

"SIRS, YE ARE BROTHERS!"—ARTICLE by MAUDE ROYDEN.

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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THE WILL TO PEACE.

We printed last week a brief summary of the events which led to the deadlock which up till now remains unchanged. To-day we are assured that "steadily and surely the country is accommodating itself to the conditions of a general strike." But there are many men and women of all shades of political opinion loyally doing their duty to carry on the essential services of the nation who dread this settling down to a state of war between fellow citizens. They long for a just and honourable peace which will satisfy all parties, but they are wholly at a loss as to how it may be secured. Though responsible citizens of a democratic country they are overcome by a sense of their own helplessness to bring the tragic struggle to an end. Readers of this paper we believe for the most part passionately desire peace, and are asking if there is nothing that members of women's organizations can do collectively or individually to further a quick and equitable solution.

Corporate action of bodies composed of members of all political parties is always difficult of achievement, but our readers are old hands at the essentially British game of compromise. Their work for equality of citizenship and for the League of Nations has made them dexterous in the art of extracting the greatest common measure of agreement from those holding a great variety of opinions, and we believe that in this instance, sharply disputed though the issue may be, a substantial measure of agreement is possible.

The Churches have given a lead. The Archbishop of Canterbury, after consultation with the leaders of the Christian Churches, has issued a carefully considered appeal which we print in full elsewhere. He asks simultaneously and concurrently the following actions: (1) The cancellation by the T.U.C. of the general strike; (2) Renewal by the Government of its offer of assistance to the coal industry for a short definite period; (3) Withdrawal by the coal owners of the recently issued wage scales. Some controversy has arisen over the use of the words "simultaneously and concurrently" in the manifesto. Many Government supporters insist that such "concurrent" action is inconsistent with the Prime Minister's declaration that the general strike must be cancelled before negotiations are resumed. But if all the world knows that action by each of the parties is contingent upon action by all, the question whether the three acts are precisely contemporaneous or separated from each other by intervals of a few hours is surely not a question upon which the chances of peace should be wrecked. However strongly it may be believed that the general strike was a mistake, we must recognize that the T.U.C. having once entered upon the strike cannot any more than the Government seem to capitulate merely to superior force. They must act for some assigned reason which is at least in apparent accord with their previous declarations. A formula is needed to serve as a ladder or bridge and the Archbishop seems to have hit upon one.

Remembering who some of the leaders on both sides are, it is easy to imagine how great the will to peace must be. The Prime Minister, Mr. Pugh, the Chairman of the T.U.C., and Mr. Thomas, of the Railways Workers' Union, may almost be said to have adopted peace so completely as their watchword that to find themselves in the greatest industrial conflict must seem to them indeed an irony of fate. Mr. Pugh represents a union that has proudly boasted for years that it has settled its internal disputes without strike or the clamour of publicity. Mr. Thomas'

industrial pacifism has nearly led to his ostracism by the more militant section of Labour.

But what part can women play in all this? Women's societies have just been uniting in a campaign for "law not war," conciliation and arbitration as a means of settling international disputes. As we go to press a meeting of women representing many different sections of opinion is engaged in hammering out their own suggestion of a peace formula which will add to the Archbishop's proposals the principle of arbitration on behalf of which they were about to join in pilgrimage.¹ We hope that similar efforts may be taking place all over the country in those towns which now seem temporarily to have returned to a mediaeval isolation. During the great war women were outside the pale of citizenship; to-day they are within. Is this going to make no difference?

THE ARCHBISHOPS' APPEAL.

"Representatives of the Christian Churches in England are convinced that a real settlement will only be achieved in a spirit of fellowship and co-operation for the common good, and not as a result of war. Realising that the longer the present struggle persists the greater will be the suffering and loss, they earnestly request that all the parties concerned in this dispute will agree to resume negotiations undeterred by obstacles which have been created by the events of the last few days. If it should seem to be incumbent on us to suggest a definite line of approach, we would submit, as the basis of a possible Concordat, a return to the *status quo* of Friday last. We cannot but believe in the possibility of a successful issue. Our proposal should be interpreted as involving simultaneously and concurrently: (1) The cancellation on the part of the T.U.C. of the General Strike; (2) Renewal by the Government of its offer of assistance to the Coal Industry for a short definite period; (3) The withdrawal on the part of the mineowners of the new wages scales recently issued."

OUR STRIKE ISSUE.

We know that we need not ask our readers for their tolerance with any defects in our paper in consideration of the difficulties under which we publish. We have decided to issue a four page number if possible so long as the strike continues. To-day we attempt to deal with the crisis as seen from the point of view of women who stand for the settlement of disputes, national as well as international, by methods of arbitration rather than warfare, and we print an address by Miss Maude Royden at the Guildhouse on Sunday last. Copies will be sent to all direct subscribers but unfortunately no parcels can be sent to paper agents or societies. We beg our readers to see that their copies are read as widely as possible and volunteers are asked for to sell this number at suitable places in London during the coming week.

¹ If possible the Resolution agreed upon at the Conference will be printed as stop press in this paper, if not, readers desiring to arrange similar Conferences may obtain it on application to the office of this paper.

PASS THIS ON OR POST IT UP.

"SIRS, YE ARE BROTHERS"¹.

By A. MAUDE ROYDEN.

"Moses showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, *Sirs, ye are brethren. Why do ye wrong one to another?*"—(ACTS vii, 26.)

I do not think that the great mass of the people in this country really have any other feeling about the strike than that expressed in my text: "Sirs, we are brethren. Why do we wrong one to another?" It seems to some of us—not perhaps to those who are among the youngest, but to older members of the congregation—such a short time since we felt that bond of brotherhood between ourselves and every class in the community with reality and passion which was new to us as a nation. . . . It was only latent, and when the country was in danger there came to nearly everyone a deep sense of brotherhood.

In August of 1914, whatever individuals here and there felt about the war, no one will doubt that the nation as a whole felt itself fused into one.

"He to-day that sheds his blood with me," said our great poet years ago,

"Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition."

. . . Every man in khaki was a hero then. It did not matter whether he was a private or an officer. It was a kind of profanity to suggest that any of them was less than a hero and a patriot. Among the first and the best were the miners. . . .

We nearly worshipped them then, but they are just the same to-day. . . . If you want to compile a book of the glorious deeds that are worked in peace as well as in war, perhaps half of them are stories about miners! Miners and seamen—these are the two dangerous trades to-day, and the way in which miners respond when there is a call for volunteers in a mining accident is a thing to confirm one's faith in human nature. When there is a disaster under the surface and a call for volunteers to go down, every man volunteers. The difficulty is only to choose who shall go, and they go down not knowing whether there is anything left to rescue but the dead bodies of their mates, or whether they themselves will not find conditions there which will lead to their own death; but there is never any holding back. . . .

Again and again when you have sent us out to crusade from this Guildhouse, we have crusaded in mining areas. I think I can say truly, for my colleagues as for myself, that we never set out with higher hearts or warmer hopes than when we are going to a mining area. I do not know all of them. I wish I did. But I know South Wales, the Rhondda Valley, and all round there, and I know a little of the Durham mines. These are old mines, mines that have been worked a long time, some of them abandoned, some closed down, and the miners themselves terribly short of work. These men in many cases organise our crusades. In Stanley they could not get the local churches to face the financial responsibility—it amounted to between £25 and £30—so these miners faced the financial responsibility and asked us to come, having really nothing behind them. Oh, you think, that is just another proof that they are well off, don't you? Capitalists, getting £9 and £10 a week. Well, one of the moving spirits was getting £2 5s. a week, and he described himself as one of the fortunate ones. He was a hewer. That is to say, he belonged to the aristocracy of the miners, not a labourer. He got the great sum of £2 5s.² a week, and he had only one child, so there were only three people—*only three*—to support on £2 5s. a week. But his mate, he said, who was not a hewer, just a labourer, got 39s. 6d.² and had four children to support. He said to me, "You know, a man *cannot be happy* when he knows that at the end of the week he has not got enough to support his wife and children." . . .

Well, people say, why don't they work longer hours? I am not going to-night to dispute about the length of hours, or the standard of wages. I only entreat you to realize what it is that you are asking when you ask for these things. Take this man who was a hewer. He got 45s. a week. I said to him, "Describe to me your day. Tell me now what you have been doing all day to-day." "Well," he said, "I work on the pit face. . . . In order to save time there has been rigged up a mechanical apparatus which carries the coal across the face and empties it into the tubs. . . . Naturally this arrangement is

¹ This sermon in its complete form is obtainable from the Secretary, The Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Price 1d. (or 2½d. post free).
² Presumably on short time.—Ed.

only a temporary one, . . . so, although it is quite efficient, . . . naturally it is not made like a Rolls Royce, and it makes a good deal of noise. Behind me the labourers (that is the less skilled men) are knocking away the props that hold up the mine, . . . and every time a prop comes down, part of the roof comes with it. . . . It is the business of the labourers to call out to me when the prop is coming down, so that I may get out of the way, but, owing to the noise of the machinery in front of me, I cannot hear them and so I must work all the time either looking over my shoulder, in which case I cannot get on with my work, or else—and this is what I really do—just chancing it. I shut out of my mind the danger, and I just hope to goodness that I shall hear them shout and warn me, so that when the roof comes down it won't come down on my head. But," he said, "at the end of six hours of that I am absolutely worn out."

If you are going to ask him to stay another hour in the mine, don't ask it as you might ask a clerk in an office, or even a shop assistant in a shop, both of them often over-worked and hardworked, but in conditions which are safe. Don't ask it as you would ask that, but ask it rather as you would say to the soldiers in the trenches, "Stay *there* another hour!" It may be necessary. . . . I do not think so, but it may be. But my point is this: that we should *understand* before we ask sacrifices like that. . . .

There is no class in the community on whom the disappointment of war has fallen with more crushing heaviness than on the miners. For days, for weeks, for months, for years they have been out of work. Mines have been not only closed but abandoned. . . . They are suffering as hardly any other class in the community has suffered. I do not say, for the moment, whose fault it is. Perhaps it is no one's fault. Perhaps it is all our fault. But I do ask you to realise how deep their suffering has been, how hard it is, after such sacrifices as they made in the war, to find their position worse than it was before. . . .

Now they are asked to sacrifice more. My friend who has 39s. 6d. a week and my other friend who has 45s., are to sacrifice more. They went out to fight in the defence of their wives and children. Can't you see that it seems to them that that is what they are fighting for *now*? That their standard of life (which means the standard of life of their women and children) is attacked? It is no use to say to a man who is getting £2 a week, "But somebody else in another area is getting a great deal more!" He says, "How does that help me?" There is a point at which the community has no right to ask for further sacrifices. There is a point at which people must feel that it is their standard of life that is being attacked.

Again, I say, I am not here to discuss a rate of wages or a working hours day. I am only here to entreat you to understand how this thing looks to those who are on strike.

What can we do? These men, we are told, have challenged the State, and we "must teach them a lesson." They have called out others in other trades and industries. They are now up against the community. "Sirs, ye are brethren!" What is all this horrible talk about defeating one another and about victories? Is it about our enemies that we are speaking, that we use such terms? These are the men whose sons and brothers have shed their blood and left their bones where your sons and brothers and husbands left theirs. These are the ones who are left. They also went out to fight, and we speak of them—at least too many speak of them now—as though they were our enemies! We are told that nothing can be done. No steps can be taken, no negotiations opened until these men have been "taught a lesson." I do not care for the moment on which side you stand, but I say that no one on any side should use such horrible language.

To whom are we to teach this lesson? To these our brothers? Is it with them that responsible leaders must stand upon their dignity? I will tell you who is dignified to-day: that man, that woman, who is working for peace. There is no other dignity to-day than that. To be called Prime Minister is less to-day than to be called Peace-Maker. Peace is "an attribute of God Himself," Who did not disdain that his Son should be called the Prince of Peace.

The Archbishops have issued an appeal to us. Is it not an appeal that must commend itself to both sides? Let us remember that, according to all reports, both the Prime Minister and the Mineowners and the T.U.C. were within an inch of a solution when the *Daily Mail* incident took place and negotiations were broken off. Is the country prepared to tolerate that when they were so near, when they had actually arrived at

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER.

BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.

The crisis has dominated politics, and during last week it was almost the only subject discussed in the House. True, on Tuesday, 4th May, nothing was said about it. On that day the Budget Resolutions, which had been passed on the previous Wednesday, came before the House on Report. Under normal circumstances several of them, such as the Betting Tax, the Silk Taxes, and the Road Fund, would have given rise to acrimonious discussion. However, when the debate began Mr. Snowden got up and said that his party did not propose to discuss them, provided it were understood that they were not committed thereby to accepting them. This being agreed, they passed without debate, divisions being taken on the more important. It is somewhat to be regretted that certain of them, such, for example, as the Betting Tax, were not argued, for on this an interesting state of opinion exists. There is a substantial body of Conservatives who object. It is true that only seven voted against the tax on 4th May, but this number will probably be increased when the real clash comes. The duty excites enthusiasm in no quarter of the House.

So much for the peaceful part of last week's proceedings. The rest of the time was given over to consideration of the crisis. On Wednesday and Thursday, 5th and 6th May, the Emergency Regulations were passed. The atmosphere of the House was calm, with undercurrents of passion, but on the whole calmness predominated, and Parliament proved once more that it is the greatest representative assembly in the world. The case for the Regulations was put first by the Home Secretary and afterwards by Sir Douglas Hogge, who is always persuasive, and though the Labour Party objected strongly to some of them they never carried their opposition beyond legitimate debate. On the second day the argument was left in the hands of their back benches, and many speeches were made, forcible no doubt, but at the same time not exceeding what was to be expected. One strong argument used by the Home Secretary and the Attorney-General was that many of the Regulations were identical with those proposed, but never passed, by Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's Government in 1924. It was, in fact, admitted that in the case of a national emergency some such regulations were necessary, the point of difference being that the Labour Party consider the present stoppage industrial and not aimed at the community. Many words were bandied to and fro upon this, but no impression was made upon opinion of either side.

At intervals during these three days, 4th, 5th, and 6th May, there were detailed arguments between the Prime Minister on the one hand, and Mr. J. H. Thomas and Mr. Ramsay Macdonald on the other, as to what had caused the breakdown of the negotiations at the end of the preceding week. Mr. Thomas's case was that the Government, having consented to meet the Trades Union Committee after they knew that the general strike was called, had broken off on too slight a cause, namely, the strike at the office of the *Daily Mail*. Mr. Baldwin's answer was that he had been doubtful whether he ought to continue conversations after a threat of a general strike, that he had done so, but that once the strike had broken out it was impossible for him or for any other Government to negotiate. Here again many arguments were used on this side or that, without substantially altering the opinion of members. The Conservative Party are unanimous in supporting the Government, and the Labour Party equally so upon the other side.

The attitude of the Liberal Party has been of interest. Mr. Lloyd George's position has been one of detachment and criticism. He has admitted the necessity for supporting the Government, and indeed all his party voted for the Regulations, at any rate for the bulk of them. At the same time it has been apparent that his support is a qualified one and he has criticised them more than once, particularly their conduct of the Government paper, the *British Gazette*. The only other prominent Liberal to speak has been Sir John Simon, and he made, on Thursday, 6th May, a pronouncement of the greatest importance. Himself a tried friend of trade unions and a fervent supporter of the Trades Disputes Act, 1906, he warned the Labour leaders that a general strike was not a trade dispute and that the railway-men who broke their contract, and their leaders who advised the breach, were personally liable in damages. He further told members of the unions that if they refused to strike they could not be deprived of their benefits, whatever the executive of the unions might say or do.

On Friday, 7th May, there was some relaxation of the tension and three or four small Bills passed second reading, of which

a "formula," this gulf should open and we should regard our brothers as our enemies?

Let us consider whether we cannot return to that point at which they were about to make peace. Some of you say, No. Nothing is to be done until the strike notices are called off. Very well, let them be called off, but not they alone. Let it be remembered that the mine-owners issued their notices first. I do not want to say anything that is prejudiced or unjust, but when I read in paper after paper, when I hear broadcast from the Prime Minister, that the T.U.C. must withdraw its strike notices, I ask myself if people have forgotten that the mine owners issued their wage reduction notices days before the strike notices were issued. Who was first? Why is all the blame laid on one side? Why is not the blame placed where it belongs? If you like, on both sides. I do not pretend there have not been ill-advised decisions, but I say that all have been guilty of them, and not one side only. . . .

Let us ask, as the Archbishops suggest, that both sides shall withdraw; that the wage reduction notices shall be withdrawn and the strike notices shall be withdrawn. Then let the Prime Minister resume negotiations. . . .

Years ago we buried in Westminster Abbey the dead body of someone who had fought in the war. We did not know anything about him. We called him the Unknown Soldier. We did not know whether he went of his own accord, or whether he was forced. We did not know whether he was English, or Scotch, or Welsh, or Irish. We knew nothing about him except this: that he was a soldier. These men who are on strike to-day, thousands and tens of thousands of them, were soldiers, but they have been buried deeper than that man in Westminster Abbey, so that we have even forgotten that they fought with us. "Unknown soldier," yes, but still a soldier! These men in their civilian dress, perhaps with their pickets' badges, will you forget that many of them were soldiers?

One of the miners I met in South Wales had been in the war four years; he volunteered on the very first day and he was in it to the end, and he is to-day one of those who are leading the strike. Can you forget? Must he remain to you an unknown soldier in his striker's dress.

I cannot believe it. I am certain that there is in this community a desire for peace stronger than the desire of a few for war. Give it expression, make it articulate. . . .

We can buy victory too dear. Let there be no talk of victory or defeat, but simply of reconciliation. . . . "Sirs, we are brothers. Why do we injury one to another?"¹

¹ The congregation then passed a resolution in support of the Archbishops' appeal, with only two dissentients.

STOP PRESS.

WOMEN'S HOPE FOR A SOLUTION.

A largely attended meeting of representative women connected with many women's organizations was convened on Tuesday, 11th May, at the Caxton Hall, by the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. The following resolution was carried *nem. con.*:—

"We, the undersigned, desire to express our agreement with the view set forth by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and representatives of the Christian Churches in England that the present disastrous dispute should not be allowed to drag on until either or both sides, and with them the whole nation, is exhausted, but should be terminated without delay.

"The possible concordat suggested by the Archbishops and others proposed that the following steps should be taken concurrently and simultaneously: (1) The cancellation by the Trades Union Council of the General Strike; (2) The renewal by the Government of the offer of assistance to the coal industry for a short definite period; (3) The withdrawal by the coal owners of the recently issued wage scales."

It was explained that owing to the shortness of notice the resolution, which will be sent to the Government, the Trades Union Council, and Members of Parliament, would not commit any women's society. It was agreed to meet again on Friday, 14th May, at 11.30 a.m., to discuss further questions connected with the dispute. A full report of both meetings will appear in next week's issue of this paper.

As we go to press we learn that the General Strike is called off.

the most notable was the one turning the Secretary for Scotland into a Secretary of State. Upon the adjournment there was a long discussion and attack by the Labour Party on the *British Gazette*, but nothing new emerged.

On the whole the House of Commons has reflected the opinion of the country; except for occasional outbursts, it has been good tempered.

THE MINERS' STANDARD OF LIFE.

By ELEANOR F. RATHBONE.

The absorption of the public mind in the Strike is so complete that one might almost suppose that our difficulties would be at an end if only negotiations could be resumed. This view overlooks the fact on which the T. U. C. at least insist in their every communication, that the point at issue between the two sides on which negotiations broke down was an industrial and economic point—the question of the miners' standard of life.

The Government took the stand on "the whole Report", including wage reductions. The miners took their stand on "no lowering of our standard of life". The T.U.C., while reluctantly agreeing at the last moment to urge on the miners a detailed consideration of the whole Report, including its recommendations as to wage reductions, could offer no assurance that the miners would accept such reduction.

When two sides to a negotiation have arrived at a deadlock, when the deadlock has led to a General Strike, the only alternative to a fight to a finish is a compromise which both sides can accept without humiliation. Where is such a compromise to be found? On the economic issue, the Report has given its answer—Children's Allowances. Such allowances, they say, "will raise the standard of living if the total wage bill remains unchanged, and may neutralise largely or completely any evil effects that would otherwise result from the fall of wages."

In other words, "the whole Report," including reduction of wages and "no lowering of the miners' standard of life" are compatible propositions only through the aid of a Children's Allowance scheme. But this, say some, is part of the scheme of reorganisation contemplated by the Report. Unfortunately, however, it is a part which everyone has assumed to be a question of detail, of which consideration should be deferred until after a general settlement has been reached. But after the country has been exhausted by a General Strike, after the miners have accepted the largest reductions of wages that they can be induced to accept, after the Government has promised in some other form whatever aid it is willing to promise—what hope is there that Children's Allowances will become an accomplished fact, if the whole cost has to be met by further reduction of wages? Is not this a point that ought to be faced immediately? Is it not a matter in which the Government might offer and the

men accept financial aid without either going back one inch upon their previous declaration? The Coal Report, it is true, did not specifically suggest State aid to the Children's Allowance scheme, but neither did it say a word in opposition to such a proposal. It would in fact be consistent with the whole general tenor of its recommendations, which include State aid to many of the reconstructive measures it proposes. The miners have actually suggested that the Children's Allowances are a charge which might properly fall upon the State, so they might well accept the offer of State aid as enabling them to accept wage reductions without lowering their standard of life. Suppose that the Government were to offer at least a substantial subsidy towards the cost of the Allowances, to be diminished on a sliding scale as the industry regains its prosperity, would not the price be one well worth paying? Would it not fit in with the opinion widely held, not only in the ranks of Labour, that it is scarcely fair to ask the miners to bear the whole burden of the sacrifices made necessary by the economic condition of the industry during the period while the promised measures of reconstruction—measures for which they have long asked in vain—are taking effect? The full cost of a scheme of Children's Allowances at 5s. per miner's child, may be estimated at roughly about £12,000,000. If the Government were to bear even half of this, it would be equivalent to about one-fourth of the late subsidy, or about twelve weeks of what the Strike is costing the country directly, to say nothing of its indirect effects in the paralysis of industry and in the embitterment of class feeling. Is not the suggestion at least one worth consideration by both sides as the possible basis of a settlement—not indeed of the Strike; that must be settled first, but of the point which resulted before and may result again, in a deadlock? If the Government would make it known that it contemplated such an offer, might it not affect the mood of despair which is paralysing efforts towards peace?

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

President: Miss ELEANOR RATHBONE, C.C., J.P. Hon. Treasurer: Mrs. SODDY.
Hon. Secretary: THE LADY BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH. Parliamentary Secretary: Mrs. HUBBACK.
Offices: 15 Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W. 1.
Telephone: Victoria 6188.

To our Societies.

Work for the Equal Franchise Campaign, the Pilgrimage and other matters referred to in the monthly letter recently issued, must be suspended so far as active measures go. Thinking and planning, however, are never out of place. The Executive met on Wednesday, and communications with the Societies will be resumed as soon as conditions permit.

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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.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS.

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

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES, Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, 16th May; 3.30, Music, Mr. Morley Horder, F.R.I.B.A., on "How to preserve our Countryside." 6.30, Maude Royden.

EUSTACE MILES LECTURES on Practical Subjects. April to June in the Green Salon, 40 Chandos Street, Charing Cross, W.C. 2. Postponed until further notice.

EDUCATED HOME HELPS BUREAU, Phillbeach Hall, Phillbeach Gardens, Earl's Court, requires and supplies educated women for all branches of domestic work. Registration: Employers 2s. 6d., Workers 1s. Suits, 7s. 6d. and 2s. Telephone, Western 6323.