, 6th March. Lord Astor does not intend that it shall be debated this session, but he introduced the Bill in its amended form for purposes of discussion.

Where Communism Breeds.

We referred in anything but favourable terms in a recent issue to the Report of the Ministry of Health on health conditions in South Wales. An impression obtained from a personal visit to a town with a population of 9,000 souls is given in a letter to *The Times* on Tuesday of this week. The writer, Mr. J. S. Hoyland, whose name is not known to us, states that he has recently returned from India where he was a famine charge officer in the last serious famine in the Central Provinces. He makes a very unfavourable comparison between the extraordinary efficiency of modern relief famine organization in India and the state of affairs in South Wales. He paints a melancholy picture of a town whose council is so deep in debt that it cannot afford to employ labour even to clean the streets "which are in an appalling condition owing to recent blizzards". This in a town in which only about 400 men and women, including teachers, clerks, etc., are employed out of 9,000! We cannot blame the helpless local Council but can inefficiency in emergency relief administration go further? We urge our readers to read Mr. Hoyland's letter for themselves (*Times*, Tuesday, 12th March, p. 12) and to write at once to their Member of Parliament. Space does not allow us here to dwell on his very damaging indictment of the position. He makes a new point when he describes the highly dangerous conditions under which the married men extract coal from mines devoid of any safeguarding appliances. But at least we are thankful that they have coal. Mr. Hoyland is not impressed by the transference proposals. He tells us that the valleys are full of stories of men who are stranded in London or other parts of the country. He reiterates the plea made by others before for the absolutely essential road reconstruction which would employ thousands of men. He speaks with the greatest respect of the demeanour of the miners and says he saw nothing of the moral enervation referred to in the Ministry of Health report. But—and let our Conservative readers note that *but*—he gained a vivid impression of how Communism breeds in such conditions.

The End of a Chapter.

Last week's annual council of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, which we describe in greater detail on page 44 marks a definite chapter-ending in the history of the women's movement. It concludes both the decade of partial women's suffrage and the Presidency of Miss Rathbone. We have spoken at various times of the characteristics of that decade: of what partial enfranchisement of women has done, and what it has left undone. Something remains, however, to be said about the change of presidency. The achievement of partial women's suffrage in 1918 was "an obstinate hill to climb," and the N.U.S.E.C. climbed it under the leadership of Dame Millicent Fawcett, whose tenacity, wisdom, resilience of spirit, and shrewd judgment of persons and events will go down to history as indispensable factors making for victory. The subsequent phase of the suffrage movement, however, was not so much an "obstinate hill to climb" as a tangled landscape to survey. It was not so much the rock strewn upward gradient of the road which made demands upon leadership, as the discernment and determination of direction. For this task, Dame Millicent's successor, Miss Eleanor Rathbone, possessed a peculiar qualification: the capacity for speculative constructive thought. Thus the movement found in her a leader who was prepared to give it a philosophy worked out in terms of practical policy, at a time of somewhat bewildering social and political fluidity. Her ten years of office have thus left a very definite mark which is not confined to her own particular organization. It is always difficult to assess personal contributions to genuinely democratic movements; nevertheless it is safe to say that two characteristics of the N.U.S.E.C.'s post-war work are largely the product of Miss Rathbone's leadership. The first is the peculiar type of scrutiny which it applies on behalf of women to social legislation: a scrutiny whose effectiveness depends on accurate knowledge of the social structure combined with imaginative perception of how changes are likely to work themselves out indirectly. The second is the broadening of the old demand for equal rights to include such large structural alterations in the body politic as shall provide a more adequate field for the advancement of women.

The Beginning of a Chapter.

By an uncontested nomination, Mrs. Corbett Ashby succeeds Miss Rathbone as President of the N.U.S.E.C. The fact that she already fills the office of President to the International Suffrage Alliance as well as to the Women's Liberal Federation, the latter of which, however, she is about to vacate, might seem to suggest that Mrs. Corbett Ashby is prepared to make a kind of speciality in presidencies. The explanation is, of course, that she possesses certain qualities which stimulate a universal demand for her services in this particular capacity. Outstanding among these are a fine balance of judgment and a peculiar graciousness of personality. It may be surmised that it was the first of these qualities in combination with her long and gallant record of suffrage activity, which ruled out of court any possible compunction in associating the leadership of the N.U.S.E.C. with one whose party affinities are well known. Meanwhile, the task which lies ahead of her as a feminist leader is an exceptionally interesting one. Like her predecessor, she takes up the presidency of the N.U.S.E.C. on the morrow of a new—in this case a final—instalment of women's suffrage. The annual council which called her to its presidency was occupied at the same time with the reconditioning of its own resources, with a view to using the instrument of equal franchise for the attainment of equal citizenship in its widest sense. The long personal association and community of outlook which exist between the outgoing and incoming presidents, suggest that the policy of the future will be a continuous development of the policy of the present. But the future holds new problems and new opportunities and we venture to offer Mrs. Corbett Ashby hearty good wishes and a promise of loyal co-operation in the work which lies ahead of her as the trusted successor of Dame Millicent Fawcett and Miss Eleanor Rathbone.

Franchise Anomalies.

An interesting question touching the rights of absent voters has arisen at Hornsey, in connection with the revision of the list last week. The claims of four prospective Liberal candidates to be admitted as absent voters, were allowed by the registration officer. Those of their wives were dismissed. One of the wives, Mrs. Neville Dixey, protested against the decision and is reported to have said that women should have equal rights with men in the matter. But for our part we cannot see that the registration

officer's decision implies any denial of equal rights, since Mrs. Dixey was apparently not herself a Parliamentary candidate. More dubious equity (though not of a kind which concerns women) seems to be involved in the contrast between the aforementioned decision, and that of the registration officer of Bala, who dismissed a similar claim made on behalf of Mr. David Williams, an engine driver, who is prospective Labour candidate for East Wolverhampton. In this case the application to be placed on the absent voter's list was disallowed on the ground that Parliamentary candidature did not come within the meaning of occupations, service, or employment, as covered by the Act.

Inequalities Suffered by Men.

A ridiculous case was heard before Mr. Justice McCardie, in which once again the absurdity of charging a husband for his wife's alleged torts, in this case one of slander, was vividly illustrated. A certain Mr. Hibbert, who had lived apart from his wife for many years, was charged together with her on account of slander she had put about. Surely it is time the law recognized that these ridiculous inequalities suffered by husbands under the law of coverture should be done away with. Equality between the sexes works both ways.

Status of Married Women in Egypt.

According to an account from the correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, a law has been passed during the last week which ameliorates to some extent the terribly subservient position of Egyptian wives. The measure gives women certain rights of divorce which they did not possess before and defines the position regarding the divorce oath. In the covering note signed by Admed Khashaba Pasha, Minister of Finance, it is pointed out that an Egyptian can divorce his wife by merely stating his wish thrice on separate occasions. There is no repudiating of the oath, which is valid when the husband is drunk. The present measure gives a woman the right of appeal to a judge if she has suffered wrong at the hands of her husband, and is considered by the Prime Minister to be a step in the right direction.

Quilt-making by Miners' Wives.

The Rural Industries Bureau is to receive a grant from the Coalfields Distress Fund to enable classes in quilt-making to be established at five centres in South Wales. The Bureau recently received a letter from a Durham miner's wife saying that the money she earned—about an average of £2 3s. a week—was the whole income of the family of five which included two invalids. The record of the Bureau of Sales and orders for quilts during the past six months has totalled about £1,200.

The Provision of Birth Control Clinics.

We have just received the Annual Report for 1927-8 of the Society for the Revision of Birth Control Clinics. It throws little light upon the technical progress of the birth control movement, none for instance on the measure of successful application of the methods in practice at the affiliated clinics. But the actual number of such clinics in operation is slowly increasing, and the year in review has added Rotherham to their number. One paragraph in the report refers to an analysis of the first 5,000 cases recorded at the Walworth clinic. Of these, 315 were found to be pregnant on a first visit and did not return, 18 sought advice for the cure of sterility, and 32, to whom contraceptive advice had been given, subsequently discontinued it in the desire for another child. In all but one of these last cases, the wanted child appeared. Of undesired pregnancies the report tells us nothing. Taking all the affiliated clinics together, we get a total of ten, at which 3,914 new cases have been dealt with during the year under review. The unaffiliated Liverpool Clinic, and the pioneer clinic, run on somewhat different lines by Dr. Marie Stopes, give us a round dozen centres at which working class mothers can be certain of obtaining expert and disinterested advice at a nominal cost. It is, as the Report is at pains to point out, an infinitesimal contribution to the need which exists. And we remain convinced that this need can only be satisfactorily met by allowing working mothers who desire such advice to obtain it from the grant-aided maternity and child welfare centres to which they would normally resort for counsel and help in their many-sided function of maternity.

STOP PRESS.

A deputation from the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship and other women's organizations on Reforms they wish to be included in the programme of the Liberal Party was received by Mr. Lloyd George on Tuesday evening. A full report will appear next week.

MORE LIGHT?

Since the publication in 1927 of a detailed but tentative report by a voluntary medical committee on *Medical Aspects of Contraception* (Martin Hopkinson, 10s. 6d.), there has, so far as we know been no expert pronouncement on the development of birth control technique. There has been an increase in the number of specialized clinics, working on known methods, and presumably accumulating, from week to week, valuable records of success or failure. But such records, as a by-product of practical endeavour, are necessarily incomplete; and the very purpose of the clinics prevents their full exploitation of experimental methods of trial and error. To-day, as when *Medical Aspects of Contraception* saw the light, the technique of birth control is in a raw stage. It is clumsy, it is far from fool-proof, so far as the general public is concerned it is the subject of widespread and harmful misapplication, and it is still unknown to large sections of the medical profession upon whom increasing demands are being made for enlightened and disinterested guidance. Clearly this is an unsatisfactory position. All the more so in view of the fact that the practical alternatives to expert medical guidance are in all probability a significant factor in the problem of maternal ill-health.

It is, however, satisfactory to know that the Birth Control Investigation Committee, an exclusively medical and scientific body under the chairmanship of Sir Humphrey Rolleston, is seriously at work on the subject, which it is approaching from a wholly objective point of view. To quote its own manifesto, it "serves no propagandist function, but desires only to establish facts and to publish these facts as a basis on which a sound public and scientific opinion can be built. The present division of medical opinion and the lack of any orthodox medical teaching on the subject are largely explained by the absence of available data, on which a sound opinion can be formed."

But how is this data to be made available? The experience of medical practitioners, more especially of those in touch with existing birth control clinics is not, perhaps, difficult to tap. But unfortunately the great mass of the data, data concerning failures as well as successes, blunders and disappointments as

LETTERS TO A NEW VOTER FROM AN OLD VOTER.—VI.

DEAR MADAM,

I will be somewhat less vituperative than I was last week, but I will not spare you another dose of pure feminism. I will only declare my intention that it shall be the last for some time to come. We know that there are still inequalities which hit women hard. Some of them are embodied in laws and written rules—they, of course, are the easiest kind to deal with. Some of them are embodied in prejudices and customs and are as difficult to fight as a London fog. It is your business, as a woman, to join with other women in fighting them. And I would add, in detecting them wherever they may exist: in complicated and apparently irrelevant pieces of legislation such as local government bills and national insurance schemes, in the administration of justice, in factory acts, educational arrangements, and conditions of entry for public or professional or industrial jobs. That is not always an easy business. It demands knowledge as to how things work, and imagination as to how they may work. And if you are disposed to take my advice and join forces with other women of all parties who are bent on detecting and fighting these inequalities wherever and whenever they occur, I would commend you to the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, which has had considerable practice in this task, and has pursued it in the past not without success—as your own vote bears witness!

SOMETHING MORE THAN EQUALITY.

But the fact remains that equality of law and opportunity is not enough. You are probably familiar with the old fable of the fox who having invited a stork to dine with him, offered his guest *equal* access to a flat saucer which suited the fox's flexible tongue but made (to say the least of it) uncomfortable provision for the stork's long rigid beak. Now I am not accusing

well as constructive achievements, lies locked up in hundreds of thousands of individual experiences, carefully guarded, unsifted, and unrecorded. How is this immense treasure house of essential information to be unlocked?

It is the hope of the Investigation Committee that it may be tapped by means of a questionnaire so drafted as to indicate all the detailed points on which knowledge is required, and so presented as to secure for the individuals who fill it up a complete and impersonal anonymity. Its broad aim, of course, is to ascertain from a fair sample of the population (not merely from a selected list of those who are known to be instructed advocates of birth control) whether or no they have deliberately practised family limitation, if so, by what methods and with what results. But if this questionnaire is to circulate widely, it must have the co-operation of organized groups of women, and of organized groups representing varied social and economic classes, as well as varied bodies of ethical opinion. It is impossible to broadcast a questionnaire of this kind indiscriminately among persons who, being unaware of its purpose and parentage, may regard its appearance as a gross impertinence. Here, then, we are inclined to suggest, is a piece of work in which non-party women's organizations, Co-operative Guilds, Womens Citizens' Associations, and the like, could usefully co-operate. They need not be deterred by the fact that they may be (and wish to remain) uncommitted to the advocacy of birth control. The members of the Investigation Committee itself "differ widely in their opinions as to the desirability of Birth Control". It is enough to share their "realization that the practice is widespread, and that the scientific problems which it raises can no longer be ignored." And to such a realization may be added the further realization of peculiar moment to women's organizations: that here are scientific problems which intimately affect the individual and corporate destinies of women *qua* women. There is indeed a strong case for willing co-operation by organized women in this quest for accurate knowledge, and in a courageous readiness to face such conclusions as the quest may disclose.

M. D. S.

our masculine fellow-countrymen of malice aforethought, but there is no doubt that the political system to which they are giving us *equal* access, is somewhat in the nature of that flat saucer. They made our political world in the light of their own experiences; and naturally it reflects their ideas of what is and what is not important. But their experience is in many respects somewhat different from ours. It does not, for instance, include the experience of childbearing and home-making. And therefore it follows that their view of what is and what is not important differs too. They have only just begun to realize that the home is in fact the workshop of a huge section of women, and that its conditions are as important a political preoccupation as the conditions of mines and factories. And they have not yet even begun to realize the importance of making adequate provision for maternity. The science and practice of midwifery is still an under-valued subject in most medical schools and the maternity service is still the "cinderella" of the public services. It is really absurd to think that the country can only spare a couple of million in rates and taxes on its maternity and child welfare services as compared to the £114,000,000 odd, it spends on the business of defence! I use the word "absurd" in charity and mercy. I am tempted to use the word "wicked." And I venture to think that a good many district midwives who go into the homes of working mothers and see the conditions in which their children are born, would be tempted to use an even stronger word. Those of you who read the article which Lady Williams contributed to *THE WOMAN'S LEADER* a fortnight ago will realize a little of what I mean. At any rate, that is just one example of what I mean when I say that our existing "political values" are not a very adequate expression of the experiences of women and that a good deal of work has got to be done if women are to make up for lost time within—let us say—a generation.

PARTY AND NON-PARTY WORK.

That, again, is a task for the non-party political societies; to emphasize certain matters which are of importance to women *qua* women. But it is not only through the non-party bodies that such work can be done. It may be true, as Mrs. Corbett Ashby, the newly elected President of the N.U.S.E.C., said last week, that no party women's organization, however independently organized, can take a completely independent view on women's questions, can for instance bring itself to press for a particular reform at a moment when such pressure might embarrass its party. Still—as we have seen, party organizations play a large part in moulding party policy, which may be government policy. And if that party policy (which may be government policy) is to give due emphasis to matters which women think important, it will be not only because the party in question is anxious to secure the goodwill of non-party women's organizations, but also because active women inside the party are making themselves felt—or perhaps you may say, making themselves a nuisance!

There is, however, one piece of work which it is far and away easier to do from inside a party organization than from outside it. That is the selection of women parliamentary candidates. If you believe what I have said about the distinctive experience of women and the need for reflecting that experience in the political world, you must also believe what I say about the need for getting some of that experience directly represented in parliament. But it is the party organizations which choose the candidates, and it is generally from among those who have served the party organizations well that the candidates are chosen—at any rate where likely seats are in question. Therefore if you are anxious to see more women in Parliament, perhaps even, to get into Parliament yourself, my advice is, get into your party organization and make yourself indispensable to it. But if you were to ask me which party is most likely to give you a fair chance and lend you a ready ear, I should be somewhat at a loss for an answer. The first party to return a woman to Parliament was the Conservative Party. But the first party to appoint a woman Minister of the Crown was the Labour Party. In the interests of impartiality I should like to find a comparable jewel to set in the crown of the Liberal Party; only for the life of me I can't. The blinding effect of old bitter memories, I suppose—since it was a Liberal Government which obstinately denied woman's suffrage during eight long years of office and against all the fundamental democratic tenets of Liberalism itself. But there—you are concerned with the future, and here am I unearthing the black pages of the past!

Greetings to you from

AN OLD VOTER.

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION: WHAT IS THE POINT OF JOINING A NON-PARTY WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION?

[A correspondent has forestalled our competition. She writes in reply to question (4) "What would you do if the party to which you belonged refused to consider a particular reform which you had very much at heart?"

I should:

- (1) Ventilate the subject in every possible way so that it became a matter of general discussion.
- (2) Find out which political party would support, or failing support, whose attitude to my question was the most satisfactory (or least unsatisfactory).
- (3) Write to the local Member (or candidate) of my party, stating reasons why my vote would be withdrawn from him and given to . . .
- (4) Write to local papers again giving my reasons from withdrawing support from my own party, stating to which party my future vote was to be given and why.

L. E. PRICE (Not a New Voter).

12 Bentinck Terrace,
Regent's Park, N.W.

[My correspondent adopts a simple expedient. But she ignores one possibility: that the particular reform in question is probably not the *only* reform which she has at heart, and presumably her party stands for most of the others. Is she prepared to sacrifice all those others without compunction?—OLD VOTER.]

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EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

Influenza notwithstanding, the council meeting of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship held last week was attended by a larger number of delegates than any since the first extension of the Franchise. This in itself augurs well for the future. The first resolution was, of course, on Equal Franchise, and it was appropriate that this should be moved by Dame Millicent Fawcett, only recently returned from Ceylon. The Council gave Dame Millicent a great reception, and sent a message to her sister Miss Garrett, who was unable to be present owing to a slight accident. Dame Millicent's successor, Miss Eleanor Rathbone, also received a warm reception when she stood up to deliver her tenth and last presidential address (printed in full in this paper last week). Her closing words after describing the three functions of the future of the women's movement apparently found an echo in the thoughts of the delegates that "they had a programme in front of them which was not likely to be completed within the lifetime of even its youngest member."

Next to Equal Franchise, the General Election found place of honour, and a resolution outlining an active election campaign, including specially the support of women candidates, was carried unanimously. Then followed two resolutions dealing with distress in the mining areas and the need for the services of women and an urgency resolution asking that the provisions of the Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1928 should be made compulsory.

The next morning the Council settled down in dead earnest to its own domestic affairs. A report was presented of an experiment financed anonymously which had resulted in the formation of four new town societies on lines similar to those of women's institutes, but with the object of the National Union in each case included. Here the sharp division of opinion of previous councils revealed itself once more. There was a small but important section of opinion against any dilution whatever of the "Equality" programme. A representative of one of the new societies mentioned hair waving as one of the subjects on their new syllabus, and the fat was in the fire! This innocent revelation of an extreme and fruitless departure from the pure milk of feminism was held up as an awful warning of what the National Union was coming to. There was some very good speaking on both sides, and ultimately the amendment to delete the proposal for the future dealing with the formation of such town societies was defeated by a large majority, and the report was adopted. Then followed the crucial question of the future object. Once again an attempt was made, and defeated, to confine the object to the essence of equality. But a significant change was made by a resolution moved in a convincing speech by Mrs. Hubback, placing the words "To enable women as citizens to make their best contribution toward the common good," in front of what has formerly been the first half of the object, "and to obtain all such reforms as are necessary to secure a real equality of liberties, status, and opportunities between men and women." Then came the further difficult task of selection of a new title. Six changes as well as the retention of the present title were suggested. Excellent speeches were made for and against all the proposals, but no one was surprised when, after a ballot on Proportional Representation methods, the present title was retained. Last of all questions relating to future policy was the decision of the immediate programme. As was to be expected, this led to a prolonged discussion, and finally the following revised, though not greatly altered, programme was adopted.

NEW IMMEDIATE PROGRAMME.

1. To encourage self-education, independent thinking and effective action among women voters on all questions concerning their citizenship.
2. To secure more women in Parliament and on Local Authorities and other governing Bodies.
3. To work for an equal moral standard between men and women, and to oppose all restrictions or regulations which, under pretext of Public Health or Public Order, are directed—whether formally or in effect—solely against women or any group of women.
4. To secure improvements in the status of wives and mothers, including:—
 - (a) An adequate maternity service throughout the country.
 - (b) The provision of Family Allowances for any or all sections of the community.
 - (c) The freedom of married women who desire it, to obtain information on Birth Control at Welfare Centres in receipt of Government grants.
 - (d) Equal rights of married women with men to retain or change their nationality.

5. To secure equal opportunity and pay in the Public Services, the Professions and Industry, as between men and women, including:—

- (a) Equal opportunity for service in the Ministry of Religion.
 - (b) Abolition of restrictions on the right of married women to engage in paid work.
 - (c) Application of the principle that protective legislation should be based upon the nature of the work and not upon the sex of the worker.
6. To support the League of Nations and the practical application of the principle of equal opportunities for men and women within it.

The annual report and financial statement presented on the opening day could not fail to encourage the Council to arrive at these decisions for the record of Parliamentary work certainly showed no diminution of zeal for full liberties, equality of liberty, status, and opportunities for women, and the treasurer was able to point to an actual improvement instead of any falling off as might have been expected when equal franchise was secure, in the subscriptions and donations.

On Thursday afternoon, Miss Neilans gave an interesting speech in moving a resolution on the report of the Street Offences Committee, declaring that its main recommendations do not constitute a satisfactory solution, and calling for legislation on the lines of the Public Places (Order) Bill (England and Wales, Scotland). Another resolution in this section called upon the Government to set up a Committee of Inquiry into the subject of venereal disease, and reaffirmed belief in voluntary treatment of this disease. A group of resolutions dealt with the need for the services of women on Local Authorities and other governing bodies, greater than ever in view of the coming into operation of the Government Local Government Bill. Another group centred round equal pay and equal opportunity. The most topical of these called upon the medical schools in London to reconsider their decision to exclude women students, and urged that all resident or honorary medical appointments should be thrown open without distinction of sex.

A great deal of interest was shown in the reports of work which had been carried on in connection with the two Bills at present under consideration, sponsored by the National Union—the Age of Marriage Bill and the Wills and Intestacies Bill, and messages of thanks were sent from the Council to Lord Buckmaster and Lord Astor respectively. Miss Crystal Macmillan received a cordial welcome when she rose in her accustomed way to move an amendment to the latter, and though the Council did not grant her amendment, it unanimously agreed to her resolution on the Nationality of Married Women.

Two resolutions were concerned with international problems, and Miss Courtney's account of the co-operation between American and British women was heard with great interest.

On Saturday morning a good deal of solid work was done, and an interesting discussion took place on the present defect in connection with Widows' Pensions, which deprives widows migrating from benefit. Two important resolutions on Maternal Mortality, one dealing with census returns, were carried, and quite unexpectedly after a long period of unusual calm, a cheerful breeze arose over a proposal for rebates for children in the rents of subsidized housing schemes. A division after a good debate showed 43 for to 38 against.

Among other changes at a memorable council must be recorded a change of personnel in the offices. In announcing Mrs. Corbett Ashby's election as her successor, Miss Rathbone spoke of her successful international work as President of the International Alliance for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship, and expressed her pleasure in handing over her work to one so fully qualified to carry on. Mrs. Ryland became hon. secretary, and Mrs. Hughes treasurer, in succession to Miss Macadam.

The meeting closed with a message of congratulation to the new President, absent from the last session owing to the illness of her mother, with well-deserved thanks to the Headquarters' Staff, and a cheer for the retiring President as she vacated the chair.

Thus ended a gathering of very special interest. Those who have watched post-war Councils were impressed with its vitality, with the excellence of the speaking from the body of the hall as well as the platform (in past years there has sometimes been a slight tendency for the platform to hold the floor), and perhaps most of all the variety of interests and occupations represented by the speakers as well as geographical areas. Scotland was well to the fore in this, and speakers representing Scottish Women's Co-operative Guild were listened to with much appreciation.

It was an inspiring Council, and delegates scattered stimulated by the definite task of an approaching General Election to help in every way they can "women to make their best contribution towards the common good and to obtain all such reforms as are necessary to secure a real equality of liberties, status, and opportunities between men and women."

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF THE COUNCIL.

The Parliamentary luncheon, still another celebration of Equal Franchise, was the largest on record, and any outsider could see on the faces of the delegates as they crowded in after a strenuous morning the decision to "carry on" from strength to strength. Sir William Johnson-Hicks, who led the Equal Franchise Bill to victory, was the chief guest, and the other guests were Mrs. Dalton, the most recent woman Member of Parliament, and Miss Ishbel MacDonald. The retiring President, in introducing the Home Secretary, said that she had expected a telegram saying he refused to come in view of the anti-man campaign of the Union gravely discussed in a leading evening paper the evening before. The Home Secretary responded that he had not believed the article in question, but that if it had been true, it would not have prevented him coming to tell his hostesses what he thought of them! Miss MacDonald delighted the gathering when she told them that she took part in her first suffrage demonstration at the age of 4, and in the thoughts of at least some of those present, recalled her gentle, clever mother, so well loved and honoured in the women's movement. Mrs. Dalton, in a charming speech, said that in her recent by-election the women had done all the hard work. The absence of Mrs. Runciman, whose parliamentary duties prevented her from being present, did not hazard the all party character of the National Union owing to the announcement that Mrs. Corbett Ashby, a Liberal candidate for Parliament, had been elected as the new President. It was a pleasant friendly informal gathering, and showed once more that if women blame the Government of the day when blame they must, they can give honour when honour is due.

QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT.

4th March, 1929.

PALESTINE—PROFESSIONS AND FRANCHISE (WOMEN).

Colonel Wedgwood asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has ruled that the admission of women to the Palestine bar must be postponed; if so, why he gave this rule; and whether any person or body resident in Palestine has raised any objection to women practising as lawyers, as doctors, as teachers, as inspectors, to women having a vote, or appearing in public unveiled.

Mr. Amery: Yes, Sir. The matter was before me in 1926, when I decided on the recommendation of the High Commissioner that it was not desirable, in view of the conditions prevailing in Palestine, to proceed for the present with the question of the admission of women to legal practice in that country. I have not the material for dealing with all the various points raised in the last part of the question. When the question of the admission of women to legal practice came before the Palestine Advisory Council in 1920, it was strongly opposed by two Mahomedan members.

Colonel Wedgwood: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will do all in his power to break down this Oriental attitude towards women?

Mr. Amery: We have examples in Afghanistan and other places of the undesirability of moving too hurriedly in this matter.

Colonel Wedgwood: When the right hon. Gentleman looks at Afghanistan, will he also look at the reforms which are going on in Turkey?

Mr. Pethick-Lawrence: Is there any evidence of any real opposition to this reform?

Mr. Amery: I understand there is; and, on a question of this sort I am bound to act on the advice of the High Commissioner.

Colonel Wedgwood: As that advice was given in 1920, will the right hon. Gentleman find out whether the High Commissioner still thinks that there would be a revolution if women were given this right?

Mr. Amery: The advice was last given in 1926.

WOMEN POLICE (MOTOR-CYCLES).

Mr. Day asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that women police attached to some of the provincial police forces have been supplied with motor-cycles; and whether any of the women police in the Metropolitan Police area are being supplied with them.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Sir William Joynson-Hicks): I understand that some county police women use motor-cycles for purposes of their duty. Motor-cycles are not supplied to women in the Metropolitan District.

Mr. Day: Is the right hon. Gentleman watching the experiment of the county police authorities to see whether it would not be beneficial in London?

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks: An up-to-date Office like the Home Office watches all these things.

THE PRIZE COMPETITION.

We give below particulars of the competition for new or potential voters. The competition is divided into two groups—the first for new voters under 30 and the second for future voters from 16 to 21. Two prizes are offered in the first group (£2 2s. and £1), and two in the second (£1 1s. and 10s. 6d.). One voter, not, however, a new voter, has anticipated our competition, and we print her reply after this week's letter. We urge our senior readers to use this opportunity of interesting their young relations, friends, maids, indeed any girls with whom they may come in contact, and suggest that they order copies of the back numbers up to date. A limited number of sets of the six first letters including this week's issue, may be had for 1s. post free. We ought perhaps to add that while we expect to reach girls and young women, boys or young men are not excluded should any wish to compete.

I.

FOR NEW VOTERS.

1. Candidates are asked to select not more than four, and not fewer than two of the questions printed below. Replies must not be sent at this stage to subsequent questions.
2. Candidates may use a pseudonym if they wish, but must send their name and address, which should be written on the competition coupon given below. Each candidate must send in a separate coupon.
3. Replies must reach the office, 4 Tufton Street, not later than 30th April.
4. The decision of the editors shall be final, and they reserve the right to print any successful answers of sufficient merit.

FUTURE VOTERS.

1. Candidates over 15 and under 21 may enter this class. They are asked to add their age and their name and address on the competition coupon. It would also help the judges if they could add whether at school or college or working. Other rules are the same as above.

QUESTIONS.

- (1) "Is the Vote Worth While?"
- (2) "When did the Prime Minister promise to give the Vote to women on the same terms as men?" Briefly describe the course of events between the Representation of the People Act, 1919, and his promise.
- (3) "What is the point of joining a Political Party?"
- (4) "What would you do if the Party to which you belonged refused to consider a particular reform which you had very much at heart?"
- (5) "Have we achieved Equal Citizenship?"
- (6) "What is the point of joining a non-party women's organization?"

COMPETITION COUPON

Name.....

Address.....

Age (if under 21).....

OBITUARY.

MRS. MARION BUCHANAN.

The death occurred in Glasgow on 6th March of Mrs. Marion Buchanan in her 89th year. Mrs. Buchanan was a life-long suffragist, and her interest was maintained to the last. Only last year she was able to come to London and be present at the reception of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. Mrs. Buchanan is known to readers of this paper as a contributor of verses, her last—a Christmas carol—appearing in our Christmas issue of 1927, and her initials M. B. became familiar to readers of different papers to which she sent articles or verse. Mrs. Buchanan lived to rejoice in the complete enfranchisement of women, and to interest herself with her daughter in new developments of equal citizenship. Her strong personality knew no age, and her loss will be very keenly felt, not only by those nearest to her, but by all who came in contact with her.

MISS MARY LOWNDES.

The appreciation of the life and work of Miss Mary Lowndes will appear in next week's issue.

PERSONAL.

Many friends and ex-colleagues of Miss Winifred Foulkes will wish her happiness and good fortune in her marriage with Mr. Basil C. Lupton, of 33 de Vere Gardens, son of Mr. Arthur Lupton, of Red Gables, Ilkley. The marriage took place on Thursday, 7th March, and bride and bridegroom set off, upon leaving the church, for Corsica. Mrs. Lupton was for five years organizer in the East of London for the London Society for Women's Suffrage, and she was also one of the four women who undertook a hazardous trip to Russia during the winter of the great famine, on behalf of the Save the Children Fund.

EVENTS THAT MUST NOT BE MISSED.

We propose from time to time to give under this heading information of dramatic, artistic, and literary events of special interest to our readers. Under "Forthcoming Events" we shall continue to chronicle notices of meetings mainly of women's organizations which are sent us. We invite the co-operation of our readers in this, and shall be glad to have suitable events brought to our notice.

Major Barbara, by G. B. Shaw. (Sybil Thorndike as Major Barbara.) Wyndham's Theatre, 8.15.

The Rumour, by C. K. Munro, Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square. Every evening 8.30; matinees Thursdays and Saturdays.

Exhibition of pictures by working men and women. Tate Gallery, 9.15.

Ideal Home Exhibition. Olympia, Kensington, W. 14. Till 22nd March, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Tickets 2s. 6d. and 2s.

BROADCAST FEATURES.

Monday, 18th March, 10.45 a.m.—Law and the Home: The Law and your House; Mrs. Crofts (5XX only).

Wednesday, 10.45 a.m.—A woman's commentary. Mrs. Oliver Strachey (5XX only).

Wednesday, 7 p.m.—Public Departments (all B.B.C. stations except 5GB). 20th March: Department of Overseas Trade.

Wednesdays, at 7.25 p.m. Mrs. Sidney Webb. "How to Study Social Questions." 20th March, "The Use of Documents, Contemporary Literature, and Statistics." (London and Daventry.)

BIRTH.

ANTHONY.—On 6th March, 1929, at The Royal Northern Hospital, Holloway, to Helen Sylvia (née Myers), and Robert Maltass Anthony, of 25 Northway, N.W. 11, a son.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

President: MRS. CORBETT ASHBY. Hon. Treasurer: MRS. ALFRED HUGHES.
Hon. Secretary: MRS. RYLAND.
General and Parliamentary Secretary: MRS. HORTON.
Offices: 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.
Telephone: Victoria 6188.

MISS RATHBONE'S ELECTION ADDRESSES.

If any delegate did not receive a copy of Milestones, containing Miss Rathbone's election addresses for the last ten years, printed for private circulation only, she is asked to send a post-card to the office. Miss Rathbone has asked us to state that if any officer or member of any executive committee in the National Union wishes to have a copy it may be obtained on application.

BY-ELECTIONS.

Arrangements have been made for the Parliamentary Questionnaire to be put to all candidates in the by-elections in Bath, East Toxteth, Eddisbury, Holland-with-Boston and Lanark North, either through Societies or direct from Headquarters. Mr. Van de Berg, Conservative candidate for the Holland-with-Boston division, has replied in the affirmative to all questions except that asking him to support legislation to make compulsory the appointment of an adequate number of women police; to this his reply is: "I believe in a proper number of Women Police."

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING.—6th-9th March, 1929.

A full report of the Council Meeting, which was attended by a large number of delegates than for many years, and received an exceptionally large press, is found in another column. The Election of Officers was announced on Saturday morning, as follows: President, Mrs. Corbett Ashby; Treasurer, Mrs. Alfred Hughes; Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Ryland. All the members of last year's Executive Committee were re-elected, together with Miss Caton, Mrs. Hornabrook and Mrs. Mott. We are very glad to welcome these three new members, all of whom have been in close touch with our work in the Provinces; Miss Caton and Mrs. Mott in Liverpool, and Mrs. Hornabrook in Plymouth.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

At the first session of the Council the following were elected as Vice-Presidents: Miss Buchanan, who has done notable work for the suffrage cause in Glasgow; Dame Edith Lyttelton, G.B.E., whose splendid work at Geneva is well known to all our members; Miss Rathbone, who has just retired after ten years from the office of President; Mrs. Reid, who has played a leading part in the work of the Union in Birmingham; Miss Frances Sterling, who as Treasurer of the I.A.W.S.E.C. has long been connected with the woman's movement at home and abroad; and Mrs. Swanwick, a suffragist of many years standing and one who has done much to help forward the work of the Union.

RECEPTION.

The reception to delegates and visitors at the Household and Social Science Department of King's College for Women, on the first evening of the Council Meeting, proved a very successful one. We were particularly glad of the opportunity it afforded of expressing to Miss Rathbone our appreciation of her ten year's work as President of the Union by a small presentation in the form of a cigarette box to which Societies all over the country had contributed. The Executive Committee also took the opportunity of expressing to Miss Macadam their appreciation of her work as Treasurer and presented her with a small bag. During the evening very delightful music was provided by Miss Joyce Warrack and Mr. Procter.

PERSONAL.

Sympathetic reference was made at the Council to the death during the year of Lady Strachey, one of the Vice-Presidents, and it was with great regret that delegates at the Council heard the announcement of the death of Mrs. Buchanan, the mother of the newly elected Vice-President. The Council was able to send an expression of sympathy to Lady Maud Parry on her long illness, and hearty congratulations to Mrs. Anthony on the birth of a son. A message was also sent to Mrs. Hanna, a Vice-President and officer of many years' standing, who is now in her 90th year. Miss Macadam reported that she had received a letter from Miss Hancock, who it was hoped would be present again at the next Council.

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

The new Executive Committee will meet for the first time on Monday, 18th March, at 11 o'clock.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.

MADAM,—The letter from Mrs. Simon in your issue of the 1st instant has just been brought to my notice.

She would appear to cling to the idea that local authorities will be eager to seek for any legal quibble which might assist them in evading their duty. I do not share this pessimistic view.

Clause 96 is a direction to the Minister and an indication of the circumstances in which Parliament will give him its support in withholding grants from local authorities. Thus the Minister in administering the section can and will take account of the intentions of Parliament, as revealed in the debates. Surely, in these circumstances, it is clear that the addition of the words "and progress" greatly strengthen the clause.

But, even on a narrow construction of the clause, it is clear that without "and progress" it would be impossible to compel any local authority to do anything more than maintain the same dead level of efficiency for all time despite advances in say medical knowledge.

GWENDOLEN IVEAGH.

11 St. James Square, S.W. 1.

THE AGE OF MARRIAGE.

MADAM,—In your article on "The Age of Marriage" you tell a story which you say is from a "well guaranteed source".

If this is so one can only conclude that since leaving its source the story has suffered distortion, for assuming that "criminal assault" means "indecent assault" (and if the charge were graver it could not be tried in a police court), the utmost punishment which could be inflicted would be twelve months' imprisonment and that only if there were more than one charge.

It is of course arguable that in saying he would have had to impose a sentence of two years, the magistrate was overestimating his powers, but as the story makes it clear that there was only one magistrate on the Bench he could not of course have been a lay magistrate and it is therefore most improbable that he would make such a glaring mistake.

For this reason my blood failed to boil when I read your article.

Need I say that I am not opposing the raising of the age of marriage, but only deprecating the use of an unsound point in its favour?

CICELY LEADLEY-BROWN.

8 Cook Street, Liverpool.

[The form of criminal assault referred to in this case was rape. The magistrate referred to was one of three Justices of the Peace. He himself stated that if the man had not married the girl he would have got two years' hard labour. We interpreted this to mean that the magistrate could have imposed the sentence himself, but he could perhaps equally well have meant that this sentence would be inflicted by a higher court.—ED.]

INSULTS TO POLICE.

MADAM,—The publicity which of late has been given to the Police Force by news editors, may be the reason why incidents in connection with individual policewomen are prominent in the newspapers.

A case reported in a London journal, of a man being arrested for asking a policewoman in plain clothes to accompany him to a place of entertainment, and his subsequent discharge by the magistrate, should impress upon every woman undertaking police duties, the necessity for an adequate knowledge of the law, and a recognition of what matters and what does not matter in the execution of her duty.

It is likely that a policeman would bear with equanimity an insulting remark addressed to him as long as it did not lead to a breach of the peace, and a policewoman cannot do better than follow such an example. No useful purpose is served by arrests for petty offences against good manners, and such incidents as the above are likely to irritate the public, and cause them to underestimate the important and useful work which is being carried out by efficient and well-trained policewomen all over the country.

MARY S. ALLEN,
Commandant.

Women's Auxiliary Service (late Women Police Service).
51 Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W. 1.

THE TRAINING OF DOCTORS.

MADAM,—May I support the view of Dr. R. Cove-Smith, published in your columns of the 22nd Feb., that medical students ought to have an opportunity of obtaining knowledge of birth control? As no such course is on the curriculum, I have been invited to give technical lectures to the medical students on this subject at a number of the medical schools, and wherever I have done this I have always found the greatest keenness to learn as much as possible of technical methods. It is, of course, possible to obtain book-knowledge from an exhaustive treatise, *Contraception: its Theory, History and Practice, a Manual for the Medical and Legal Professions*; but experience at a practical clinic emphasizes the need for first-hand demonstration rather than book knowledge on this most important branch of gynecological work. The variety of internal configuration is much greater than would ever have been theoretically anticipated, and necessitates an expert technique, which can only be learned by practice.

Heatherbank, Hindhead, Surrey.

MARIE C. STOPES.

"THE DUTCH PICTURES."

MADAM,—I am sorry that a letter of mine should hurt the feelings of a friend, but, like a woman, I hold to my opinions still.

But whatever be my misdoings, they should not be charged to the discredit of a country which in this respect at least, is unoffending. Like A. H. W., I am a British woman, and like a Briton, will take the responsibility for my own sins on my own shoulders.

DORA MELLONE.

7 Booterstown Avenue, Blackrock,
Co. Dublin.

COMING EVENTS.

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE.

19th March. 1 p.m. 17 Buckingham Street, Strand. Luncheon. Speaker, Miss Thompson, O.B.E. "Impressions of Canada."

Guildhouse W.C.A.—18th March, 3 p.m. Mr. Hendricks: "Why Have Rheumatism?"

MORLEY COLLEGE FOR WORKING WOMEN.

18th March, 3-10.30 p.m. 61 Westminster Bridge Road, S.E. Open Day. Choir, Orchestra, Greek and Folk Dancing, Gymnastics, Lecture on Television, etc.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN (BIRMINGHAM BRANCH).

22nd March. 3 p.m. 154 Gt. Charles Street, Miss Kelly, J.P. (member of Street Offences Committee), "The Street Offences Report."

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

Barnsley S.E.C.—20th March, 5.30. St. Mary's Parish Room. Mrs. Berryman. Report on Annual Council Meeting.

Edinburgh W.C.A.—20th March, 8 p.m. Gartshore Hall, 116 George Street. John Guy, Esq., M.D. (Deputy M.O.H. and Tuberculosis Officer for the City): "Some Aspects of Food and Diet."

Glasgow S.E.C. and W.C.A.—20th March, 8 p.m. 172 Bath Street. W. L. McJarrow, Esq. "Report on Protection and Training of Young Offenders."

Horsham W.C.A.—22nd March, 3.15 p.m. W.E.A. Hall, Carfax. Public Meeting. Speaker, Dr. Alice Owen.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

16th March, 5 p.m. St. Patrick's Clubroom, Soho Square. Miss Gordon, M.A.: "What we can do at the General Election."

THE GUILDHOUSE, ECCLESTON SQUARE, S.W. 1.

22nd March, 8 p.m. Miss Edith Craig: "Church Plays."

TYPEWRITING.

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WOMEN POLICE.—Six months' training offered to social worker before entering Police Force; maintenance given, age 25-30, height over 5 ft. 6 in., sight sound without glasses.—Apply, Women Patrols, 5 Cases Street, Liverpool.

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FOR SALE AND WANTED.

SECOND-HAND CLOTHING wanted to buy for cash; costumes, skirts, boots, underclothes, curtains, lounge suits, trousers, and children's clothing of every description; parcels sent will be valued and cash sent by return.—Mrs. Russell, 100 Raby Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne. (Stamped addressed envelope for reply.)

DRESS.

GOWNS well cut and fitted by experienced dressmaker. Terms from 21/-. Ladies' own materials made up. Renovations a speciality.—Grace Mayman, 168 High Street, Notting Hill Gate. Phone: Park 2943. Appointments.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

LONDON AND NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR WOMEN'S SERVICE, 35 Marsham Street, Westminster. Secretary, Miss P. Strachey. Expert advice on openings and trainings for professional women; interviews 10-1 (except Saturdays) or by appointment.

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 17th March, 3.30, Mrs. C. de Crespigny, "The Spiritualist Movement"; 6.30, Maude Royden.

EDUCATED HOME HELPS BUREAU, 190 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W. 1, requires and supplies educated women for all domestic work. Holiday engagements. Registration: Employers, 2/6; workers, 1/-. Suiting fee: Employers, 10/6; workers, 2/-. (Victoria 5940.)

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