

WOMEN IN COUNCIL

"N.C.W. NEWS"

Special No.

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REPORT OF THE COUNCIL MEETING AND CONFERENCE

HELD IN ABERDEEN, JUNE 15—20, 1931.



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WOMEN IN COUNCIL

JULY, 1931

SPECIAL CONFERENCE NUMBER.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
ADDRESS OF WELCOME	3
PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS—RETROSPECT AND FORECAST	5
FINANCE REPORT	8
RESOLUTIONS PASSED	II
THE SPECIAL SERVICE	14
YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETING:—	
GOOD CITIZENSHIP:	
LADY LESLIE MACKENZIE	18
VERY REV. J. HARRY MILLER	21
1ST PUBLIC MEETING:—	
MENTAL DEFICIENCY—MISS EVELYN FOX	24
DR. HAMILTON MARR	26
THE NURSING PROFESSION—MISS E. M. MUSSON.....	33
2ND PUBLIC MEETING:—	
WHAT THE COUNTRYWOMEN OF THE WORLD ARE DOING—	
MRS. ALFRED WATT	39
THE DRAMA AS APPLIED TO AMATEUR PRODUCTION—	
MISS ELEANOR ELDER	41
3RD PUBLIC MEETING:—	
THE RIGHT USE OF LEISURE—DR. JANE WALKER	48
BROADCASTING—D. CLEGHORN THOMSON, ESQ.	55
THE CINEMA—REV. A. E. BINKS	57
WORK OF THE I. C. W.	61
THE REGIONAL COMMITTEES	62
REPORT OF AN ENQUIRY INTO FILM CENSORSHIP	67

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THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF GREAT BRITAIN.

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Editor "Women in Council."
Miss Clara Smith.

**Office—National Council of Women, Murray House,
Vandon Street, Buckingham Gate, S.W.1.**

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ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING AND CONFERENCE.

MUSIC HALL, ABERDEEN.

June 15th—20th, 1931.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME.

THE LORD PROVOST OF ABERDEEN, in welcoming the Representatives at the Council Meeting on June 16th, said:—

I came along this morning with some diffidence—I am very fond of ladies' society, but I prefer them one at a time! But if I hadn't come I would have had to meet Lady Adam Smith afterwards—so I am here! It is a real pleasure to come and offer you on behalf of my fellow citizens a very hearty welcome to the city of Aberdeen. We fully appreciate the value and importance to our city of having you with us as our guests—it is some 23 years since we had that honour, and during these intervening years much good work has been done which we acknowledge and appreciate. If I might suggest it, there is something more in our welcome—the little, personal, peculiar touch—in that we have here on this platform our own Lady Aberdeen. I need hardly say that it is impossible for me to exaggerate the depth of the affection and regard with which she is held here in the North of Scotland, therefore any organisation with which she is associated, any enterprise on which she embarks, is sure of a hearty welcome and support in this part of Scotland. Speaking more particularly for my colleagues in the management of the affairs of this city, we are greatly indebted to, and highly appreciative of, your visit. During the last 25 years there has been a radical transformation of the duties of public life. I remember in the early years in which I was engaged in public life, it was a question of dealing with those communal services, such as keeping the streets in order, water supply, lighting, etc., all of which to-day are standardised and stabilised so much that one can hardly go wrong. But to-day the duties have entirely changed, and the local authority has laid upon it the responsibility for dealing with the whole ambit of the communal life of the community, embracing as it does public health, public services, education and so on. Just because we all of us feel that progress along these lines is not only a question for discussion, but one on which we are all agreed, we have to be careful that our hearts do not

over-ride our heads; and while we are satisfied that a thing is perfectly all right and absolutely desirable, we must have regard also to the times through which we are passing and must not neglect the economic aspect of the whole situation. That is how I see a public authority working. So I recognise at once the value of an educated and experienced public opinion, represented in the National Council of Women, as I know it is. While we may not be able to go so far as you would like us to go, I can assure you that we greatly value the advice, the suggestions and the opinions that we expect will be expressed during the next day or two with the enthusiasm which has been for so long associated with the work of your Council. I have the greatest possible pleasure in extending to you a most hearty welcome to the city of Aberdeen, believing that your visit will be an encouragement and a means of enthusing us all to a keener service not only of this city but of the whole country.

THE MARCHIONESS OF ABERDEEN AND TEMAIR, President of the Aberdeen Branch, said:—It is a great honour for me to be deputed to offer a very hearty welcome from the Aberdeen Branch of the National Council of Women, to its President and delegates, and not only to act as spokesman for the Aberdeen Branch but also for the Scottish Standing Committee, who desire to tender a very affectionate greeting to you on this sixth visit of the Council to Scotland. This is the fourth time that I have had the honour of offering a welcome to such a Conference in Aberdeen. The first time was in 1888, when the union of women's societies, which had been formed after the visit of Miss Ellice Hopkins in 1884, thought that they would be able to develop and strengthen their work if they could arrange such a conference with the aid of friends from the south, and the few of us who remain who remember that conference will remember what an inspiration the messages of our friends from the south were on that occasion. I am not sure whether there are any here who can remember that meeting along with me. The next occasion was in 1906. It was perhaps rather a family affair because it was a conference of the Scottish Branches alone, but still it was a very helpful and pleasant gathering. Then came 1908, to which the Lord Provost has already alluded, when the National Council did us the honour of coming here under the presidency of our good friend, Mrs. Edwin Gray, whose notable address on women in early times is still remembered and whom we had hoped we might have had the pleasure of seeing on this occasion. We are very sorry she is not able to come but glad that she is represented here by her daughter. I should like to be allowed to send both Mrs. Edwin Gray and Mrs. George Cadbury a message of affectionate remembrance and best wishes. We are very glad that there are quite a number here now who were here then, and in

particular we should like to greet some of those who have acted as President of the Council—Mrs. Franklin, Lady Emmott, our distinguished townswoman, Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, who is so intimately connected both with the Aberdeen Branch and with the city that we can scarcely speak of her as a visitor, and also Miss Green. May I now particularly welcome you, Mrs. Keynes, both in your personal and presidential capacity. We hope that the arrangements both for the comfort and for the convenience of the delegates which have been made with such care by Lady Adam Smith and her colleagues will be appreciated. We all look forward with much happiness to these days when you are to be with us, and in the belief that you will be a great stimulus to us in our work in the north.

THE PRESIDENT, after thanking the Lord Provost and the Marchioness of Aberdeen for their welcome, then gave her presidential address to the delegates.

RETROSPECT AND FORECAST.

Scotland has been very hospitable to the National Council of Women of Great Britain. The formal constitution of the Council in 1895 was preceded by a meeting in Glasgow in 1894, and, including that year, the Council has been received twice each by Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow, the subsequent dates being 1902, 1908, 1911, 1923, and now in 1931.

The Scottish Branches have always been an important element, and have exerted an influence even beyond their numerical strength. Of the twenty-four Vice-Presidents, who formed part of the Executive when the Council met in Aberdeen in 1908, six were resident in Scotland, without including Lady Aberdeen, who was then spending much of her time in Dublin.

Three of those Scottish Vice-Presidents have this year been recipients of important distinctions. We offer our warmest congratulations to Lady Aberdeen, President of the International Council of Women, and also of the Aberdeen Branch, on the Distinguished Order of Dame Grand Cross of the British Empire conferred upon her recently by His Majesty, King George; to Miss Sarah Siddons Mair, whose name reminds us of her distinguished ancestress, the great dramatic artist, the centenary of whose death was commemorated last week, and who is now herself a Dame Commander of the British Empire; and to Dr. Ogilvie Gordon, who has been elected as the first woman Member of Honour of the Geological Society of Vienna, in recognition of her work on the structure of the Dolomites.

We also have the pleasure of congratulating Dr. Jane Walker and Mrs. Swanwick, who have received the Order of the Companions of Honour; Miss Clarkson, formerly Sheriff and now Lord Mayor of Norwich, a member of the Norwich Branch; Miss

Haslett, former Convener of the Industrial Committee; Miss Major, former Member of the Birmingham Branch and for the last six years Mistress of Girton; Dr. Louisa Martindale, President of the Brighton Branch; all of whom have received the Order of Commander of the British Empire.

Among those fellow-workers whom we have lost, we desire especially to commemorate a great Scotswoman, Lady Frances Balfour, our President when we met in Cambridge in 1922, and in Edinburgh in 1923. Of frail physique but fearless courage, of brilliant intellect and caustic wit, she was born of a famous Scottish House to be a leader of leaders—"Her deeds shall live, and the toilsome glory of her actions."

Dr. Ethel Bentham, Member of Parliament and Hon. Member of our Executive, passed away in the midst of her activities. She had managed to combine medical practice with much local government and parliamentary work, and at the time of her death was in charge of the Bill dealing with the Nationality of Married Women. We pay grateful tribute to her memory.

In meeting here we are reviving in the minds of some of our members memories of the Conference to which I have already referred held in Aberdeen in 1908, under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Edwin Gray, who also presided at Portsmouth the following year.

In the interval that has elapsed since then, the work of the National Council of Women (then the N.U.W.W.) has increased greatly. The number of Branches has doubled while their members have increased threefold. The number of Sectional Committees has doubled, and in order to deal with the amount of work now passing through the office, the Executive Committee meets monthly instead of quarterly. It is not surprising that, in view of all this activity, expenditure has also doubled, but I shall leave this subject to the Hon. Treasurer, merely noting in passing that the Hon. Treasurer of that day had to report that £50 more had been spent in the year than had been received, and that the financial position was a constant source of anxiety—then as now, now as then!

On one item there must surely have been a profit, for I notice that there was "an unprecedented demand" for a paper by Mrs. Creighton, "On Growing Old." I propose to ask the Publications Committee to consider reprinting this paper, for the subject is so much more pressing for many of us than it was twenty-three years ago.

It is interesting, in looking back, to the early days of the National Council, to find that the foundations were so well and truly laid by the pioneers that very few fundamental changes have been necessary in the Constitution.

It is still more interesting to note the consistency with which the N.C.W. has pressed for certain reforms, such as the appointment of Women Inspectors of Prisons, and Police Matrons, subjects which appeared upon the programme as long as thirty years ago.

Maternal Mortality and the Training of Nurses and Midwives have formed the subject of a series of resolutions from 1895 until the present time, and at Aberdeen in 1908 support was given to the Bill for the State Registration of Nurses. At that meeting it was also considered of urgent importance that Domestic Science should be one of the optional subjects in the public examinations in Secondary Schools. Now that this point has to some extent been gained, we are asking that it should be further recognised as one of the qualifying subjects for certain certificates.

Many more examples might be given. On Local Government, Industrial Questions, Criminal Law Amendments, Legislation affecting Children, including Children's Courts (established under the Children Act, 1908), the N.C.W. has spoken with no uncertain voice, and can claim to have taken a definite share in forming public opinion upon much of the social legislation of the past generation.

To come to our present work—we have not completed a full year since the last Council Meeting, and the General Secretary's Report will therefore not be presented until the autumn, but I should like to remind you of some outstanding features of recent date.

In consequence of the resolution on Film Censorship having been referred back at Portsmouth, a Cinema Enquiry Committee was set up, under the chairmanship of Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, upon which were co-opted representatives of various other bodies having expert knowledge of the conditions of Film production and distribution. A valuable report has been issued which is now available in print.

Great impetus has been given to the Women Police movement by the formation of an interested group in the House of Commons, with Miss Picton-Turbervill as Chairman. Three meetings have been held in a Committee Room of the House, attended by Members of Parliament and by representatives of the N.C.W., and a deputation, accompanied by Miss Tancred as technical adviser, was received on April 26th by the Home Secretary, who subsequently (May 21st), in a letter to Miss Picton-Turbervill, expressed his intention of calling a Police Council for the consideration of draft Regulations for Women Police. As a further result of the deputation, Miss Peto, whose appointment to Scotland Yard we welcomed last year, is to be summoned to this Police Council, which the Home Secretary assures us he hopes to arrange before long.

The Parliamentary Committee has carefully considered Miss Rathbone's Wills and Intestacies Bill, and has watched the progress that has been made with regard to the Nationality of Married Women. The Sentence of Death (Expectant Mothers) Bill was introduced by Miss Picton-Turbervill. This was the only Private Member's Bill for which special facilities were given, since only in that way could time be found to place it upon the Statute Book.

All the Sectional Committees have had under consideration

subjects of great interest and importance, of which details will be given in the Annual Report. A special Committee drew up a Memorandum on the Training of Nurses for the Lancet Commission on Nursing, and evidence was also given before the Commission. A recent Home Office Circular on Probation embodied several points brought forward by the N.C.W. We still await the promised Amending Bill to the Children Act.

What of the future? Is there still work for the National Council to do? I see no lack of it. Much social work, it is true, is now carried out professionally; it no longer depends entirely upon the volunteer. But there is still an urgent need for organised voluntary workers. There is legislation to be promoted and administration to be watched. There are gaps to be filled and experiments to be made. The professional worker, whether probation officer, hospital almoner, rent collector or welfare worker, needs stimulus, encouragement and co-operation from those who study these questions from the non-professional point of view, if the work is to be kept vital rather than mechanical, inspired by human sympathy rather than merely efficient.

The Dean of St. Paul's and the Lord Rector of this University have both in the last few days been engaged in prophesying. They have outlined for us pictures of the future of civilisation and coloured them from a mixed palette of hopes and fears. The Dean believes that within 1,000 years the nations, while remaining distinct, may have attained a state of friendly emulation—"if we really desire it"—but adds a warning that the perils are many, and in the interval civilisation may be wrecked. Sir Arthur Keith, although dreaming of a warless world, by his study of the past finds himself driven to the view that the price of progress is national antagonism.

We are not, perhaps, equipped for looking so far ahead. As social workers, it is our business to concern ourselves with present needs and to seek to do our work on such lines that our successors may in their turn be able to build upon it.

We prefer the teaching of the more optimistic Dean to that of the pessimistic anthropologist, but the N.C.W. can leave on one side speculations based on hopes of the remote future or fears based on the remote past. In the spirit of practical idealism we shall press forward with faith and courage towards that which we really do desire—the gradual amelioration of human relationships, nationally, imperially and internationally.

FINANCE REPORT.

By the Hon. Treasurer, LADY TRUSTRAM EVE.

You will have before you the figures of the finances of the National Council of Women, but I ask you to remember that, owing to the change of the date of the Conference from October back to June it is only barely a nine months' Statement, and is not

even comparative as this, because we find the great majority of Branches pay in June and July, so I ask you not to multiply and divide and come to a conclusion, which may be an entirely wrong one.

Expenses also are not always to be considered month by month as some come in at different intervals, but as far as it is possible to say, we still need an extra £170—£200 a year to meet expenses easily and without strain. Of course I feel, and you will all feel that if we can get some new Branches, say 15, we should take up the best way to get the money required to carry on. But this must be a matter of time. We have some new Branches and are in process of forming others. Indeed there is a real hope of others coming in.

Our Regional Committee, newly organised, will I think do much to keep up interest and to arouse fresh interest. As it is not only the formation of new Branches, but the keeping of those we have, that is essential to the well-being of the N.C.W.

We have a Bring and Buy Stall here, which brought in last year £22. 11s. 4d., and from it this year we may hope perhaps even greater things. Although we need large amounts every little definitely helps, and if it were not for these comparatively small efforts, which are organised by individuals and bring in here and there a few pounds, we should be in a worse way than we now are.

This year's Statement includes £35 from the Public Service Committee for Minutes, which was not in time last year to be on the Statement. This Committee brings in a very substantial sum each year towards our finances.

The Women Citizens' Section of the N.C.W. has now been in existence for some months and the financial arrangements made mutually are working smoothly and cover the additional expenses involved adequately.

We have a long list this year of Branch Fees unpaid, and again I would remind you that this is entirely because of the change of date of the Council. This list is up to June 5th, 1931, and some may have paid since that date, but in any case we cannot reproach them as there is no obligation to pay before the end of September. Some of the new Branches are now not bound to pay their £5 for two years after formation. This is, of course, to prevent a new Branch being overwhelmed by its obligations, but we hope very much that many will do so to help the Association, which is often in the position of being unable to pay its bills.

I have been asked to make an appeal for the new Office funds, and I can almost hear people sigh as I mention it. It is indeed a hardy annual, but I feel we must face the fact that we have not got enough money to carry on, and it seems to me rather a poor thing to run away from this fact and let things drift.

As I am going out of office as Treasurer, I can say more easily that the position of the affairs of the National Council has been a great anxiety for years, but especially since the Council decided to move to more expensive offices in 1926, and thereby incurred very heavy responsibilities for more rent, larger rates, and various other incidental expenses, apart from the expense of moving, and this has meant that we should really have, plus our ordinary income, another £190 a year. I would recall to memory that when this was discussed in 1926, it was decided by the Council in London that we would raise a Capital Sum of £5000 a year and, investing it, produce for ourselves the extra income necessary, but later in 1929 we considered that £4000 would meet the case.

We have received £2874. 15s. 1d., and interest on this sum has given us another £443. 1s. This amounts to £3317. 16s. 1d., of which we have invested £2700, and we have spent on extra rent, income-tax and rates, etc., £473. 14s. 11d. We have on deposit at the Bank £100 and Cash £44. 1s. 2d.

I would like to remark here that the interest accumulated during the two years before we moved, or else we should not have been able to put as much as £400 to the fund collected.

Now I am quite aware that there are people who say, why trouble about all this? Why not spend the £3000 we have and let the future take care of itself? I am not of that number. It is very unsound finance. We set out to do a certain thing. We passed at the Council that we would have a Capital Fund, and many Branches and individuals gave to a Capital Fund, some people even specifying that what they gave was to be used for a Capital Fund. To my mind it is rather an acknowledgment of defeat when a body of women give up the task they have set themselves and say, we cannot do this, let the future take care of itself.

I am quite aware of financial difficulties. I know too well how great the strain is upon almost everyone, but I have a great belief in the strength of the National Council and the fact that if they really put their hand to a job, they can carry it through.

I don't believe, as some do, that this is a Council which is going down, that after a generation there would be no one left to wish to work or organise for women. I wish I could think that in 50 years time or less there would be nothing left for women to organise for, and I always say to take the easiest way is hardly ever the best way. Therefore I appeal to the Council once more to help me as Treasurer to go out of office feeling that a really great effort has been made to set this thing right, and to get together by one means or another the extra six or seven hundred pounds necessary. We have 100 Branches more or less. When looked at in the light of numbers it is not so very much individually and it is well worth while.

I ask you again to make one really great effort this year.

I will ask those Branches who are prepared to make a real effort to help, to come forward and tell us what they propose to do, as I know some have already said they will do so.

The Hon. Treasurer is very glad to report that she was approached by various Branches, during the Conference, who told her that they were preparing to make the required effort.

RESOLUTIONS

PASSED BY

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF
GREAT BRITAIN,

AT ABERDEEN, 16th, 17th, 18th JUNE, 1931.

Humane Slaughter of Animals.

“That the Representative Council of Women, consisting of delegates from Branches and Affiliated Societies in Great Britain, in meeting assembled, re-affirms for the third time its unanimous support for the Humane Slaughter of Animals Bill, and urges the Prime Minister to give immediate facilities for the Bill now before Parliament, in order that it may reach the Statute Book this session.”

Sexual Offences against Children.

To reaffirm the following resolution, passed by the Council in 1930:—

“That the National Council of Women deplors the delay in the introduction of legislation on the lines of the recommendations contained in the Reports of the Departmental Committees on Offences against Young Persons and on the Treatment of Young Offenders respectively, and urges H.M. Government to introduce such legislation at the earliest possible date.”

1. Cinema Licences.

(a) “In view of the urgent need for some uniform standard in the conditions attached to cinema licences throughout the country, the National Council of Women appeals to all licensing authorities to adopt and put into operation the model rules recommended by the Home Office in their Circular of 16th December, 1929.

(b) Further, this Council would welcome a decision to establish a Consultative Committee, representative of the Home Office, the Board of Trade Film Advisory Committee, the Local Licensing Authorities, the Board of Film Censors, Film Producers and Social Organisations, whose functions should be to create a more immediate and effective contact between

the Censor and public opinion, and to foster and maintain the highest possible moral and artistic standards in the films produced and exhibited in this country."

2. Woman Prison Commissioner.

"That the National Council of Women requests the Home Secretary to appoint a Woman Commissioner of Prisons and Director of Convict Prisons, whose duties should include the inspection of prisons where women are confined, and urges upon the Government the necessity for a revision of the methods of dealing with women prisoners; it further asks the Secretary of State for Scotland to make suitable arrangements of a similar character for Scotland."

3 Women Police.

"This meeting of the National Council of Women, representing women's organisations from all parts of the country, calls upon the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Scotland to draft regulations for policewomen for submission to a Police Council, called and selected for that purpose, on which women shall have a fair representation."

4. Nationality of Married Women.

"This Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women welcomes the decision of the Council of the League of Nations to consult women's international organisations on the question of the Nationality of Women, and to authorise the establishment of a Committee representing these organisations for the purpose of preparing a joint report for transmission by the Secretary-General to the 1931 Assembly of the League. It is of the opinion that there should be no distinction based on sex in the laws of nationality, so that a woman, whether married or unmarried, should have the same right as a man to retain or to change her nationality. It therefore urges the said International Women's Committee to support this policy in their report."

5. Disarmament Conference.

"The National Council of Women, realising that all-round reduction of armaments is an essential condition of permanent peace, and that the future of international co-operation through the League of Nations largely depends upon the success of the first World Disarmament Conference convened for February, 1932, urges that a concentrated national effort be made to ensure that the Conference shall result in immediate reductions of the Army, Navy and Air Forces of the world, and that the expenditure on armaments in those countries upon whom reductions were not imposed by the Peace Treaties shall be substantially reduced, and trusts that His Majesty's Government will spare no effort to attain this result."

6. Examination of Juvenile Offenders.

"That in the opinion of the National Council of Women there should be facilities in connection with every Juvenile Court for necessary expert examination (physical and psychological) of all offenders."

7. Remand Homes.

"That this Council is of opinion that provision should be made for the proper housing of all persons up to 21 awaiting trial for alleged offences, without the need of committing them to prison in the absence of sureties, such provision to take account of the results of modern investigation which has shown that there is urgent need for both medical and psychological examination, especially in cases where the accused is a child or young person. It therefore calls upon the Government to give effect to the recommendations contained in the Report of the Departmental Committee on the treatment of Young Offenders, in so far as those recommendations are concerned with the need for the provision of Remand Homes for all persons under 21."

8. Wills and Intestacies Bill.

"That the National Council of Women, recognising that England falls behind Scotland, most European countries and the Dominions, in its lack of legislation requiring a testator to provide for his or her surviving spouse and children, declares its opinion that the time is ripe for legislation on the subject, to give effect to the principle that marriage and parenthood entail permanent obligations not terminable by death."

9. Lodgings for Women.

"In view of the large increase in the floating population due to unemployment, the National Council of Women urges its branches to enquire in their respective areas as to the accommodation open to women other than on premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquor, and to consider the desirability of providing suitable lodgings for women."

10. Causation and Prevention of Mental Deficiency.

"That the Government be asked to appoint a Royal Commission to make full enquiries into the causation of Mental Deficiency, into its relationship to other abnormal conditions and social problems, and into any measures, including both segregation and sterilisation, by which it might be prevented."

11. Unemployment and Agriculture.

"This meeting of women electors, members of the National Council of Women of Great Britain, shares with Parliament its deep concern regarding the problems of Unemployment and

Agriculture which are menacing the life of the Nation. It realises that party divisions in this national crisis render each party impotent. It therefore asks the Government to disregard, temporarily, party divisions and, in view of the imperative need for effective action, to unite all parties in an attempt to reach, if necessary by compromise, some practicable methods for dealing with these national problems."

12. Compulsory Day Continuation Classes for Unemployed Young Persons.

"That the Government be urged to introduce an immediate measure bringing all unemployed young persons, aged 14 to 16 years, under a system of compulsory Day Continuation Classes, on the lines of the working certificate procedure."

13. Women House Property Managers.

"That in view of the danger of the new housing estates built by Local Authorities as part of their Slum Clearance schemes themselves degenerating into slums, the National Council of Women urges its members to bring pressure to bear on such authorities to employ as managers on these estates women fully trained on Octavia Hill lines; and further, that the N.C.W. recommends that Universities be asked to provide facilities whereby students intending to become Women House Property Managers can receive a more specialised training in the Social and Economic Courses than has hitherto been customary, and thus be prepared to receive shorter practical training than is necessary for non-University candidates."

Amendment to the Constitution.

"That after holding office for one year, the Hon. Secretaries of the Sectional Committees be accorded a vote on the Executive Committee."

NORAH E. GREEN,
General Secretary.

THE SPECIAL SERVICE.

A special service, conducted by the REV. MELVILLE DINWIDDIE D.S.O., Minister of the Cathedral, was held in the ancient Cathedral of St. Machar on June 16th. THE VERY REV. SIR GEORGE ADAM SMITH, D.D., LL.D., Principal of the University of Aberdeen, gave the Address.

President and Members of the National Council of Women of Great Britain, this forenoon you are to be welcomed to the City of

Aberdeen by its honoured Lord Provost. Here and now we offer you the welcome of Aberdeen's Church and University, with their prayers that during your Annual Meeting your fellowship be blessed of God Almighty, and that, in this time of many grievous troubles and problems, your discussions and resolutions may be for the furtherance of the national peace, interests and welfare. May we as Church and University briefly but most earnestly call to your minds these words of Holy Scripture:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.—I. Corinthians ii.5.

The writer of these words was one who strove to teach every man in all wisdom. Therefore he would be the first to admit the inspiration we may find in studying the wisdom of our fathers. Nor in our duty would he deny a foremost place to that use and discipline of our own reason, without which we cannot hope for a blessing from above. As John Caird said: "The world may be saved by the foolishness of preaching but never by the preaching of foolishness."

I gratefully remember the guidance and courage in these respects, which, as a young man and a young preacher, I derived from the works of two writers, neither of whom was a theologian or a churchman, but one the head of a Department of the State, and the other a scientific economist. These works were the late Sir John Simon's *English Sanitary Institutions, Reviewed in their Course of Development and in some of their Political and Social Relations*, and *The Economic Interpretation of History*, by Professor Thorold Rogers. Both writers do justice to the personal wisdom and courage of our fathers in designing and carrying out the social and political reforms in which Great Britain then led the world: the abolition of serfdom and slavery, the creation of free labour, the redemption especially of women and children from cruel forms of labour, the political enfranchisement of the people, the raising of the nation's health by sanitary measures, with the prevention of plague and pestilence. They trace how all such reforms were effected by the careful research and long reasoned thought of individual statesmen and scientists, and by their brave patience in ultimately bringing them through self-interested or ignorant opposition. But both those witnesses—neither a churchman or preacher—record how the way was opened for the reforms, the moral conditions of their possibility prepared and their progress furthered by religious movements; those of the early Church with the first schools, libraries and hospitals, those of Wyclif and the Lollards among the farmers and peasants of the land, those of the brothers Wesley among the labouring classes, to which great succession we may add the thought and energy of the English Lord Shaftesbury and our own Scottish Chalmers.

The same union of human wisdom with reliance on the Divine Power is seen in the labours of those noble women, Elizabeth Fry in prison reform; Florence Nightingale in the reform of military and civil hospitals; Octavia Hill in organising anew House Property Management; and Ellice Hopkins and Josephine Butler in the White Cross Crusade. All these were women of faith as well as of genius.

You may say, as many do, that the tasks and problems which confront us to-day are even more formidable than our famous pioneers had to face, that the clouds now resting upon the future of our people are darker than those brave women and men fought under. That may be so. But are we not equipped with a far larger experience, and more powerful impetus than launched any of our forerunners upon their courses—the experience and the knowledge how to avoid errors and the impetus which by their toils and their triumphs they have so richly bequeathed to us? And is our faith in the power of God to be any less than their faith?

Then look at what we have active in our own days to strengthen and give us heart. Wisdom and understanding, character and conscience, patience and perseverance have surely not died out with the fathers; nor under the Blessing of God has progress become stagnant. Take some obvious proofs.

When we are tempted to suppose that as a people we are thoughtless and extravagant, idler than of old, and indeed verging on moral and financial bankruptcy, look at the National Savings Movement and its strength. As many of you must know, the sale of Saving Certificates through the past year has gone up to nearly 63 millions from 52½ the year before. And from the beginning till a month ago the total value of certificates sold was almost eight hundred million pounds, a sum "considerably greater than the whole national debt before the war." Do not say that this means only money. Think of the genius which planned the scheme and which lives with us still. Think of the powers of character in the multitudes of our people who rose to it, and the steadiness with which they hold to its opportunities.

Take another sign in the same direction of hope. Last week there was held another Annual Conference of a national character—that of the Orthopaedic Association of Great Britain. What discoveries they have to record not only in the past but continuing. What relief and redemption from deformity, especially among the children of the realm! Add to the inspiring books I have named, Sir Arthur Keith's *Menders of the Maimed* and M. Watson's *Civilisation and the Cripple*.

You will understand the pleasure I have to welcome you to Scotland as the Chairman of the Scottish Council for Women's Trades. In the end of last century that achieved not a little in

removing the evils of sweated industries among women. And still its work goes on, of which I can speak gratefully for I am not one of the Executive, but the labours of this are the labours mainly of women—Miss Blackie, the Chairman, Miss Irwin, the Secretary, Mrs. Johnston, Miss Tancred and others. They have rescued large numbers of girls from unemployment and hopeless homes, given them domestic training on farms and in manses, and sent them to lives of usefulness in Canada and elsewhere, from which they write of their happiness in work and in fellowship.

Need I speak of the cheering advance in the Adult Education Movement, or that in the discipline of the young by the Boys' Brigades, the Boy Scouts, the Girls' Guildry and the Girl Guides?

These are only some of the movements which prove that progress among us is not stagnant, and which correct and rebuke the pessimism that our present difficulties and dangers naturally excite.

Our clear duty then, besides recalling the wisdom and courage of our forerunners, is not only to exercise and discipline our own reason and other natural gifts, but to remember that the full liberty and efficiency of these will come to us only through religion: faith in the God who made us and would have us both believe that He makes nothing in vain and help Him to carry this out; faith in Jesus Christ, Whose parables tell us that the Divine Mind abhors nothing more than waste—unprofitableness and waste by the burial of our talents, whether through selfish idleness or, as is our chief temptation in these days, through despondency and fear.

A few last words on your fellowship in this happy reunion. We here have just been celebrating the Five Hundreth Anniversary of the birth of the famous Bishop Elphinstone, builder in part of this Cathedral and Founder of our University. He was the great peacemaker of his times and I leave you with his words on Friendship:—

"Friendship is the stay of kingdoms, the mother of peace and tranquillity, the patron of justice, the parent of pity and mercy. Without the fruits of friendship Kings cannot reign nor states hold together; nor can anyone in the long run, whether in public or private, be able to live for, or be of profit to himself and his fatherland. For no good thing may be in life without friendship or not connected with friendship. To sum up, friendship is that harmony by which if it stands small affairs increase, and if it be removed great affairs will gradually decay."

Do not these great words appeal straight to ourselves to-day, and offer the high solution of all the problems and differences between the various classes of our own people, and between the nations of the world?

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETING.

LADY ADAM SMITH, J.P., presided over a Meeting for Girls on the evening of June 15th.

GOOD CITIZENSHIP.

LADY LESLIE MACKENZIE began her speech by referring to the old days when the National Council of Women was known as the National Union of Women Workers, but though the name had changed and another group of people now seemed to think the title of Women Workers more appropriate to themselves, the National Council had at any rate kept the work. They had indeed added to it in many directions, especially in the way of administration and the legislation that is behind social work of all kinds. But what they stood for was still the same: knowledge and interest in humanity, and in caring that humanity should be dealt with fairly and justly in every direction.

Lady Mackenzie said she had been asked to speak mainly upon the best way in which girls could use their capacity and training in doing for the rest of the world what they would like to be done for themselves. As a preliminary they must realise that, in order to do any work in the world at all that was worth doing, they must know something about the world, about its conditions, and how and what could be done to meet those conditions. She proposed to talk about the kind of training young people ought to have if they were to make the best of their lives for the community. In the old days she thought many of them plunged into things and barged into bits of work for which they were probably not very well fitted and about which perhaps they knew very little. That had led to a good deal of criticism upon women's work, but the criticism of that earlier period was not justified to-day. Women in this country nowadays were preparing themselves as well as they could for the work they undertook. The younger generation had a chance of doing things a little more systematically and more technically than the older generation had the capacity to do.

Many of her audience, said Lady Mackenzie, were still at school, and she felt very strongly that while at school, their duty was their school work. She did not think she was greatly in favour of much of the kind of distractions that went on now both in school and college. A little less of it would be a very great help to many studious students. She felt safe in saying that in Aberdeen! Aberdeen people did know how to work. But she was not sure that to-day they worked as well as her generation had done. At any rate, while at school, it must be school work that came first, and they must remember that they were learning not only for school but for life. It would be that learning for life that would be of

use to them later on, when they began to try living on their own, perhaps at their own expense.

Before they left school, they would perhaps make up their minds about their next step in life; and at whatever age they left, they ought by that time to have acquired a certain amount of education on other things than what was called book-learning. Some might be able to go on to a higher branch of education, others would have to begin earning their own living at once or helping to earn the household living. There was a clear distinction between the two types—those who must immediately find a job, and those who could look about them and probably train themselves further for the work they chose.

In the old days a young lady could very genteelly become a governess, or perhaps a dressmaker or milliner or something of that sort, but not much more was open to her until the period when it became quite "nice" to be a nurse. The teaching profession, once called governessing, was still the most important work a girl could undertake. Many others were open to her in these days, but there was no profession on earth of more value to the community than that of teaching. In fact, the teacher had in his or her hands the making or marring of the whole lives of the community. The responsibility of the teacher, therefore, was exceedingly great. She had even heard a school inspector say that he almost believed that, in some parts of the country, the schoolmaster was all that stood between the community and barbarism. She thought that a terrible statement, but it did emphasise the fact that those who became teachers should have the capacity for taking such a responsibility.

Nursing had been completely revolutionized in the last 60 or 70 years, and had become, in all its branches, one of the great occupations for women.

Allied to it was the medical profession, which women were entering in great numbers. She was not sure that the position of the private practitioner was a very lucrative one for them. She felt doubtful whether women voted for women candidates in the field of politics, and she felt equally doubtful about women employing women doctors. But that was only one section of the work, and there was plenty of opportunity for well trained medical women in Public Health, Child Welfare, School medical service and inspection. There were also posts available as radiologists in hospitals, research workers, etc.

Although women had been admitted to the legal profession, she was afraid the Law would remain in the hands of men for many years to come. She would leave to Dr. Harry Miller, who was to be the next speaker, the question of women clergy.

Coming to the domestic side of life, Lady Mackenzie said that

Domestic Science training was now beautifully organised and led to some extremely well-paid occupations. To take catering, for example. From her own experience, she knew it was almost impossible to make and sell food without making a profit, but it was a job that needed somebody who was well trained and prepared to put her back into the work.

Storekeepers and laundry managers were also in demand, and women might well fill such posts. Hotel management, she thought, was a real profession for women, and a thoroughly good occupation for both sexes. She had been shown over a training school for hotel managers at Lausanne, where every branch of management was taught. Not only cleaning rooms, laying tables, etc., but knowing about wine and food, even learning foreign languages was included. And in connection with food, she would mention the work of a dietician in a large establishment—work very well fitted to a qualified woman.

In the field of Public Health came the work of sanitary inspectors and rent collecting. Several Local Authorities with big housing schemes were making arrangements for having trained women as rent collectors, who would also see that the property was kept in proper repair.

In the Babies' department, there was the social service of looking after the "toddlers' playgrounds" in our large towns, which could occupy a great many young women who had a certain amount of time to spare, such as the girls who have left school and do not need or want at once to look for paid work. But it was important to remember that such a job, though voluntary and unpaid, must be treated as a daily job and done regularly and honestly.

Among the social services, came the Almoner's work—interesting and useful work demanding well-trained women.

For girls with a good education and some artistic capacity there were opportunities as house architects, an occupation which comparatively few had entered as yet. She could not understand why they kept men architects arranging houses which women had to disarrange as soon as they got into them.

Among the out-door occupations were gardening, dairying, the keeping of animals, etc.—all jobs which required training, good physique, good health, and willingness to be adaptable.

Whatever occupation they chose as their professional work, they could spare time to do something of a voluntary nature.

Lady Mackenzie said she would like to see girls in every school taught to read an Act of Parliament. They would find them fascinating bits of reading. They should also read their newspapers carefully. Newspapers gave better training in social conditions than would ever be believed from the look of them. They should

visit their own institutions, go, for instance, to the public meetings of their own Town Councils. When she herself was lecturing on Local Government to Edinburgh University students, she felt that she was talking into wool until she had taken her class to see their own institutions. After that they began to realise the difference between the Lord Provost and the Town Clerk. When girls had been often enough to look at their Town Council and had attained the age of 21, they must begin to vote for the proper people to be on the Council, and must not wait too long before they began to try and be representatives on it themselves.

In conclusion, Lady Mackenzie told how she had overheard one woman say to another, at an Edinburgh street corner, "Aye, aye, God knows it's a hell of a world." It had roused in her the wish to fight every wrong she should meet. She wanted them to think what circumstances could have roused in a clean, decent, tidy house-wife such feeling, what wrong could have drawn from her such a terrible saying. Few people who were old in years had been free from troubles which made them doubt whether this world was good and beautiful and true. They knew there were difficult conditions all round them, but they knew too that there were beautiful things, warmhearted friends, and competent officials who could bring comfort and help and healing and perhaps some happy distraction to the sad and sick. Most of our social service had come into being to meet the difficulties and hardships of life, and many of those bits of service that women could do were meant to remove conditions of life that might lead to that terrible judgment she had quoted. It was the privilege as well as the duty of young people to think of those conditions and give some service to alleviate them.

"When you have felt the call and qualified yourselves for any section of this great social service, we older people say to you, in great humility: 'Go forward without fear, in the name of wisdom, power and holiness, to do battle for justice, goodness and truth.'"

THE VERY REV. J. HARRY MILLER, C.B.E., D.D., said he proposed to speak on the spirit and atmosphere in which all such service should be rendered. He wanted to underline the need for becoming trained in any work undertaken for the community. The untrained worker was a waster of time and energy and, unless gifted with humour, a failure, but those who trained themselves would always find sufficient work to do.

The danger to-day was that the range of service opening before women was so wide that it was almost distracting. Its possibilities were so unrestricted that people were liable to forget there must be a certain restriction of themselves and a discipline

of their own character before they could be what they ought to be to the community. But the girl who knew what she ought *not* to do was very far on the way to discovering what she ought to do.

Many of his audience were probably aware of powers in themselves that had never yet been called forth. He did not want to make them think of themselves more highly than they ought, but they were to think of themselves highly in the sense of having some quality of their own which could be of rare value to their generation. The question was, where and how to use it.

He would remind them first of all that the work which had to be done in any generation was not done wholly by youth or wholly by age, but by age and youth working together. Age needed youth far more than youth always realised; and youth needed age, perhaps a little more than youth realised.

With regard to this question of homes and housing—they had all been born into homes, they had them now, and when they went out into the world their homes would be a memory gracious or tragic according to how they used them now. He would remind them that they could find no more radiant or joyous place of training for service than their own home just as it was. He himself suspected that the people who made most trouble upon Boards of Governors, etc., had been solitary children who had never learnt from the criticism of brothers and sisters, that criticism so delirious, so free, so incessant. Good homes were needed, and some of his hearers might do worse than connect themselves with some of their local housing schemes. He hoped they would also follow up the line suggested by Lady Leslie Mackenzie of house architecture. Women architects were sorely needed, though there were occasionally rare men who had an idea or two about a house.

And, again following Lady Mackenzie, he too would urge them to make themselves acquainted with and masters of Acts of Parliament. There were few things more illuminating than to read through some of these Acts. They would find there an immense amount of legislation lying moribund simply because people did not know it was there, and because it was in advance of its time.

Turning to the question of leisure and recreation, Dr. Miller referred to the wonderful work that could be done by the cinema, when it was well handled, though there was nothing that could become a somewhat second-rate money-making machine more easily. At present the cinema was balanced between the desire for making money and the desire for giving wise information and noble thoughts to the community.

The girls of to-day had to take over at a time of fascinating

interest and extraordinary possibility. It was in their power, if they would take up this line of social service and bring to it a trained mind and trained character, to make their land nobler and better. And not only in their own land but the world over there was a hunger for something greater. It was not only development of the great national life but—and he believed that it lay in the hands of the women of the world—the securing that the brilliant discoveries of science should be applied to the development and ennoblement of human life and not to its destruction. He himself had been through the War for four years—and was proud still to hold the commission of the King,—but just because he had been through the War, he wanted to remind them what a grim, sad, terrible thing war was. If they could put the weight of their character and trained intelligence to the destruction of armaments, so that nations could come into a great co-operation for the glory of truth and righteousness, then they would have seen a vision of something world-wide in its wonder and greatly attractive in its ideals.

The secret lying beneath all this possible service was that they had got to know what they were trying to do. Somebody had once described a kitten as "Something which takes little rushes at nothing and stops before it gets there." He wanted to warn them against that kitten-like attitude to social service. The ideal he would set before them was, not only that they were part of a great company moving on to a nobler day, but that they should be ready to look at the dark and difficult things they had to face. Life had its dark and difficult side, and if they were going to be good citizens, they must look the dark things straight in the face, not walk round them. And in looking, they should seal a vow that they would not rest until such things were put right.

LADY NUNBURNHOLME, in proposing the Vote of Thanks, said she did not want the young people to go away too depressed about the dark and difficult side. Life was very wonderful and very beautiful, and the great thing was to go forward in faith and hope, expecting to meet good things: they would find them waiting round the corner.

FIRST PUBLIC MEETING.

MRS. OGILVIE GORDON, D.Sc. Ph.D., F.L.S., J.P., presided over a Public Meeting on the evening of June 16th.

MENTAL DEFICIENCY.

MISS EVELYN FOX (Central Association for Mental Welfare) began her speech with a reference to the changes in outlook which had taken place during the last 20 years or so on the whole problem of mental deficiency, especially upon its social aspects. In particular, the work done for defectives during that period had thrown light on the larger problem, which had only recently emerged as one of the acute questions of the day, namely, the "sub-normal" group of the population. During those years people had really got a new orientation towards the whole problem of mental deficiency. Anyone who had the courage to read the Report of the Royal Commission on this subject, issued at the beginning of the century, and who had also read some of the more modern reviews dealing with it, could not fail to be struck by the enormous difference in the approach to the subject.

In the Report of the Royal Commission, comparatively little reference was made to the problems of diagnosis. In those days they seemed simple enough. It was then thought that there was a very well-defined group of defectives who could easily be isolated and be dealt with in perfectly definite ways. Another feature of the Report was the general feeling that the mentally defective person formed part of a basic, "impossible" group in all social problems, and that if this group could be dealt with successfully, the way was open to finding a solution of such matters as poverty, prostitution, recidivism. The evidence of all those concerned with relief work, Poor Law Guardians, social workers in prisons, etc. did leave a quite definite impression that the mentally defective were the most serious social problem of the day, and that once the Mental Deficiency Act was passed and administered, we should have gone a long way towards meeting some of these other troubles.

The work which had been carried out since then, not only in this country but also in the United States, Germany, and Switzerland, pointed to a very different state of affairs. Miss Fox said she thought it important to emphasize this fact because so many people had a tendency to be obsessed by the tragic individual cases they had come across: for instance, the defective woman with illegitimate children who were burdens on the State, the defective boy or girl, who could not support themselves economically, the trouble of the really vicious and the defective who could not be

protected outside but for whom it was extremely difficult to find a place in an institution. Such cases tended to make people lose sight of the wider issues.

When the work under the Mental Deficiency Act was started, an effort was made in England to try and provide as efficient as possible a social service for defectives in the community. It was found that the number who could actually be certified was far fewer than had been estimated. On the other hand, a great number of "defectives" were present in the community, a proportion of whom were holding their own in a very small way under the protection of their families. Defectives were not found in great numbers in rescue homes, etc., and yet many people do find their way there. Clearly it was not the mentally defective who formed the "social problem group," it was the sub-normal element in the community.

It had been estimated that something like 10% of the population belonged to this mentally sub-normal group, and of these slightly less than one per cent. were definitely mentally defective, i.e., came under the definitions of the Mental Deficiency Act and could, therefore, be dealt with by the Local Authorities as defective. There was no legal power of control over the remainder of that sub-normal group.

All the figures pointed to the same conclusion: that once the cases of defects were known, and once it was possible to supply special schools and community control for those who must remain at home, the certifiable mental defective was not the worst danger, either racially or economically, in the country.

That only meant transferring the problem to a different and more difficult place. What was to be done with the "sub-normal" group? Miss Fox said she herself believed a method of tackling the difficulty would be found through our methods of dealing with and controlling the mentally defective in the community. It was a question with them of adjusting a limited personality to the complicated demands of the present day. This could be done in two ways; either by placing the defectives in an environment adapted to them, i.e., an institution; or by providing such control and training as to fit them into fairly ordinary surroundings. The latter course meant a lot of work, but it could be very successful. A limited mentality meant a restriction of interests within a small circle, and it made the whole difference to such cases if they could be provided with a change of interest from time to time. Occupation centres, training, travel groups, were all ways of meeting the difficulty, and by this kind of method efficient control was being secured over defectives who must remain in the community. It might seem a small way of tackling so large a problem, but it did mean that a large number of persons could be

fitted into a complex society, who would otherwise live in institutions or be a serious social difficulty.

She visualised the day when we should be able to protect, with the exception of the temperamentally defective and those with vicious tendencies, this group of our fellow citizens. But it could not be done by any ready method, by merely providing institutions or by sterilization; it depended on careful study of the individual. The establishment of mental tests during the last few years had been an enormous gain, for with their help it was possible to form a far better idea of the actual mental condition of a person and so to select, with a greater chance of success, the sort of environment which would suit him.

In conclusion, Miss Fox said there were certain principles which must be observed if this work were to be done successfully. There must be sufficient institutions available for those who could not be dealt with outside, and there must be a careful testing of defectives in order to weed out those suitable for institutions, or otherwise. In addition there must be efficient organisation for providing some form of social help or assistance for all defectives.

DR. HAMILTON MARR (Senior Medical Commissioner and Member of General Board of Control for Scotland) said:—

The cloven sphere of the brain, which holds all thought in its folds, is as mysterious and as wonderful in every way as the Universe around us. The world of mind within each of us is locked in numberless constellations. We know more about these constellations, the elements of the brain and nervous system, than astronomers do of the stars. An attempt has been made to number those on the surface of that part of the brain which has specially to do with conscious mind, and it is estimated that there are twelve hundred million nerve cells located there, in normal conditions. We know that each of these nerve cells—the elements of the nervous system and visible only through the microscope—is complete in itself, capable of receiving impressions, of interpreting impressions and of giving effect to those interpretations.

We know that it is the special function of part of the cell to convey impressions or sensations to the body of the cell and that in this complicated body take place all the processes, whether mechanical and reflex or mental and reflective, which make the cell "The House of the Interpreter" who transmits his will by other special parts of the cell and gives expression to it in movement, in speech, and in the written and printed word.

The interpreting function of the body of the nerve cell varies between the limits of purely mechanical and chemical interpretation, such as takes place in the nerve cells in the eye where the pictures of external objects are registered by mechanical and

chemical means, very similar to those by which a photograph is developed, and the limits of those complicated actions which in their entirety are called "conscious mind."

Above all, and this has an important bearing on our subject, all the nerve cells are present at birth. It is scientifically true that "our brains are 70 year clocks, the Angel of Life winds them up once for all, then closes the case and gives the key into the hand of the Angel of the Resurrection."

Two lines of research have shown us that at birth there are three layers of nerve cells, all of equal depth on the surface of the brain, and that as the mind develops in childhood, the third layer increases so as to have a depth of four times that of each of the other two layers, and when mind is markedly wanting, as in gross mental defect, this layer does not develop at all. On the other hand, when it has developed in a normal manner and has been attacked by disease in early life, the cells in this layer are destroyed and disappear, with the result that the mental condition in such cases is reduced to that low level which is present where there has been an absence of development of this particular layer. This point is well illustrated by the conditions known as microcephalic mental defect. In such cases the state of mind is of a very low grade whether the condition is inherent and the result of relatively few nerve cells in the mental area, or whether the area, having been normally developed, has its cells destroyed by disease—whether, in other words, it is inherent or acquired microcephalic defect.

The closure of the cranial bones does not take place completely until the age of 4 years. In normal conditions the anterior and posterior fontanelles, as they are called, close up gradually, and finally the upper part of the skull is a solid mass of bone. In microcephalic defect this closure of the skull takes place much earlier than usual, the growth of the skull is stopped and it falls to a minimum size, below which the possessor is necessarily mentally defective. The term "microcephalic" is applied to all heads below 17 inches in circumference.

While the nerve cells are all present at birth and never reproduce themselves and, further, when destroyed cannot be replaced, like the bud they expand and unfold, and this is the cause of the enlargement of the third layer of nerve cells I have specially referred to as having intimate relations with mind. This growth of the brain takes place chiefly during the first seven years of human life and the brain attains to three-fourths of its full adult growth in these early years. These are the most important ages for the protection of the delicate developing nerve cells which subserve mind and are necessary to maintain the tone and regulate the machinery of the whole body.

During these early years, ill-health, improper or unsuitable

nourishment from within or from without—for we are apt to forget that the sense organs are important digestive organs conveying immaterial food to the human mind—environment, in short—may affect these delicate growing cells and be for them:—

“As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or frost to flow’rs.”

The term “Mental Deficiency” may best be defined as marked want of mind or extreme stupidity arising from an inherent scarcity of the nervous elements of the brain or destruction of many of those elements through inherent malnutrition or disease before birth, or during the evolution of the mental faculties in childhood at the age of 7 years. Let me compare this definition with that of Mental Deficiency in England. Section 1 (2) of the Mental Deficiency Act, 1927, reads as follows:—

“For the purposes of this section, ‘mental defectiveness’ means a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind existing before the age of eighteen years, whether arising from inherent causes or induced by disease, or injury.”

The distinction is mainly one concerning the maximum age for the recognition of defect. Broadly speaking, mental disease, as distinct from mental defect, is amenable to medical care and treatment and may be cured. If an Institution for the mentally defective is to be equipped, like a Mental Hospital for the diagnosis, cure and treatment of mental disease, there would be no serious objection to young people up to the age of 18 years entering it as is permitted in the English Act, but in my view such an Institution must necessarily be less efficient and make Mental Defective Establishments needlessly costly to the community. Ideal conditions, in these respects, would be attained when active remedial medical treatment was required; the mentally defective could be transferred temporarily to the Mental Hospital. The Mentally Defective Institution should function essentially as an Educational Institution as contrasted with the essentially medical Mental Hospital. It should be clearly understood that the mentally defective even when their conditions have improved so much as to allow them to be in home conditions or at work among the general community should remain on the Register of mental defectives. In this manner any mental deterioration or alteration in their circumstances, which would affect their welfare and well-being might be obviated by immediate attention from the responsible Local Authorities.

Defect, such as has been broadly defined, implies that there is no prospect of recovery. The mentally defective can never fulfil the obligations and duties of a responsible citizen and must be kept continuously under supervision. I know of no better illus-

tration of the necessity for such permanent registration and continuous supervision than one which I have repeated so frequently that it may be wearisome to you:

I had occasion to visit a defective boy in the remote Highlands, and as I passed up the hill to the cottage, where the boy resided, I saw in front of the cottage a boy clad in a rough kilt, bare-legged and with a broad leather belt around his body. To this belt a rope was attached and the other end of the rope was tied to a stake. He had roughly a circle of about 10 yards to walk in. I went on to the cottage, the door was opened by a bright, fresh-complexioned woman and, when I asked where the boy was I had to visit, she pointed to the boy tied to the stake. I said to her, is it not a cruel thing to tie up your boy like this, as if he were a sheep or a goat? and she said “Cruel? I would not hurt a hair of his head.” Then she took me to the back of the cottage and showed me cliffs going steeply down to the sea, some 100 feet in height. “This house,” she said, “is called Clach-nan-Ceachbann, the place of the tether. I have had to tether all my children until they learned to avoid the danger at the back of the house but my eldest son, the boy who is tethered, has never been able to learn this and so I have to keep him tethered.” So it is with the mentally defective; they must throughout life be tethered. The tether or supervision may be very slight but it is always required, and must be of such a nature that when the mentally defective person shows any signs of deterioration in his conduct the tether may be drawn closer and the comparative freedom of, say, residence in a croft or farm or his own home, whether in a country village or city, exchanged for the closer supervision of the Colony of an Institution.

It is not in the power of any human being to define mental conditions, to say where soundness of mind ends and unsoundness begins. We cannot draw a stroke between the confines of day and night, but light and darkness, on the whole, are clearly distinguishable. On the whole, mental defect and normal mind are tolerably distinguishable, and it is obvious that the basis of treatment of the mentally defective must be education—education in the broadest sense of the term, having for its object the development of the limited faculties of the subject, so that he may be of use to himself and even to the community. The centre of this educational system must be the special classes of the Educational Authorities and the School of the Mentally Defective Institution for young children from the earliest age that it is possible to have them under care, and for the adult the workshops with their arts and craft teachers.

In the very earliest stages and in normal circumstances the home is the proper place for the mentally defective, but even the best of mothers must be assisted by teachers, nurses, mental welfare workers and medical men who have a special knowledge of mental defect.

Such a combination, in practice, makes, out of apparently hopeless material, individuals able to help themselves and even others, and such a combination in the long run will be of the greatest economy and benefit to the community. Once defect has been ascertained, these agencies, all pulling together, to make the best of the mentally defective, will see that the defective must never be an absolutely free agent and arrange that supervision should never be relaxed. In this way depraved, vicious and criminal habits need never be acquired, nor need the defective be taken advantage of and allowed to become the prey of others.

This is not the place to speak of the detailed work of a Defective Institution, but I would like to summarize the principles that should be adopted to make the care and treatment of the mentally defective ideal. The first principle should be continuous supervision. The defective should have the advantages of education from the very earliest age, scholastic, if possible, but, where this is, after trial, fruitless, education of some kind should never be neglected even in the most apparently hopeless conditions. There is no such being as the ineducable child. The younger children should be separated from the older. In general, therefore, there will be two main parts of the institution—that for adults and that for juveniles.

The age of 16 years is taken as an arbitrary age, for the precocity of some defective children may require that they should be put into the adult section at an earlier age than this, and, again, there are many defectives over 16 who can quite readily be allowed to associate with juveniles.

In the Colony or adult section of an Institution the main function—education—must be continued and be of such a nature as to fit the defective for service, a trade or occupation of some kind. In many cases training is so fruitful as to allow defectives to be engaged in outside occupations and in many cases to make a living for themselves with a consequent increase in their happiness. In one of our Institutions a troop of Girl Guides was second in a Competition among the whole of the guides for the County in which the Institution was situated, and might have been first but for the fact that there was a written examination and many of the girls could neither read nor write.

The necessity for supervision throughout the life of a mentally defective person has been emphasised, and while there are many defectives at present earning their living and who are not certified it is of very great advantage to have these people always on a Register. It is an incentive to them to remember that if they fall into evil ways and deteriorate they will lose the large amount of freedom which they have under slight supervision, and be returned to the Colony of an Institution and to stricter care.

There is a class of mentally defective, that defined as the moral imbeciles, who are at present certified only when they have been launched on a criminal career, or, in the case of women, have been taken advantage of and had illegitimate children. These mentally defective persons often possess a high degree of intelligence.

If the Mental Deficiency Act were in proper operation and mental defect taken care of in its early stages, it would be found in practice that this special class of case, which is causing so much trouble, which fills our Workhouses, our Borstal Institutions and Prisons, would be detected. The defect of mind, in the majority of these defectives, is not in intelligence, often they are above average intelligence; the defect lies in conduct, in the control of the emotions, in the moral feelings and in the will-power. These abnormal conditions appear at very early ages and may be recognised by teachers, especially in the ordinary school life. Furthermore, the majority of those defectives have stigmata of degeneration which, when taken with the anomalies of conduct, point to the inherent and acquired conditions of mental defect. I shall illustrate only one or two types of this class.

Case I.—A farm servant aged 28, was seen in a Poor Law Institution where she had given birth to a child. Her personal history showed that she had reached Standard II. at school. She had no knowledge of figures, did not like school, frequently played truant and finally ran away from home. For a time she lived in a tinker's camp, developed loose morals at an early age and had an abortion. At the age of 17 she had a child and since then has had 4 more. Each child had a different father. Three of the 5 children were seen and when I reported that the mother and 2 of the children (who were imbecile) were defective, the Local Authority concerned had them certified.

Case II.—A farm servant. Age unknown. I have never been able to see this woman though I have followed her in Inverness, Perth, Stirling, Lanark, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright. She disappears whenever she learns that enquiries are being made, and I understand she has now found a home in Ireland. At each farm when I called the story was invariably the same—a fine worker, quiet in every respect, but men will not leave her alone. She has had, to my knowledge, 8 illegitimate children. I have had an opportunity of seeing 6 and all have been certified as feeble-minded.

I should like to deal shortly with a method by which many hope that greater freedom may be given to the mentally defective and, at the same time, benefit the community by preventing the mentally defective and unfit from repeating mental defect in their offspring. This is sterilization.

Any interference with natural processes must always be re-

FAWCETT COLLECTION

garded with suspicion by the physician whose office is wholly that of service, of observation of the normal processes of nature in the human being and study of these processes, in the hope that when they depart from normal channels his experience and knowledge may help to bring these abnormal courses back to healthy ones.

The attempt to lay down a general law with regard to sterilization of the mentally defective must end in failure and in disaster. The mentally abnormal can only be dealt with on an individual basis and in such circumstances where sterilization may be helpful sterilization should be complete. In general, sterilization, as advocated and practised, is of a limited nature, and its object is to prevent the individuals concerned from conceiving. This partial sterilization, while preventing the birth of children to parents who might be likely to propagate mentally defective offspring, leaves the whole sexual glandular system in operation, and in consequence of the changes that go on in the organs, nervous influences are excited which, being unsatisfied, lead to violent, dangerous and criminal propensities and, where the fear of giving birth to children has been taken away, to unrestrained sexual excess in women and the spreading of infection and contagious disease. And it must not be forgotten that even in complete sterilization, when the organs have been completely taken away, the nervous reflexes associated with these organs remain and must be considered in the subsequent care and treatment of the person concerned. The subject of eugenics, again, is only in an experimental and theoretical stage, and has not been fruitful in its results when natural laws have been set aside. On the other hand, observation of the conduct and ideals of large numbers of individuals may prove to be of profound importance to the human race. Having regard to the enormous influence of the first 7 years of life on the individual, of the effects of malnutrition, either material or spiritual, on the developing brain, I would ask you to watch the effect of the 5 years' plan in Russia. With its political aspect I have no concern. I am interested only as a psychologist with the effect it will have on all children who have been 7 years of age or under during the working of the plan and on all children born while the plan was in progress. I may be wrong in my information but, so far as I can see, the idea dominating the scheme is a material one, that man can live by bread alone—that the mind can be separated from the body. If this view is correct, does not the scheme remind you of that lost soul in Dante's *Inferno*, who carries his head severed from his body and does his infernal round without making use of it? Only when the unexpected and the unlooked for arises must he hold up the head by the hairs, as a lamp, for only out of the severed head can any answer come. In this great experiment to remodel humanity, is it not the hand that is supreme, the hand that holds the severed

head by the hairs, the hand that dominates the head, the hand that has no need of the head in the machinelike round of the Infernal surroundings? What effect must all this have on the coming generations?

I have said sufficient to show that there is no subject more delicate in its nature or more difficult in its practice than the recognition of the mentally unfit, and the best mode of providing for their welfare. That all the mentally defective should be assisted or sustained is inculcated at once by religion, humanity and expedience.

Could we have a clearer exposition of the situation than that given by Greatheart in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. "Brother Feeble-Mind, I have it on commission," said he, "to comfort the feeble-minded and to support the weak. You must needs go along with us. We will wait for you, we will lend you our help, we will deny ourselves of some things, both opinionative and practical for your sake, we will not enter into doubtful disputations before you, we will be made all things to you rather than you should be left behind," and because of Greatheart we read later that Feeble-Mind entered the River as the rest. His last words were "Hold out Faith and Patience," so he went over to the other side.

THE NURSING PROFESSION.

Miss E. M. MUSSON, C.B.E., R.R.C. (Chairman of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales) said:—The passing of the Nurses' Registration Acts in 1919 marks the recognition of Nursing as a Profession in the British Isles. There are four separate Acts for England and Wales, for Scotland, for Northern Ireland and for the Irish Free State. The Acts are similar and when drawing up the Regulations the Councils consulted one another in order to secure a uniform standard of qualification. In order to avoid misapprehension I wish to say that my remarks refer to the present position in England and Wales, but will for the most part be applicable to the other parts of these Islands.

The Powers conferred by the Act of Parliament are definite and limited. It set up a Council which is required, under certain prescribed regulations:—

- (a) To form and keep a Register of Nurses for the sick, consisting of a General part for general trained Nurses, together with Supplementary parts for Male Nurses, Mental Nurses, Nurses for Mental Defectives, Sick Children's Nurses and Fever Nurses.
- (b) To make rules regulating the formation, maintenance and publication of the Register; the conditions of admission to

the Register; the conduct of Examinations; and also rules regulating removal from, and restoration to, the Register.

The Council has also to approve Hospitals as Training Schools.

It is a penal offence under the Act unlawfully to assume the title of Registered Nurse or in any way to cause falsification of the Register.

There are, at the present time, 51,030 Nurses on the General part of the Register maintained by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, and a total of 11,322 on the Supplementary Registers. Examinations, both Preliminary and Final, have been held regularly three times yearly since 1926.

The great importance of a Nurse's practical skill is recognised by the Council by the award of double marks for the practical as compared with the theoretical work, while her suitability of temperament and her character are tested, as hitherto, by her work and conduct during her training and must be vouched for by the Head of her Training School before a candidate is admitted to the Examinations.

The approval of Training Schools and the issue of a standard syllabus of instruction has led to the provision of class rooms and teaching equipment in many Hospitals where previously there were none, to more regular and systematic teaching and to the appointment of Sister Tutors who are wholly or partly engaged in class teaching and coaching.

The general education required for entry into the Profession is a matter of great importance. The demand in all the various branches of work undertaken by Trained Nurses is for the "educated woman," but this is a term which is capable of various definitions.

The general consensus of opinion in the profession is, that the minimum should be a secondary school education, while the standard to be aimed at should be, whenever possible, the school leaving certificate or its equivalent.

We have need in the Profession for lecturers, examiners, writers and research workers, and there is room and scope for the woman with a University Degree, provided she is in other respects suitable.

The discussion and correspondence which have taken place of late, have led to the erroneous impression that fewer girls are now entering the Profession than was the case some years ago. This is not correct. More probationers are being trained than ever before, and a larger number of Nurses are admitted to the State Register each year. The number who entered for the Final Examination in General Nursing in England and Wales in 1926 was 3642, five years later the number was 5601, an increase of nearly 2000, and each successive examination is still bringing in an increased number of entries. This is only to be expected if we remember the

steady and continuous expansion of Hospital accommodation, with the consequent increase of staff, both trained and untrained. It is estimated that the bed accommodation in Voluntary Hospitals in England, Scotland and Wales increased by about 15,000 beds during the ten years 1919 to 1929, and this increase is still going on. The accommodation has also increased in the Hospitals maintained by Public Authorities.

Further, in practically all Hospitals, the hours on duty have been very considerably reduced during the same period, and this also has necessitated an increase in the number of probationers. The demand for Trained Nurses has also increased, especially for all branches of preventive or "Public Health" work.

With regard to probationers, the number of *suitable* applicants has not so far kept pace with the increased demand. This has meant that numbers have been increased and kept up by the admission of the less suitable applicants, that much effort is wasted on probationers who have to be weeded out, and that the average standard of the examination is still lower than is to be desired.

The establishment of a basic qualification has already had the effect of interesting other educational bodies in Nursing as a Profession. Post graduate courses have been established in connection with several colleges and Universities, chiefly through the instrumentality of the College of Nursing. Thus, King's College for Social Science offers a course of study and a certificate for Sister Tutors; Bedford College for Women in conjunction with the College of Nursing provides courses in Public Health Nursing and in Training School Administration; the Universities of Hull and of Birmingham offer courses of study for Health Visitors, while Leeds University and the University of London give Diplomas in Nursing.

The College of Nursing has for some time been in touch with the Head Mistresses' Association, whose members are now adopting a more sympathetic attitude towards Nursing as a career for educated girls than some of them have hitherto shewn. As a result it is hoped that certain subjects may be introduced into the school curriculum which would lighten the amount of study at present required during the first year of training. A question has been raised whether certain "credits" obtained in the school leaving examination might not exempt a Nurse from taking the State Preliminary Examination. There would be difficulties in adopting this suggestion. The state Preliminary Examination is "preliminary" to the Final, not a Preliminary School Examination. It is, more strictly speaking, an Intermediate Examination, taken half way through the training; it includes a certain amount of Nursing and is jealously guarded as the "one portal" examination for all parts of the Register.

Preliminary Training Schools, giving a short preparatory course of 6 weeks' to 3 months' duration have been established in many of the principal Hospitals and have proved to be a great help by teaching part of the ground work, both practical and theoretical, before a pupil begins duty in the wards. It is suggested that groups of smaller Hospitals might combine to run similar Preliminary Training Schools, or that such might be established with the help of the Education Authority for candidates selected by the Hospitals in a given area. Much of the improvement which has taken place has depended on better organisation. Nurses as a body are engrossed in their work and have been slow to organise, but there are in existence several Associations, the first of which (the Royal British Nurses' Association) was founded in 1887 by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. It may be interesting to this audience to know that most of these Associations are affiliated to form the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and through it are members of the International Council of Nurses, one of the oldest of Women's International Associations, which now includes Nurses in 23 countries. The largest Association of trained Nurses in this Country is the College of Nursing, founded in 1916, and now incorporated by Royal Charter, the membership to-day being over 28,000. The College is an Association of individual Nurses who elect their Council by postal ballot—(one member, one vote). It is non-party and non-sectarian. It has a Scottish Board to manage its affairs in Scotland, and has also established Branches in 84 different areas in order to maintain close co-operation between members and the Council. Representatives of the Branches meet quarterly to discuss questions affecting the College and the Profession. It controls a weekly Nursing Paper, edited by a Registered Nurse. As one of its first efforts, the College set up an *ad hoc* Committee to enquire into the salaries and hours of work of Nurses. As a result of this Committee's Report—which it published—the College in 1919 approached Hospitals and other employers of Nurses with suggestions for improvement, submitting at the same time a recommended scale of minimum salaries.

A Questionnaire, circulated in 1929, shows that in a period of 10 years the hours worked by Nurses in Hospitals have been very considerably reduced, and that the salaries of trained Nurses have increased at rates varying from 50% to 150%.

Post graduate instruction for higher education in all branches of Nursing work is also organised and carried out at the beautiful building provided for the College Headquarters by the generosity of Annie, Viscountess Cowdray and the late Lord Cowdray.

The College has been instrumental in establishing in conjunction with the Hospital Officers' Association the "Federated Superannuation Scheme for Nurses and Hospital Officers," which is

contributory and in which more than 60% of the Voluntary Hospitals in England, Scotland and Wales, as represented by the number of beds, now participate. Under this scheme pensions are secured by Insurance Policies which are written in the names of the Council of the Scheme as Trustees, and benefits are not sacrificed on change of work within Nursing or Hospital service at home or abroad. This is not the case with Local Government Superannuation Schemes except in so far as they allow for transfer values within that Service. It is hoped that some means may be found to make possible interchange of Pensions between the various services.

For the Nurse in training, a "Student Nurses' Association" has been founded as an auxiliary to the College. This includes at present 110 "Units," and is managed by the Student Nurses themselves, who elect their own officers and draw up their own programmes.

The matter which most concerns the girl who wishes to become a Nurse is, however, the return which her training will bring. In the opinion of those best able to judge, that is to say those who are constantly interviewing candidates and their parents, it is not the prospect of hard work, unavoidable restrictions, nor the small amount of pay during training which deters many well-educated girls from taking up Nursing, but the poor remuneration which is offered to qualified Nurses, as compared to that in other professions. Many Nurses and 'would-be' Nurses have sisters in the Medical and Teaching professions, and even when due allowance is made for the greater expense when studying for these, the comparison in the matter of prospects seems unfavourable in the eyes of candidates and their parents.

A variety of careers are open to the Registered Nurse. She may choose to remain in the Hospital Service—general or special. The first post is usually that of Staff Nurse, often a more or less temporary post for the purpose of gaining experience and regarded as a stepping-stone.

The post of Ward Sister is considered by many to be the most desirable in the profession; it is one which requires ability both as regards nursing, teaching and administration. The same abilities and further experience are needed for the higher posts of Departmental Sister, Night Sister, Tutor Sister, Home Sister, House-keeping Sister, Assistant Matron, and ultimately Matron.

Private Nursing absorbs many Nurses and is perhaps somewhat more remunerative than some other Branches, especially for those who are able to live at home between their cases.

District Nursing is important social work which has not received the consideration it deserves. This branch of Nursing Service has suffered from the inclusion in its ranks of many unqualified

Nurses and is also regarded as the worst paid branch. As this Service is run almost entirely by Associations controlled by Committees of Women, I would specially commend this matter to your attention. It is hoped that in time the whole of the country will be served by fully trained, registered "Queen's Nurses" who are also registered Midwives, and that wherever they are required to act as Health Visitors, School Nurses, Infant Welfare workers, and so on, as is often the case in rural areas, they should also hold the Health Visitors' Certificate recognised by the Ministry of Health.

In addition to these Services there are posts in the Naval, Army, Air Force and Pensions Nursing Services, also in the Prisons Nursing Service. The Overseas Nursing Association sends Trained Nurses to both Government and Voluntary Hospitals and to private Nursing Associations in the Crown Colonies and other out-lying parts of the Empire.

Lady Minto's Nursing Service for private duty among Europeans in India and other organisations are available for those who wish to travel, and there is constant demand for well trained Nurses in the Mission Field.

A limited number of Nurses find work on the big liners; combined Secretarial and Nursing posts are to be found in doctors' consulting rooms; posts in Schools and School Sanatoria offer attractions to Nurses who wish to be free, wherever possible, during the School holidays.

On the *preventive* side there is a demand for well qualified Nurses as Health Visitors, School Nurses, Nurses in industries and factories, and so on.

The various Associations of general trained Nurses and the leading representatives of the Profession do not advocate the fixing of either hours or pay by Act of Parliament, but trust that by influencing public opinion they may obtain such improved conditions as are still necessary. They are strongly of opinion that the tendency shewn in some places to increase the pay of the pupil out of proportion to that of the qualified Nurse is wrong, and where it has been tried has failed to attract really suitable candidates. They ask for better pay for the Nurse when qualified and for all Hospitals to bring their teaching and living conditions up to the standard now found in the best Hospitals, i.e., a separate bedroom for each Nurse; common and recreation rooms, separate from the dining-room; well cooked food; properly equipped class and study rooms; hours on duty which shall not exceed 56 per week on night—as well as day-duty; opportunity for recreation both in and out-door.

We must not forget that the pupils are being trained for arduous, exacting and responsible duties. Attendance on the sick is often unavoidably fatiguing and will always call for sacrifice and forbearance on the part of the Nurse. In addition to the scientific

knowledge she must gain and the practical skill she must acquire, she must learn physical endurance and self-discipline, and practise such qualities as punctuality, quiet ways and patience.

Like other Britons, we claim the right to grumble when we "feel so disposed" as Sairey Gamp would say, but it is a striking fact that, in spite of the hard conditions and bad pay of the past, it is very rarely that an old Nurse is found who would not choose the same calling could she begin again. Nursing is very interesting by reason of the constant advance in the sciences of Medicine and Hygiene, and also of its contact with all forms of social work and all sorts and conditions of men.

The fight against disease is a real one and Nurses are in the thick of it and may learn for themselves the joy which a poet describes as

"The joy of most glorious striving, that dieth in victory."

To those content to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water," who regard it as merely a means of livelihood, Nursing may appear to be dull and hard, but to the Nurse with a real vocation, who finds her chief interest *in* her work, not outside it, who has vision, and Faith and Hope and Charity it is the most absorbing and happiest of callings.

SECOND PUBLIC MEETING.

THE MARCHIONESS OF ABERDEEN AND TEMAIR, G.B.E., L.L.D., J.P., presided over a Public Meeting on the afternoon of June 17th.

WHAT THE COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD ARE DOING.

MRS. ALFRED WATT, M.A., M.B.E. (Liaison Committee of Rural Women's Organisations) said:—It will be of interest to this gathering to call to mind that Mrs. Hoodless, of Hamilton, Ontario, to whom we owe the Women's Institute movement, was at the time she brought forward the idea the Treasurer of the N.C.W. of Ontario and had in this conception the sympathy and support of her President, Lady Aberdeen, and that to the same support and kind invitation many years after we owe the International Women's Institute movement.

It is a far cry from the little loft over a corn chandler's shop in Stoney Creek, Ontario, where the first Women's Institute was formed, to the Albert Hall Meeting of the W.I.s a few weeks ago, when 7000 country women met to discuss questions those other country women would naturally have thought settled for them by

if not their own, some one else's lords and masters; when every great London daily paper commented on the efficient business-like way in which country women solved their personal problems; when half a million other country women listened and heard a Minister of the Crown tell their own representation that the best deputation he had received within his term of office was one composed of country women. It is only 34 years since the organisation of rural women as such began, but much water has run under the bridges. The little Stoney Creek has become a great river, carrying on its waters women of every creed and condition, of every race and occupation, gentle and simple, young and old.

There is an informal alliance known simply as the Liaison Committee of Rural Women's and Home Makers' Organisations, which, given hospitality by the International Council of Women, was formed tentatively in London in 1929, and rather more confidently at Vienna in 1930, and which now has an office of its own in London. We have Lady Aberdeen as our President, and Miss Zimmern for our honorary Secretary, thus ensuring for our Committee some international experience of great value. During these two experimental years we have managed to draw into our circle of friendship almost all the nationally organised existing women's Societies, numbering 39 in all, and have been appealed to by six other countries, where there is no W.I.—Holland, Portuguese, East Africa, Ceylon, Japan, Newfoundland, and Portugal—to help them get such a movement started.

Each of these years we have published a book called "What the Country Women of the World are doing," and we have a third volume in preparation. This book has only partly the character of a report, and it has been priced to keep it within the means of a majority of our members, with the result that out of the two editions of 5,000 copies, there are now only 100 copies left, and hundreds of orders for our next book have already been received.

We are sending out a monthly leaflet—Links of Friendship—which has had an amazing success. It is translated into many languages and goes into thousands of homes. We are training organisers. We are distributing articles on how country women live to various women's papers. All sorts of enquiries from all over the world about W.I. work are dealt with, and an increasing number of visitors are giving and getting information.

But far the most valuable part of our work is that many small societies of quite poor women are now feeling that some other women are taking an interest in them, that they are getting a backing.

Now about our finances. The only societies we enrol are those who promise to contribute to our funds; and any Society of the same character and scope as the Women's Institutes is eligible.

There is no membership or affiliation fee. Many of our societies are entirely composed of peasants, and each contributes what it can. Many do not wish and are unable to have formal affiliations, so we have only these informal conditions of contribution by societies of similar character. You may well say how very uncertain our revenue is. It is so uncertain that, while we start with the societies' contribution, we are building up a revenue from other sources. First we have the income from the societies. Then our reports are evidently going to pay for themselves, and give us a small income. Also we are getting small sums for sales of various articles produced by members of our societies: cookery books, handicrafts, etc.

We are building up a modest endowment fund starting with a hundred Foundation Friends at £5 each. These will form our roll of honour of Country Women, and we shall have it attractively lettered and reproduced for sale. In some cases friends have subscribed to name a poorer countrywoman who has given service to her country. This is a privilege you may all share. Neither Lady Aberdeen, or Miss Zimmern or I will mind in the least how often we are buttonholed by eager offers! We have now nearly 50 names. We also hope to get a great many annual subscriptions at a pound each. We think if we had 500 of these, we could carry on.

We are living in difficult times, but if we had more confidence in one another they need not be quite so difficult. We keep our own money on deposit account, and expect to have trade stimulated with other people's money. We forget that trust between peoples as between persons must be a mutual affair.

The country women of the world, because they have like ways of living, like problems and like aspirations, readily understand and trust each other. They start well equipped for international co-operation. What a fertile field for the growth of new conceptions of humanity! There are no barriers to throw down; and surely from this material something wonderful in human relationships can be built up. In bringing together the country women of the world, you will find new partners in the world's business, and it may well be you will set free a spiritual force in human affairs.

THE DRAMA AS APPLIED TO AMATEUR PRODUCTION.

MISS ELEANOR ELDER (Arts League of Service) said: There has never been a time in the life of the world when Drama has held a more important position than it does to-day. This statement may seem strange in face of the facts that lie before us in our own country where, every day, another theatre closes and another picture house opens,—another touring company joins the list of

those who have had to give up the losing struggle for support in the provincial towns, from whom in past years they received an annual welcome. Yet to-day there are more plays written, translated and published than ever before.

America seems to have caught the enthusiasm first. A few years ago little theatres sprang up everywhere in the States and also in Canada. America has enthusiasm and money. There is not a school, college or institute of any size that has not its well equipped theatre, and as much money is spent on mounting a college play as on a London production. They draw on Europe for many of their plays, and nothing is too modern or too extreme to daunt them.

Germany has always had a tradition of national Drama. Besides the Passion Play at Oberammergau there are 19 other Centres where Passion and Folk plays are produced every few years; and we read of numbers of small student and semi-amateur theatres that are springing up in the small towns. Germany has ideas and the courage to carry them out, and a vitality amongst her actors that is rarely seen on the stage over here.

Russia has still more vitality and many more ideas—but she is too limited by her political policy to allow freedom to her artists—and when propaganda comes into the theatre, too often art flies out. Realising that through the drama her vast hordes of illiterate masses can best be influenced, she has made the theatre and the film her two chief methods of education. I was in Moscow two years ago studying the theatre, and I was amazed at the thoroughness with which this educational policy was carried out. It would seem that, for a dramatist to get a hearing and find favour in a theatre owned by the State some definite teaching or instruction would have to be incorporated into his play, concerning hygiene or economy or some such subject. The drama is not always confined to the stage. In one or two theatres a scene was prepared and acted in the midst of the spectators themselves, for example, when an actress dressed as a peasant woman in the audience cried out that she had been robbed of all her savings which she carried with her. With tears and lamentations she soon had the whole house in sympathy with her, whereupon the manager came on to the stage and explained how much better it was to bank one's savings, and the advantage banking was to everyone. In Moscow there are no empty theatres and no expensive seats. The situation there can in no way be compared to the state of the theatre in other countries. But I believe if our theatres could continue to keep down their prices they would find much better support.

What of our own country? Our stolid Britain?—where it has taken years to collect funds for a national theatre at Stratford-on-Avon, in memory of the greatest dramatist the world has ever seen.

Although we have not yet got our national theatre, it is possible that we shall in time get our national drama. We have much to be proud of in the work of our little theatres and semi-amateur groups, badly as we support them. Many of them are better known in America than they are over here, as may be seen from the number of visitors who come from abroad for their seasons and festivals every year.

In England, Scotland and Wales, there are 1700 amateur dramatic societies duly registered and affiliated to the British Drama League alone, besides numbers of other groups which exist independently, and some of which existed long before the British Drama League came into being. This goes to show that, whatever may be happening to the commercial theatre in the towns, it does not mean that there is any less interest in drama in the country—indeed it is far more widespread and intense than it has ever been before.

If you ask me what has precipitated this revival—if such an unprecedented occurrence can be called a revival,—I would unhesitatingly say,—the War. It was the War that stirred up the dramatic instinct of the Nation, which, surfeited with horrors, yet remained unsatisfied. Every instinct in man has its dual possibility—the sublime ecstasy of the religious revival has its dark counterpart in an orgy of degradation; and the dramatic instinct in a man can be roused by a street accident or the representation of a divine act of sacrifice. The tendency at first to violence in literature, to overstatement, is now finding relief in dramatic representation.

Acting is as natural as breathing to most children (indeed it is a common fact that no interest in acting is a characteristic of mentally deficient children). It is equally natural to many adults, but as we grow older our acting often becomes a habit acquired to conceal nervousness or self-consciousness, or to convince ourselves and our fellow men that we are something which we know in our heart of hearts we are not.

Acting as an Art gives us an expansion of consciousness, and we forget our nerves and ourselves in using to the full our imagination, in creating something outside and beyond ourselves. It is to many people the best and happiest form of recreation, and we should do all in our power to help and stimulate those village drama societies, so rapidly multiplying, which shows signs of becoming real centres of culture and recreation.

Two societies which came into existence just after the War have done more than anything else to encourage this dramatic revival which has been rapidly growing throughout the country in the last 12 years:—The British Drama League, and the Society which I represent, the Arts League of Service. The British Drama

League with its splendid library of plays achieved much with the help of the Carnegie U.K. Trust, and its programme of dramatic festivals is well known to everyone interested in amateur dramatic work. The A.L.S. was founded with the slogan "To bring the Arts into everyday life," and one of its chief aims was to provide recreation for the towns and villages outside the usual theatre radius, in the form of a dramatic programme that would include besides drama, poetry, music, mime and dancing. In short, a variety entertainment simply conceived, with a minimum amount of staging and a maximum amount of imagination. It was hoped that this would stimulate an interest in the arts and encourage individual and amateur groups to create drama for themselves with the limited means at their disposal.

The success of this venture was quite amazing, and now the small company of professional players tour England, Scotland and Wales for nine months every year, carrying their theatre, costumes and lighting with them in one car and travelling the length and breadth of the land.

It would be quite impossible to carry out these tours if it were not for the hospitality given to the players in each locality, and this brings us into touch with numbers of dramatic groups and individuals who are anxious to create dramatic centres in various towns and villages. They come to the Arts League for advice as to good plays, lighting and details of simple staging, with the result that an increasing number of amateur groups spring up in the wake of the travelling theatre, as has been shown by the popularity of the dramatic festivals in those districts where the travelling theatre has visited. The British Drama League follows to co-ordinate and assist local drama.

Now it has been argued that this amateur enthusiasm for drama has had a bad effect upon the commercial theatre, and that the poor support given in the provinces to touring companies is due to the fact that amateur groups are too interested in and satisfied with their own efforts to care to go to the theatre. I have not found this to be the case. The keenest amateurs are those who never lose an opportunity of seeing every good play that comes within their radius, but it certainly makes them more critical of bad plays and poor acting.

I remember some years ago, when our travelling theatre visited a tiny village in one of the Yorkshire Dales (at the invitation of an artist who ran a local dramatic society there), we were met at the Hall by a boy about 10 who offered his help when we were unloading the car. "What play are you doing to-night?" he asked. "I hope it's 'Riders to the Sea,' by Synge. We were going to do that last winter but we had influenza." Their last play, he told me, was "Milestones," and the girl who was washing

the steps at the post office played "Emily." I was told of an unfortunate travelling company who came to that village with "East Lynne," of how the village turned out to see them, and howled with joy over the false sentiment and bad acting, much to the chagrin of the players who were used to less educated audiences. Can anyone say that amateur theatricals are a waste of time with such results as these?

We all know what excellent work the Women's Institutes are doing. What they mean to thousands of our women, and how they have wisely added drama to their other activities. Numbers of rural institutes have taken advantage of the fund given by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, to have visiting producers to them to raise the standard of their productions, but many of them limit their dramatic membership to women only. I would like to suggest that to make a village dramatic society really effective, it should be drawn from both sexes and all classes, and that it should be run jointly by the Women's Institutes and the Men's Clubs, for the social and educational benefit of the whole community.

Can we not discover whether we have not a National drama of our own which will mean something to our people, something more than just an occasional evening of amusement? I wish that, instead of the hundreds of amateur operatic societies in England and Scotland which confine themselves to the production of Gilbert and Sullivan, we could have as many groups which would undertake to give a Shakespeare production once a year. I cannot help feeling that if Shakespeare had been a German, Germany would not have left his great works so neglected as we do. In fact I am not sure that there are not more opportunities of seeing Shakespeare on the Continent to-day than in our own country.

But apart from Shakespeare and his contemporaries there are others, and many of our best dramatists of to-day (not to mention those of the future) who should be included under the heading of National Drama. There are some whose searching criticism of our national defects and tendencies, whose amusing satirical wit, probe our hypocrisies, and help to cleanse our public life,—these are as useful as others who record our historic deeds, and epitomise our national greatness.

Something might be said for the production every few years of one of our great war plays, which, while keeping fresh the memory of of courage and sacrifice, also remind us what a crime war is. Amateur societies, capable of producing such works do exist, although this type of play would be beyond the capacity of most village groups.

There are not many good historical plays, but there is no reason why we should not, some day, acquire them. It would be an interesting experiment to finance some able young writer, and get

him or her to undertake to write a village drama round some place of historical interest in England or Scotland. This could be produced every year, or every few years, by the people themselves at a local dramatic festival,—something less expensive and less dependent on the weather than a pageant.

Then there is our almost unlimited fund of poems, ballads and Folk Songs to be drawn upon. Since our Travelling Theatre introduced the fashion of acting and miming them 12 years ago, these have become very popular, and they bring in the Arts of music, colour, rhythm and dancing. Almost every county has its own Folk Songs, and these are worth preserving in their own vernacular.

If we wish to form a dramatic group, what is our best way to set about it? There should be a preliminary meeting of those who were keen on acting, and later, of all those who were willing to lend a hand. The work would certainly settle on the shoulders of the one who is keenest, but it should be divided and delegated as soon as possible. Who can lend rooms for rehearsals? Who can lend dresses or furniture? Who will give a little time to sewing and to the making of properties? There is the local carpenter to interest, and he is an important man on the committee—the local garage man for lighting. Is there any artist near who will help? Perhaps someone teaches dancing and would be useful? What of a pianist? Or the possibility of a local orchestra? Will the organist help and the choir be useful? Will someone do the secretarial work and undertake to let everyone know about rehearsals, and to type the parts if necessary? Above all there must be some leader with social gifts and tact who can stand outside the production and be willing to work for the good of the group and without any wish for personal success, one who will produce and co-ordinate; or, if an outside producer can be obtained, who will work under and with that producer, and who will be willing when necessary to take all the blame and forego the praise. Someone who can inspire keenness and who sets a standard of self-forgetfulness and of concentration, so that the duty of rehearsals will be a pleasure and there will be no slackness in attendance.

There is the first play to choose. Every village has its own talent and its own capacities, and what would make a suitable beginning for one would not do at all for another. But above all, let the play be a good one, and well written.

I wrote to a friend who is working just now in the Highlands giving dramatic classes and producing in connection with the Scottish rural institutes, to ask how her classes appreciated Shakespeare. She writes as follows:—“Undoubtedly the easiest plays for beginners are those which deal with familiar aspects of life, humorous situations, and the variety of types that one can meet in any village. Unfortunately hundreds of authors attempt

to write plays of this kind—most of the pieces are sheer banality about mistresses and servants, petty gossip and sordid jealousies. But where a company happens to include one or two specially gifted or experienced players, a piece may be chosen that has outstanding parts for them, and less exacting roles for the rest of the cast. Under these conditions it is possible to represent scenes from the greatest dramatists, and in this way no less than 10 Shakespearean productions have been achieved in Highland Institutes during the past three years. And when circumstances do admit of such ambitious attempts, the result is found to justify the effort. For, since amateurs are less capable than professionals of filling out and making the best of a part, it is the more desirable that the part itself should be good, so that, if the audience can even catch the words, they have got some return for their money. It is sometimes difficult to persuade a rural class to contemplate Shakespeare, but if they can forget the full commentators they have studied at school, and get into the real human interest of the characters and situations, they soon discover that the language is more easily memorised and more easily delivered than that of any other author. There is no more thrilling experience for a producer than to present the Highland tragedy of *Macbeth* in its own district, with actors probably descended from some of the historical characters of the play, many of whom use habitually locutions that occur nowhere else in literature, all of them giving to the poetry of the lines full value by the music of their voices and the richness and purity of their vowels, and the exquisite neatness of their enunciation.”

Well, here to a great extent we have a “National Drama,” and if only half our amateur groups would turn their attention to a really good Shakespeare drama once a year, it would mean definite progress. It is only in the country that it can develop.

There is now a fund of good books on village drama, production, lighting, staging, costume, make-up, etc., easily obtained by anyone who wishes to study the subject, and let me recommend the *Amateur Dramatic Year Book*, edited by G. W. Bishop, in which there is an article on “Hints on rehearsing a play” by Granville Barker, which is full of interesting suggestions.

And now in conclusion, a word to those who may not be concerned with dramatic production and would yet like to help. Every member of this Congress represents a sphere of influence in some part of the country. Let me beg of them to use their power to help and support any local dramatic effort that shows signs of developing into a centre of real value to the community. Above all, prevent if possible the acquirement of the one and only suitable hall for the use of some film company every possible night of the week. Here in Scotland the prejudice against the theatre is rapidly

dying out, but one still hears of villages where the only available Church hall has been refused for purposes of rehearsal on Saturday night, to the benefit of the public house next door which was open.

If we are to have drama it must have its theatre, and there is a real danger that more and more of our town halls in country places are being annexed for films alone.

I have no ambition to see large and expensive fully equipped theatres appear like mushrooms in every town and village, as in America, before our groups are old enough and strong enough to use them. I am not ambitious to have our drama dictated to us and cut to fit either an educational or political policy, as in Russia. But above all, I do not want our drama to be crowded out by American films, and our language to be corrupted by American slang.

Some one said to me the other day: "Don't you realise that your travelling theatre is cutting its own throat by making drama so popular in the villages? You will soon find that there will be so many groups producing good plays locally that there will be no room for such a theatre as yours." There are no signs of that as yet, but when the day comes that we are of no further use, we will cease to exist.

Why should there be any regrets? It has been a privilege and a joy in spite of the hard and arduous work to have helped to bring into flower the greatest revival of community drama since the Elizabethan Age.

THIRD PUBLIC MEETING.

LADY TRUSTRAM EVE, J.P., presided over a Public Meeting on the evening of June 18th.

THE RIGHT USE OF LEISURE.

DR. JANE WALKER, C.H., J.P., said: There is a dictum now rather widespread amongst Sanatorium Physicians and their patients which states—"A patient does ill or well according as he uses his leisure ill or well." If this is true in such a restricted sphere of activity as the treatment of Tuberculous patients, so much more true is it of ordinary individuals who make up a community. So that our title "The Right Use of Leisure" is truly comprehensive. It concerns the individual's own action and his action in relation to his immediate surroundings and so to the nation to which he belongs, and indeed, to the whole world.

What do we mean by Leisure? We may describe it as a definite opportunity for ease or relaxation, freedom from necessary occupation or business, spare-time.

There is a difference between recreation and leisure. Recreation may take place in leisure time, but it should not occupy the whole of it. For example, doing cross-word puzzles is a very laudable and interesting form of recreation and quite justifiable as such, but to spend the whole of one's leisure time in solving cross-word puzzles could not fairly be described as the right use of leisure.

The idea that everyone is entitled to some leisure is of comparatively recent growth. Society was roughly divided into the leisured classes who had time that they could use as they liked, and the working classes who were not supposed to have any time to spend exactly as they pleased (moreover this idea of the two classes of people really dies very hard): indeed that very phrase "the leisured classes," presupposes that there exists such a section of the people as the unleisured classes.

The idea that leisure was required for statecraft and governing was common to both Greek and Hebrew before the Christian era and indeed up to comparatively modern times. In 1541—and here I am quoting from a most delightful and instructive address, by Professor Ernest Barker, delivered before the Second Annual Conference of the British Institute of Adult Education at Cambridge, in 1923—"the Commissioners of Henry VIII. are proposing to confine the Canterbury Grammar School to the children of the gentry, on the ground that it is meet for the ploughman's son to go to the plough, and the artificer's son to apply the trade of his parent's vocation, and the gentlemen's children are meet to have the knowledge of government and rule in the Commonwealth." But these ideas are quite contrary to the Christian spirit and we find Archbishop Cranmer telling the Commissioners so with no uncertain voice.—"Utterly to exclude the ploughman's son and the poor man's son from the benefits of learning," he said "is as much as to say that Almighty God should not be at liberty to bestow His great gifts of grace upon any person . . . Who giveth His gifts . . . unto all kinds and states of people indifferently." Challenged by the Christian spirit, the old ideas have been undermined by the spread of democratic principles, which have vindicated the right of the suffrage and, as a corollary, the right of education, for all the members of the community. Finally, the great change in the nature of manual work which we call the industrial revolution has abolished the advantages which might before be claimed for manual work, and has thus completed the overthrow of the old ideas. Under the conditions of production by the machine in the factory, it cannot be said that the worker, engaged in the repetition of some mechanical process, either becomes "wise in his work" or finds that "all his desire is in the work of his craft." And just because he cannot get wisdom or the satisfaction of his longings in the course of his work, he too must somehow find leisure and release

from business, and out of his leisure gain both wisdom and satisfaction.

In an interview with Professor Jacks, the Principal of Manchester College, Oxford, published in the *Observer* some few weeks ago, occurs this paragraph: "Turning to the question of leisure, Dr. Jacks said: Mr. Keynes has been saying that very soon machinery will reduce the working hours of man to three or four per day; what on earth are people going to do with that amount of leisure?"

This pertinent comment emphasizes for us the importance of our subject and how topical and to the point it is, how it has been, and is being tackled, and what is the outlook as far as we can see it. If it is true that such a short time each day will enable any man or woman engaged in industrial pursuits to earn enough to keep himself or herself alive, then it follows that we must have some plan for the right use of the rest of the day.

Formerly a manual worker had a really interesting and varied day, partly spent in farm work, partly in care of animals, and in some domestic work. But since the industrial revolution any arguments for men doing only manual work have really perished. Such work, says Professor Barker, is neither a satisfaction nor any education. And because it is a drudgery the workers have demanded, and the conscience of the community has agreed, that there should be a limitation of their hours and that periods of leisure should be guaranteed to all who work in factories, shops, and places of business. It was realised by some people, more far-sighted than the rest, that something different was now going on in the work that the large proportion of the nation had to do in order to make a living and that it could not be fairly called education. A large amount of it was monotonous and soul-destroying in character—it was largely mechanical consisting as it did mainly of repetitive work. Moreover this work was often carried on under most unfavourable conditions. The atmosphere was stuffy, the noise appalling, and the whole circumstances of work were certainly not conducive to health or to the quickening of intelligence. It is not to be wondered at that when their toil was over the workers tended to have neither the desire nor the capacity to use their leisure to any advantage, but were content simply to loaf.

But there have always been some people who saw the danger of this state of things, and one of the pioneers in this work of adult education—which is, in other words, the right use of leisure—was Dr. George Birkbeck. He was born in 1776, in Settle, in Yorkshire. He always showed a great predilection for scientific pursuits, and in 1799, after he had graduated as a Doctor of Medicine, he was appointed to the Chair of Natural Philosophy at the Andersonian Institute of Glasgow. The year after he delivered a gratuitous

course of scientific lectures for the benefit of the working classes, he came to London and founded the first Mechanics' Institute, which later on became the Birkbeck Institute. From this beginning all over the country sprang up Mechanics' Institutes, where men could read and debate and where lectures on various subjects were given.

Following on that remedial effort came the University Extension movement, later to develop into the extra Mural Boards of the various Universities, though at first the movement was mainly with Oxford and Cambridge.

But during the last 33 years the great force in aid of the right use of leisure has undoubtedly been the Workers' Educational Association. Born at Peterborough, in 1898, at the Co-operative Congress, it now extends all over the world.

The real founder and head of this great and ever spreading movement is Albert Mansbridge, who has just been made a Companion of Honour. At a Summer Meeting conference at Oxford he sought, to quote from his booklet "The Making of an Educationist," "to prove to the conference that the co-operative movement could only achieve its highest educational work in alliance with the universities." He convinced no-one, and indeed was so sadly battered that he retired forthwith into private life, carrying as the only solace for his efforts the crushing statement that he had "aimed at the moon and hit a haystack."

But he just went on working as student and teacher, taking various co-operative classes of students in his evenings, and these gave him not only as he says "a social policy but an enthusiasm for truth and justice in commercial affairs." . . . Moreover he was not really discouraged because like many other pioneers, his own people believed in him. About this time he went home to his wife and told her he had seen Canon Barnett, that grand idealist and practical worker, who himself was the pioneer of all university settlements, who had told him that it could not be, he was aiming too high. His wife, who was making a pudding, at the time, wiped the flour from her hands, and taking her purse from her pocket, opened it, and threw a half-crown on the table, saying, "I'm your first member, here's the subscription, go ahead!" And thus the Workers' Educational Association came into being. It had always seemed inevitable and this gave it its final push, as it were. Events now moved quickly, both Oxford and Cambridge gave ready help and encouragement and worked alongside of co-operators and trade unionists. The first conference was held, and an Association to Promote the Higher Education of working men, as it was then called, was definitely formed by the unanimous resolution of delegates from co-operative societies, trades unions and educational bodies, at Oxford, on August 25th, 1903.

There is a passage in Thomas Hardy's "Return of the Native," which well puts the ideals of the sort of man who has been a leader in this movement—"He loved his kind. He had a conviction that the want of most men was knowledge of a sort that brings wisdom rather than affluence. He wished to raise the class at the expense of individuals rather than individuals at the expense of the class. What was more he was ready at once to be the first unit sacrificed."

It is because men and women of this sort have been found to lead this most magnificent movement that it has reached the position it occupies at the present time. They, perhaps to their surprise, discovered the universality of desire for Education. This did not mean that every person was capable of becoming a student, much less a scholar, but it meant that every normal person was by nature anxious to undertake definite training or study which would enable him to live completely.

In spite of a good deal of opposition on the part of those who said that the Workers' Education Association was side-tracking the working classes, it went on and flourished, and in 1916 another great agency for the right use of leisure took shape in the form of the Central Library for Students. "To each student his books" is its motto. This Library, now to be known as the National Library for Students, has attained a great position, and is of the utmost value to people who are doing serious work. All students can borrow books from it free of charge, the only expense to them being the postage.

In 1918 came the World Association for Adult Education, based on the conception that although national and local efforts would differ, yet underlying everyone of them are the same principles and before them lies a common goal; the British Institute of Adult Education (1921), with Lord Haldane as President till his death, to act as a spearhead opening up difficult ways to eager workers in the cause; and the Seafarers' Education Service (1919), which in a few short years has revolutionised the opportunities of reading for workers in the mercantile marine.

This Seafarers' Education Service deserves rather more attention than time allows us to give to the other developments. The idea was not mooted on the High Seas, but in an Oxfordshire garden, when the question was asked the Chairman of the World Association—"Why can't something be done for seamen?" The answer was—"We will help them to organize their own education." "I am sure the owners will co-operate." The idea was taken up with enthusiasm and in December 1919, at Old Jordans, a conference was held at the invitation of the World Association for Adult Education. They talked and came, as so often happens at a meeting of this kind, to a common mind and a resolution "that it is desirable to establish a system of education for adult seamen" was passed unanimously and enthusiastically.

So at this Conference at Old Jordans a scheme for the Education of the Seaman during his leisure time was initiated, and a Commission of Enquiry was set up, consisting of representatives, of the Seafarer's Joint Council, the World Association for Adult Education, and leading Shipowners, to report on the best methods of educating adult seamen of the British Mercantile Service.

The education was started in the following order—

1. Long voyage men.
2. Short overseas voyage men.
3. Coastal and in-shore men.

The first requirement was felt to be the provision of Libraries on the ships for the use of the crew. A member of the crew was to be chosen as librarian. In the first instance about 200 books were to be provided which were changeable, and in addition, about 100 books to form a permanent nucleus. The Central Library for Students undertook the distribution of the interchangeable books and to lend books for experimental purposes.

The story of the first experiment is thrilling. On May 29th, 1920, the *S.S. Aeneas* of the Blue Funnel line, left London for Brisbane, with a library on board under the charge of the Master's clerk, for the use of the crew. The owners gave every assistance, paying for the books and instructing the Master's clerk, but leaving the choice of the books entirely in the hands of the Seafarers Education Service. The experiment was a success. As would be the same on land, about half the books taken out were standard fiction, the remainder, in order of popularity were—books of travel, modern biographies, and books of exploration, technical books and works of reference. Shakespeare's Plays were continually in use, and the Atlas in constant demand. Books on industrial history and economics practically untouched.

Every book used was returned in good condition. The men took the greatest care of them, even making covers for them. The clerk helped a man to read and write, and educationists in the Australian ports gave all the help and encouragement that they could to the scheme.

The *Aeneas* sailed again in November, and it is interesting to find that the library was more used on its second voyage than on its first. Before she had finished her third voyage several other vessels had been equipped with libraries. The work is indeed growing so rapidly that the Commission has some difficulty in keeping the experiment within controllable dimensions, and without allowing individual owners to provide their own libraries, which would be undesirable from the point of view of education as well as economy.

The result up to the present is most encouraging and hopeful

and has brought about conditions that were neither fore-seen nor contemplated by the promoters of the scheme at the beginning. The ship owners have positively gained by the necessary expenditure of money that they have made in that the conduct of the men is so much improved that when the ships leave the ports, men return in time, sober, and in good health—harbour dues being thus lessened, and the whole atmosphere being happier and more satisfactory. Moreover the men have gained too, because it has happened that when new ships have been built provision has had to be made for the housing of the library and so more space has been found to enable the various ratings to have better quarters.

The Seafarers Education Service is now a recognised institution. In spite of the difficulties in shipping the Service now fits libraries in 440 ships, belonging to 33 shipping Companies.

Another form of training in the right use of leisure is the educational work now being carried on in prisons. Voluntary lectures and talks have been given in prisons since 1896, and in 1906, 285 voluntary lecturers gave their services, but it was not till after the war that anything substantial was attempted. In 1928 there were over 10,000 prisoners receiving instruction from our teachers and lecturers of high standing, in over 400 separate classes. The educational field covered is a very wide one, e.g., gymnastics, cookery, nursing, seamanship, to name only a few.

An excellent report of what has been done up to date can be found in the *Journal of Adult Education* for April, 1931.

No dealing with this subject would be complete without some mention of Wireless—the greatest agent of civilisation. If it could be introduced into every village in India, and the villagers were in a position to know in an unbiased fashion what was transpiring, how it concerned them, the outlook all round would be transformed into something much more hopeful.

In schools and work-shops as well as in the home, it has proved one of the greatest means towards higher civilization that the world has ever known—instructional, educational and recreational.

The Women's Institutes, in addition to other activities, are carrying on a great work of training in the right use of leisure. To quote from a recent article in the *Observer*—“the Institute is the greatest co-operative force in the country side. The mind of the country-woman is stimulated through discussion of questions of common interest, through the sharing of knowledge, through training in crafts. Mental growth leads to right thinking and right thinking must lead to right doing.”

Finally, the right use of leisure does not come by chance, it is in the end the result of training and education, and that is where both adolescent and adult education is so important—to quote Professor Barker again:—“if man is to rise to that height of his

being in which he uses leisure for the purpose of contemplation of the world, in order to explain it, and his own experience of it, and to attain to the justification of faith in its purpose and operation.”

BROADCASTING.

MR. DAVID CLEGHORN THOMSON (Scottish Regional Director B.B.C.) said:—I admit I am feeling somewhat nervous of addressing you to-night, with a little bell behind me and this diabolical instrument in front of me, and it is an extremely difficult thing for a young and inexperienced bachelor to venture to raise his voice in such a place as this regarding the likes or dislikes, the needs or the deserts of women in regard to any particular national service.

The whole problem of broadcasting, however, I would claim, deserves the attention which you are giving it at this conference, for several reasons:—

- (a) It places women on an equal footing of opportunity with men with regard to hearing authentic and first-hand comment on the affairs of the day, thereby helping women to find their civic feet. The women of the world are going more and more to have the job of social reform and general amelioration in their hands, and it is no small matter that wireless keeps them in touch with some of the keenest minds of the world on topics of progress and reform.
- (b) Broadcasting is also providing for women equal opportunities, if not greater opportunities for experiencing aesthetic pleasure and stimulus in listening to music and drama and forming definite standards of judgment thereon.

I think women have something quite special to gain in intelligent listening, not because their mentality is different, but because their usual life's work is of such a nature as to make it possible for few of them to set aside time to attend courses of Lectures or Concerts regularly, or even keep in close contact with public affairs in the Press. Women, especially countrywomen, have little chance of keeping in touch with experts, and have to be all-round people—their own experts in the task of the household—and above all, their work is never done. Wireless comes right into the home providing not only the expert on tap, the latest news and the most vital facts, but also relaxation and entertainment, to cheer the listener on in the somewhat uninspiring round of household duties.

Perhaps largely on account of the persistent survival of the tacit assumption of superiority on part of the male, that “unconscious air of effortless superiority,” there is, may I venture to

say, a widespread timidity among many ordinary women, able in their own homes, which makes them fight shy of keeping in close touch with matters outside their spheres. Just as a woman juror if I may be forgiven for saying so, in nine cases out of ten, will be enormously swayed in judging the credibility of a witness, by her instinctive reaction to his personality—sometimes more swayed than by the evidence—so I believe a very large number of women take a new interest in public figures and the movements with which they are concerned now that wireless affords them a chance of reacting to their actual personalities if only through one of their senses. Again may I venture a guess? I think there is in the minds of a fair number of women in the home, a feeling that those of their sex, who take up politics and enter wider fields of civic reform, must of necessity be unpleasing and unsexed. Such people have only to listen to many public women who broadcast, and this damaging legend can be hastened to its death.

There is much more in this topic of women in broadcasting than the fact of wireless lightening the drudgery of working women's life in the home—than our evidence of the appreciation felt by individual women all over the country, and in some cases in Clubs and Women's Institutes for this or that item or series of items in our programmes. It is my belief that women form the bulk of the congregations in all our Churches, and of the audiences in our theatres, music halls and concert halls. It is the taste of women in artistic matters and in the construction of their homes, which is going to decide the fate of our artists and architects in the coming generation. And finally—most important of all—are two factors, the influence which women through their suffrage can bring to bear on the whole fortunes of the country and the Empire at elections, and the guidance and influence which they can exercise in the early years of the generation that is to come in their homes. Is wireless providing the thousands of women up and down the country whose whim decides which play or which actor shall succeed, with fare which will improve and not degrade their taste in drama and which will make keener their critical faculty in this sphere? It is the same with music and art and literature. If wireless is worthy of its trust in taking advantage of this great opportunity in the homes of the country, it will be helping the women of Great Britain to elevate the standards of the drama and the concert world; it will save the Festival Movement and spread the joyous activities of amateur drama throughout our villages, it will lead to a widespread demand for a higher standard—more beauty and more intelligence—in religious services, and a lighter touch and more brightness and fresh material in the schoolroom.

Indeed a noble conspiracy. The B.B.C. and the women of the world intriguing together to effect the cultural renaissance.

Wireless can be neither useful nor companionable in the home unless women listen intelligently and selectively, looking ahead and marking the things of special interest and the things not to be missed. There is also the question of discussing the material heard, and seeking through organisation and communication to alter the programmes so as to make them more useful from your point of view.

In conclusion Mr. Thomson bespoke the interest of women in the two most significant problems of programme-building—the international aspect of broadcasting and its effect on world peace, and the regional aspect and its effect on fostering national characteristics.

THE CINEMA.

THE REV. A. E. BINKS opened his address with an apology for having come to replace Mr. Carter, who had been taken ill at the station when actually on his way to Aberdeen. He then said: "I am very glad to be here if it is only to congratulate you on what you did on Tuesday. You were discussing the great question of the cinema and I am quite sure the resolution which you carried is going to have a very great effect. We have heard to-night things about which I think we are all agreed. I am now venturing to discuss a subject with you upon which there is much difference of opinion and about which there is very deep concern, which is becoming every day more evident throughout the country. We were not surprised that your great Conference had to take this matter into its purview—every Conference, be it educational, social or religious, has to give much time to the discussion of films and their effects upon national life. Without doubt it is one of the three things which most influence the life of our land. The three things which I have in mind are the press, broadcasting and the cinema, and in spite of what we have heard about the tremendous influence of broadcasting I am not sure that the cinema does not affect more people. Governor Millikan, Secretary of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, tells us that there are 57,000 picture theatres in the world and that not less than 250,000,000 people see the pictures every week. By the end of this year there will be 5,000 cinema theatres in Great Britain and Ireland. It is difficult to know how many people go to the cinema, but at least half the population of this country attend the cinema theatres at least once each week. There is no doubt that the cinema does affect our life. If Mr. Carter had been here to-night he would have told you what he saw in America. He was talking to a great leader of the cinema industry who was pointing out the widespread influence of the pictures, who said that in New

York those responsible for providing ladies' attire used to look for two seasons of ladies' fashions. That is to say in New York there was one season in which certain things were seen, and then further west these things appeared in the next season. They cannot do that now because pictures representing the fashions are shown in every part of America and the world. In the newspapers there has been a discussion on the way in which the modern talkie is affecting the speech of our country. I simply suggest that if the cinema is having this effect on such things as dress and speech, it is also having an influence on the moral and spiritual make-up of our people.

I am here tonight as the friend of the film, not as the enemy. I have been engaged in the trade itself and for 20 years I have shown pictures to children. I am here tonight as the enemy of the bad film and in the interests of the good film. I am sure that there is in the cinema something that can contribute to the education, recreation and wholesome amusement of our people but we must see that this entertainment and amusement is of as high a character as we can secure. There is a lot of criticism of films and of the film censor to-day, but I would suggest to you that much of this criticism is misguided and quite unfair—unfair in the sense that many of those who are criticising have no direct knowledge of the films in question. Our criticism can only be useful if it is well informed and constructive in its aim. Only this morning I heard that someone had spoken about "those dreadful films," and had then said "I have never been to see one." Many people behave like that with the result that we get a distorted view.

Lady Nunburnholme was right when she told you that during this year there has been an undoubted improvement. The National Council of Women, the Mothers' Union and other societies represented on the London Public Morality Council in giving evidence the other day from all parts of the country, said that there is an unanimous opinion among those investigating the situation that films are on the up grade. But there is still very great cause for concern. I will quote the words of the film censor himself, he speaks in his report of films which are unwholesome and repugnant to large numbers of people. He said "Such Films have required drastic eliminations and modifications before they could receive the Board's certificate. Of late it has been noticed with regret that films are being produced in which the development of the theme necessitates a continuous succession of grossly brutal and sordid scenes, accompanied, in the case of auditory films, with sounds that accentuate the situations and nauseate the listener. No modification, however drastic, can render such films suitable for public exhibition. In consequence, the Board takes this opportunity of notifying the trade that in future no film

will receive the Board's certificate in which the theme, without any redeeming characteristic, depends upon the intense brutality or unrelieved sordidness of the scenes depicted." These are the words of the censor himself.

How can we account for this situation? It would appear that the chief cause is to be found in America. During this year at least 90% of the films shown on our British screens have been produced overseas. Last year 605 feature films were released in this country and of these 12 came from the continent, 33 were British and 560 from the United States of America. In this month of June 54 films are due for release—2 from Germany, 10 British and 42 American. So it does appear that the source of our concern is largely in America. That seems to reflect upon the intellectual, moral and spiritual outlook of our friends across the water, but there is a great mass of people in that country just as deeply concerned as we are ourselves. Not very long ago it was my privilege to speak on this subject in one of our churches in London, and this was reported in an American newspaper. I have also had letters from Americans which prove that they are really concerned. When we get right down to the real source of these problems it would appear to be this—the majority of the films which are produced come from half a dozen great corporations with immense wealth behind them and a wonderful organisation. When you consider the directors of these organisations you find that they are not 100% American. These tremendous organisations to-day are in the hands of a few people who have come from Southern or Central Europe and have not our Anglo Saxon point of view and our standard of life, and when you remember that 250,000,000 people are seeing the films week by week and that what they see is in the main determined by this outlook, can you wonder that we have cause for concern?

The one great remedy is a greater output of films which represent British morality and the British point of view and the things we stand for and are so concerned about in conferences such as this. You may suggest that not all our British films are passed without criticism. We know in Australia some of our films have been turned down because they have been regarded as contravening their standards, their judgment and their ideas of morality. But I believe those responsible for the production of British films are realising the situation and there is no doubt from the evidence coming to us to-day that the films recently made by our British producers are showing a higher standard than hitherto.

Then I think we must remember that there is a difference in the point of view. We had an illustration of this in a film called "The Big House," which gave a representation of prison life in America far removed from anything we know in this country.

There was a great difference of opinion about this film but there is no doubt that it gives an illustration of prison life which does not agree with our own methods. We asked the Americans if they did not think it undesirable to show it not only in England but also in China and India. The reply was that this particular film was intended to do for America what the novels of Charles Dickens had done for England fifty years ago.

I believe that on Tuesday you did take one step which is going to help to remedy this situation. I know that one of the questions of to-day is that of the respective merits of our present method of censorship and of state censorship. I have the honour to represent the London Public Morality Council Cinema Committee and we have felt that at any rate our policy must be to support the present form of censorship. The censor at present is nominated by the trade and is always chosen in direct consultation with the Home Secretary, so that an appointment is never made without the Home Secretary expressing his full and considered judgment. It may seem to some people that a state censorship would be able to act with more authority and to help us in other ways. I do not know whether your experience is that the state censorship of plays has been good or not, but I think there are very great difficulties.

Down in the south of England in a town where the same person owns the local theatre and one of the largest cinemas, exception was taken to a film. The person who complained wrote to the Ministry direct and steps were taken to put the matter right. Later on a play on this subject was produced and shown in the same town in the theatre owned by the same man. Exception was taken to the play but the gentleman said, "The play has been passed by the Lord Chancellor, you must take the matter up with him." The difference is between state control and local control. Cinema control is largely and almost entirely in the hands of the local authorities, and while they have usually accepted the censor's judgment, yet in many cases they do not agree with it. For instance "The King of Kings" and "Outward Bound" were not passed by the censor, but the London County Council and other County Councils have allowed them to be shown. On the other hand, in the city of Bath the magistrate responsible for the licensing asks the managers to show him the list of films to be shown in the next month. From time to time the magistrates of Bath have not passed a film though it might be shown in London. The theatre manager is not always a free agent; there are scores of theatres here controlled by American money and those to whom reference has been made not only produce the pictures and are responsible for their distribution but also own the theatres in which they are to be shown and they determine very largely what you shall see.

If you go out from this great conference to help your country

through the local authorities, first by helping them to realise the power which is in their possession, you will do great service. Then I believe your resolution will strengthen the Home Secretary in his suggestion to set up a consultative committee, composed largely, probably chiefly, of representatives of local authorities together with representatives of the Board of Film Censors and of the Home Office itself, so that information can be collected and collated and a uniform standard of judgment can be arrived at. There is no one more anxious to have the right standard than Mr. Shortt himself. He was approached by a deputation representing the National Council of Women, Mothers' Union, Girls' Friendly Society, London Public Morality Council and representatives of all churches in London, and he assured us of his deep desire to do everything in his power. If he realises that he can count on the support of ladies like yourselves and those you represent and the spiritually minded people of this country, there will be an improvement in the standards of the films which are being shown.

There is another way in which we can help. One problem which affects the situation is the problem of the box office. In a small town in the Midlands not long ago I was told that although there was a cinema proprietor who was really anxious to show good films that proprietor found it very difficult sometimes to make these good films pay. There are, we must recognise, great groups of people in this country who do seem to desire a certain type of film. I think it is for us to seek to overcome the evil by the good, and do our best through our organisations to support the films which we think are worth while and so make them a paying proposition.

I am sure you will do great service and may God bless your efforts.

THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN.

At the Representative Council Meeting on the afternoon of June 18th the Marchioness of Aberdeen and Temair, President of the International Council of Women, in an address on its recent work gave various items of news which may be summarised as follows.

The new Headquarters Office in Paris at 49 rue St. Georges, Paris, IXe, is now fully established, and Lady Aberdeen extended a cordial invitation to all members to pay a visit to these charming offices when in Paris.

The National Council of Women of the United States of America has recently elected a new President in Miss Phillips, who is also President of the National Business Women's Association.

The Indian National Council of Women is now bringing out a

“Bulletin” of its own. Lady Aberdeen much regretted to report that Lady Tata, its Chairman of Executive was still very ill.

The Executive Committee of the International Council of Women will meet in Stockholm next year, probably in the month of June.

It was suggested at the Council meeting in Vienna that the Standing Committees might if desired, meet separately, and not only at the time of the Executive. The I.C.W. Cinema Committee will accordingly hold a meeting in Rome in October in connection with the meetings of the Cinematograph Institute, the Italian Government having promised reduced railway fares, and support for this meeting. Interesting expeditions are also being arranged.

The International Council of Women has communicated with the various National Councils of Women, urging them to support the Disarmament Campaign, and the January “Bulletin” will be a special Disarmament number, articles being written by well known writers. This may be ordered from the N.C.W. Office, Murray House, Vandon St., Buckingham Gate, S.W.1.

THE REGIONAL COMMITTEES.

A Meeting of the Regional Committees was held in the Music Hall, Aberdeen on Wednesday, 17th June, with Marjorie Lady Nunburnholme in the Chair.

Lady Nunburnholme, from the Chair, said that it was appropriate to be meeting in Aberdeen, as the Scottish Standing Committee was the mother of all the Standing Committees, now known as Regional Committees. She said that the Regional Committees had various new Branches in process of formation, but as there had not been a full year since their last annual meeting it was a little soon to report on this work. She then asked the various Committees to give their reports.

Home Counties. Hon. Mrs. Franklin reported that this Committee had met twice and that the Branches were very active. Various Branches had sent in the names of good lecturers and it was hoped to compile a list of speakers.

The representative for **Aylesbury** said they were having a meeting on 30th June and hoped to send a contribution to the New Offices Fund. At **Gerrards Cross** a successful effort had been made to enrol new members, particularly young people, but it was found very difficult to get working women to join.

East Midland. Mrs. Lewis (Derby), said that so far this Committee had not met and the three Branches comprising it were rather out of touch with each other. They hoped to hold a Conference in the autumn.

West Midland. Miss Locock (Birmingham) reported that two meetings had been held in Birmingham, and efforts were being made to keep the Branches in touch with each other by consulting them on matters of general interest, by circulating notices of meetings and inviting delegates to attend on special occasions. For instance, Coventry had recently held a Peace and Disarmament Conference in conjunction with the League of Nations Union, and Birmingham had sent two delegates to the meeting.

Several Branches had taken up with enthusiasm the work of Cinema enquiry. The Cinema Enquiry Committee started by the **Birmingham** Branch last year was now an independent body, but the Branch was represented on it and was trying in this matter to work in conjunction with the other members of the Regional Committee. **Coventry** was conducting an enquiry and proposed to issue a report. A speaker from Birmingham had addressed the **Malvern** Branch on the same subject and the Branch was watching the type of films produced. **Leicester** had held an important meeting to which Women Councillors and Magistrates had been invited, and a rota of visitors to picture houses had been formed. **Wolverhampton and North Staffs** were also taking an active interest in the same subject.

At the last meeting of the Regional Committee it had been decided that each of its members should make an effort to form a new Branch in some neighbouring town. So far only preparatory work had been done, but Wolverhampton, Coventry, Birmingham and Leicester all hoped to be able to carry the work further in the autumn—Walsall, Leamington and Worcester being some of the towns which it was intended to approach.

Questions as to the numbers of active Magistrates on the rota and also of Women Magistrates had recently been circulated by Birmingham to the other Branches and useful information on the subject obtained. The reports generally indicated that there was a sufficiency of active magistrates but that in some cases a few more women would be an advantage. On Burton County Bench, however, it was reported that there was a real shortage of magistrates.

North Eastern. Mrs. Raine reported that this Committee had made good progress, and in most cases all the Branches had been represented at the meetings. They had attempted to start new Branches in Grimsby, Scarborough and Cleckheaton. A Branch had been started at Scarborough in the previous week, with 30 members. The Mayoress had held an At Home and officers and committee had been elected.

Eastern. Mrs. Hartree (Cambridge) reported that this Committee had met twice—in Peterborough and Kings Lynn. At the meetings the Executive Committee of the local Branch were in-

vited to attend as visitors and this was much appreciated. The committee meetings were held in the morning, when reports on the work of the Branches were given and suggestions and difficulties discussed. The Branch inviting the committee held a meeting in the afternoon, the speaker often being one of the visiting members.

The visit to **Peterborough** had been particularly interesting, as the members were taken over the flats built by a Public Utility Society formed by the Branch. These had excited much envy among the members of the Cambridge Branch, which had initiated a similar society but so far had only been able to adapt existing houses. At the afternoon meeting Mrs. Keynes had spoken on the N.C.W. and the I.C.W.

At the May meeting in **Kings Lynn** the suggestion of joint meetings of adjoining Regional Committees had been discussed, but this was not considered practicable owing to the geographical position and consequent railway difficulties.

With regard to the work of the Branches, **Cambridge** had started a luncheon club, with a membership of over 450, meeting twice a month. It was also organising a rota of cinema visitors. **Kings Lynn** had now induced its Town Council to adopt the model bye-laws for the slaughtering of animals, and it was also particularly interested in Mental Deficiency. It had also started a luncheon club. **Norwich** had been making great efforts to increase its membership which now numbered 450, an increase of 139 since January 1931. A Voluntary Housing Scheme had been inaugurated. **Peterborough** was one of the oldest Branches having been formed in 1896. Miss J. Colman had been Hon. Treasurer from the beginning and was at one time also Hon. Secretary. Most of the social work of the town had been started by the Branch.

Northern. No report forthcoming.

North-Western. The Hon. Mrs. Cawley reported that this Committee had met twice, Lady Nunburnholme having taken the Chair at the first meeting when the Hon Officers had been appointed. They had held a discussion on the Cinema and were endeavouring to form Branches in Lancaster and Rochdale.

Southern. It was reported that the inaugural meeting of this Committee had been held in May when delegates from all the Branches were present. Mrs. St. Loe Strachey had been appointed Convener and Mrs. W. E. Muir, Hon. Secretary.

South Western. It was reported that this Committee had held meetings in Bournemouth and Southampton. It had been hoped that the Branch in Southampton might be re-formed, but so far there had not been a very good response to the efforts made. In connection with this Committee, a letter was read from Lady Hort, asking that there might be typed copies of suggestions for

forming branches. She also suggested that any member who was considering accepting election as Hon. Secretary of a new Branch might be allowed to attend a meeting of the Branch Representatives Committee.

Western. Mrs. Bence (Bath) reported that this Committee usually met in Bristol. At the meeting held in May the Branches had reported as follows: **Gloucester** had held an At Home in February, with a delightful programme of music, when £5 had been raised, and in March a meeting on "The Place of the Cinema in National Life," and later a concert in aid of Wireless for the City General Hospital, raising £42. **Cheltenham** had held a public meeting in December on "Equal Pay for Equal Work," a social meeting in April with music and an address on "Home Crafts," when £7 had been raised, and a public meeting on "The Menace of Mental Deficiency." **Bristol** had held a public meeting on "The Mental Treatment Act," addressed by the Chairman of the Board of Control with an audience of 300, a meeting on "The Care of Youth under the Municipal Authorities," addressed by Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, and a series of Information Meetings dealing with various subjects. **Bath** had held a public meeting on "Mental Deficiency," when Mrs. Potts had spoken and 200 had been present, a public meeting on "Maternal Mortality," speaker, Dr. Helen Dixon, of Bristol, a series of smaller lectures, and also a Discarded Treasure Auction, when a local auctioneer had given his services and £23 had been raised. **Torquay** had held quarterly information meetings, had started a housing scheme, taking a site of five or six houses and borrowing money at 2½%, the houses to be let at a small rental, lower than Council houses, and had held a meeting on "The Cinema Question." The result of the latter had been that the Branch had been asked to form a committee, with clergy and others serving, to deal with films and view them before they were shown.

Scottish Standing Committee. Mrs. Melville reported that this Committee had been started in 1903 after the Council Meeting in Edinburgh, when it had been decided not to start a separate National Council of Women for Scotland. Lady Aberdeen and Mrs. Greenlees had presided, with Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon as first Hon. Secretary. It had invited the large national societies to join it. Each Branch was entitled to send three voting members to the meetings, with one additional member without a vote. Five national societies were represented on it. It had formed the Branch in N. Ayrshire in 1928. There was not much difficulty in attending the meetings as the members were willing to make sacrifices. During the last year the Committee had considered the question of legal aid for the poor and the different Branches had given reports. Last winter it had dealt with the conditions

under which halls were licensed. It had had a special Women Police Committee for some years and had later formed a Cinema Committee and was represented on a joint Committee for the legalisation of Adoption.

North Wales. Miss Pugh Jones said she had no report to present, as the Committee had not been able to meet for two or three years. The difficulty had been to find a centre which was accessible to all.

South-Eastern. This Committee had held three meetings, two in London and a summer meeting in Eastbourne. It was a Triennial Contributor to the International Council of Women. Reports on Branch work were as follows: at **Brighton** the members of the Junior Group at School had installed a News Room where all newspaper articles, etc., on the League of Nations were available for members. **Bromley** continued to send help to distressed Mining areas. **Croydon** had over 1,400 members and divided its work into wards, printing a programme of the year's work in advance. Each Armistice Day it conducted, in conjunction with the W.C.A., a ceremony of remembrance, beginning with a service in the Parish Church. The suggestion that a woman should speak at this service next November had met with a favourable response. A banner, embroidered by local cripple girls, had been presented to the Branch by a member for use on ceremonial occasions. At **Eastbourne**, Miss Chamberlain had again been elected to the Town Council with a large majority. The Chief Constable had been Chairman at a very successful meeting when Miss Craven had spoken on "Women in Prison Life"; the Branch suggested that other Branches should adopt this policy when the subject considered had to do with police or prison life. **Hastings and St. Leonards** had formed a rota for visiting and reporting on Cinemas and had already sent two deputations to the Chief Constable and Watch Committee on the subject of Women Police. **Maidstone** had again taken charge of the fruit and flower stall at the Rural Community Fair, and as a result had sent £25 to the Council for its work among tuberculous persons. The retiring Hon. Secretary of the Tunbridge Wells Branch, Miss Amelia Scott, had compiled a printed History of the Branch, giving an account of the work for the last 25 years. Copies of this had been given to each Branch in the Regional Committee. **Worthing** had made over £12 at a Garden Fete in the grounds of the Lord and Lady Mayoress, to be sent to the Headquarters New Offices Fund.

The Committee wished to make the following suggestions:—

1. That a subject of general interest be proposed for discussion at any meeting of a Regional Committee should time allow.
2. That every meeting of a Regional Committee should

begin or terminate with tea, to allow time for social intercourse, which is invaluable.

3. That one of the meetings held during the year should be a special meeting, and should include luncheon and tea and visits to local social activities.

Discussion on Reports. Lady Emmott suggested that Regional Committees with a certain number of Branches might invite "correspondents" from towns where there was no Branch to attend their meetings. In this way interest might be aroused in the work and new Branches formed. These "correspondents" would of course be non-voting members.

Hon. Mrs. Franklin in supporting this suggestion also suggested that the Regional Committees might push the sale of *WOMEN IN COUNCIL*, the official organ of the N.C.W.

Hon. Secretary.

Mrs. Nowell Watkins was re-elected Hon. Secretary for the Regional Committees for the ensuing year.

REPORT OF AN ENQUIRY INTO FILM CENSORSHIP.

CONDUCTED BY THE CINEMA COMMITTEE.

Chairman: MRS. OGILVIE GORDON, D.Sc., J.P.

Preamble.

The report here submitted represents a survey of that aspect of Cinema administration which concerns the censoring of films in Great Britain. The Cinema to-day occupies an important place in the life of the nation, and is a constant source of happiness to thousands of people, rich and poor alike. It exercises in its proper use a powerful and beneficent influence upon the community: its cultural and educational possibilities are unlimited, whilst as an instrument of propaganda it stands on a level with Broadcasting and the Press. These are truisms, but it is because of them that thoughtful people are so anxious to keep the moving picture industry free from any taint of corruption of morals.

It is from this standpoint that the following report has been prepared. At the same time, careful consideration has been given to certain important practical considerations, the first being that the motion picture industry is primarily a commercial undertaking and must thus cater for popular feeling as reflected in the revenue obtained at the Box Offices; the second, that certain films suitable for adult exhibition would, if shown to children, be most unsuitable.

Terms of Reference of the Enquiry.

At the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Women held in Portsmouth in October, 1930, a resolution was submitted urging the Government to set up a Departmental Committee to enquire into the question of Film Censorship and matters connected therewith. Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon moved the following amendment, which was carried:—

“That in view of the recent appointment of a new President of the Board of Film Censors and the fact that the ‘model rules’ issued December, 1929, by the Home Office have just been accepted by a number of the Cinema Licensing Authorities, it is premature to ask for public intervention on the part of the Government. The National Council of Women accordingly refers this Resolution back to its Cinema Committee with request that they consider it in the light of the newer developments and report to the Executive before the next Annual Meeting.”

The discussion showed clearly that all were in agreement as to the urgent need for more stringent supervision over the kind of films displayed, while one speaker after another accentuated the unfortunate effect such films were bound to have upon young folk and children, many of whom sit through the display of ‘A’ films although these are marked by the Censor as ‘suitable for adult audiences,’ and even where the ‘Model Rules’ of the Home Office have been put into operation attend unaccompanied by a parent or bonâ fide guardian.

Two obvious directions of enquiry emerged from the discussion. (1) To consider whether it was practicable, under the present *Voluntary System of Censorship* by a *Board of Film Censors* nominated by the Cinema Trade and approved by the Home Office, to prevent the distribution of films based on unsuitable subjects and calculated to have a detrimental effect on public morals, or whether a *National Board of Film Censors* with statutory powers under Government should be set up.

(2) To investigate the working of the ‘Model Rules’ recommended by the Home Office and to consider to what extent their adoption by all licensing authorities could be expected; and whether, if this were effected, it would meet the needs of the situation.

The Cinema Committee accordingly drew up a Questionnaire to be circulated to the N.C.W. Branches and appointed a Sub-Committee to conduct the special enquiry and to draft a report. The Sub-Committee included Mrs. Keynes, President of the N.C.W., and the other honorary officers and two members of the

Cinema Committee, together with one representative from each of the following: the Scottish Branches, the Birmingham Branch, the Public Service Committee, the Women Citizens’ Section, the Mothers’ Union and the London Public Morality Council. Four meetings were held under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon.

The Scottish Branches, while wishing to keep in touch with the Sub-Committee, were themselves taking part in an Enquiry on Cinema matters in Scotland, where the powers of the local licensing authorities differ considerably from those in England and Wales.

Pronouncement of the Home Secretary on ‘Film Censorship.’

In reply to various requests for the appointment of a Departmental Committee of Enquiry into the question of film censorship, Mr. Clynes stated in the House of Commons in December, 1930:—

“that he had given careful consideration to this matter. It was not always recognised that a power of censoring films was vested in the local authorities. The local authorities relied for the most part on the systematic examination of all films by the Board of Film Censors, but their power of censorship remained in reserve. He was aware that there were signs of growing uneasiness in the public mind as to the tone of many films now exhibited, and he welcomed this evidence of public concern because he believed that the pressure of public opinion could alone bring about an improvement. There was, however, some confusion of thought in the idea that a change of the system of censorship would provide a remedy. He doubted if an enquiry by a Commission representative of different interests and points of view would be of much assistance. He had no reason to believe that any alternative system so far proposed would produce better results or command general support, or that the standard of censorship in this country was not at least as high as that in any other. The public exhibition of certain films would give rise to difficulty under any form of censorship, and it was doubtful whether any better system could be devised than one which left the local authority free to allow or prohibit the exhibition of such films in their own area according to the circumstances. While he was not prepared to appoint a Committee of Enquiry, he was considering whether any steps could be taken to secure a more continuous contact between the Board and representative local opinion.”

The weak spot in the present system appears to be the comparative isolation of the Board from ‘representative local opinion,’ for while it is in touch with the Cinema Trade Associations and Producing Companies, it only comes into touch with the licensing

authorities when it sends them the lists of films passed. From the Home Secretary's suggestion of a "more continuous contact" there has sprung up a very general desire for the formation of a Consultative Committee, which should keep in touch with the Board of Film Censors—the members to be mainly drawn from the local Licensing Authorities, and to include representatives from the Home Office, the Board of Trade Film Advisory Committee, the Film Censor, the Film Producers and possibly social organisations. Such a Committee would bring together parties interested in all aspects of the Censorship of Films, and would contribute towards better understanding and co-ordination.

Open letter from the President of the British Board of Film Censors.

A few weeks after the Home Secretary's statement, the following communication was made by the Rt. Hon. Edward Shortt, P.C., K.C., President of the British Board of Film Censors, to all film companies, and published in the press:—

"In our last reports attention has been drawn to the tendency to produce incidents of prolonged and gross brutality and sordid themes, which, it must be admitted, are unwholesome and repugnant to large sections of the audiences in this country.

Such films have required drastic eliminations and modifications before they could receive the Board's certificates.

Of late it has been noticed with regret that films are being produced in which the development of the theme necessitates a continuous succession of grossly brutal and sordid scenes, accompanied, in the case of auditory films, with sounds that accentuate the situation and nauseate the listener.

No modification, however drastic, can render such films suitable for public exhibition. In consequence, the Board takes this opportunity of notifying the trade that in future no film will receive the Board's certificate in which the theme, without any redeeming characteristic, depends upon the intense brutality or unrelieved sordidness of the scenes depicted."

This letter shows the high sense of public duty of the British Board of Film Censors, but it may conceivably have little effect on the kind of films produced, since most of these are of American origin. It is all-important that the support of public opinion throughout the country should be given to the Board's appeal and should make itself felt in the U.S.A. as a vital factor in Cinema trade.

As the result of the interchange of views between many of the Voluntary Societies in this country—especially the London

Public Morality Council—and the American Motion-Picture Producers and Distributors a "New Code for American Producers" was published on March 31st, 1930, in which an undertaking is given to "produce no picture which will lower the moral standards of those who see it," and which enumerates certain tendentious subjects which will not in future be presented.

The new films have not yet been released to any extent, but if carried out, this Code will mark a big step forward in America, while the letter of the Board's President may be expected to lead to an improvement in the moral tone of British films. It is with regret that we read of some of the British films being banned by the Censor of the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Statutory Authorities under the Cinematograph Act, 1909.

The Cinematograph Act, 1909, empowered the County and County Borough Councils, or certain other bodies to which they delegated these powers, to grant licenses for the Cinema Theatres in their area, provided that these complied with the statutory regulations made by the Secretary of State with a view to the safety of the public, and were issued "*on such terms and conditions and under such restrictions as, subject to regulations of the Secretary of State, the Council may by the respective licences determine.*" The system under the Act was one of local control, pure and simple. In addition, under this Act the Lord Chamberlain is the licensing authority for some 40 theatres under his jurisdiction.

The Censorship and the Sub-division of Films "A" and "U."

The Board of Film Censors came into being three or four years later, when the need for some form of reliable censorship of the films shown was being more and more felt. Unofficial consultations took place between members of the trade, leading officials in the Home Office, and members of the House of Commons, when it was decided that the censorship should be voluntary and not statutory in character, and that the members of the Board of Film Censors, while paid by the trade, should be absolutely independent in the exercise of their censorship duties.

The Enquiry Sub-Committee has been informed that a consultative committee of exhibitors, renters, and producers meets with the Board when there are questions of policy to decide, but no questions are ever asked as to why a film has or has not been passed. The trade has never influenced their decisions.

The Board of Film Censors had from the inception of their work found it necessary to divide the films into (1) films which they considered suitable for *universal* exhibition and marked as "U"

films; (2) films which they considered suitable for exhibition to "adults" only and marked as "A" films.

Had the exhibitors been able to make up their programmes according to their own choice, doubtless some of them would have provided two types of programmes, one of "U" films only, and the other of "A" films for audiences over 16 years of age. But unfortunately there appear to be difficulties concerning the method of releasing and booking films which make it practically impossible for exhibitors to arrange their programmes in this way. For example, film producing companies usually arrange to produce a certain number of films over a stated period of time, and frame a "line-up" to show exactly how many productions will be made and released and in what order. The renting firms which arrange for the distribution of the films and act in the capacity of middlemen, are accordingly obliged to release their films much in the order in which they are made.

Then again, for the purposes of distribution, cinema theatres are divided into runs—1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th runs—and in any particular town the 1st run theatres—which are invariably the better-class houses—book the films for exhibition immediately they are released by the renter. Subsequently the films pass by stages through the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th run theatres, each in turn paying less for their hire. For example, in a city such as Birmingham a first-run theatre might pay 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % of their takings for hire of a film, whereas other theatres in the same city and for the same film may pay only 25%, 15% or even 10%, the difference being due to the fact that the 1st run theatres are entitled to show the films first, when public interest is naturally keenest.

It will therefore be clear that an exhibitor cannot easily plan his bookings, and that what he shows will be regulated by the character of his theatre,—first, second or third-run,—the Company from whom he books his productions and the date of release of the films.

The matter is further complicated by the fact that many theatres are controlled by circuits, which appear to have understandings with particular renting firms to take a fixed percentage of their product.

The whole system of trading in films has been so definitely established on American business methods that, so long as the present high proportion of American films continues to be shown, there is little prospect of exhibitors being able to institute reforms in the arrangement of their programmes except within narrow limits.

Under this system most programmes include both "U" and "A" films, and children may be admitted with adults, except in the few places where the local licensing authorities are now exclud-

ing children up to 16 years of age from "A" films. This does not, of course, refer to specially-arranged matinees for children, which are outside the ordinary programme.

The Powers of the Licensing Authorities.

In the early years of the Board's work there was a tendency among certain of the Licensing Authorities to disregard the censorship of the Board. The Report of the Board for the year 1921 contains the following passage:

"Whilst many of the Licensing Authorities throughout the country had included a clause in their licences under the Cinematograph Act, 1909, to the effect that only films must be exhibited which have been passed by the Board, there were several important authorities who were not quite sure as to the legal position of such a clause in so far as it delegated or transferred their powers, functions, and discretions to another body. In 1920, the County Council of Middlesex inserted a clause in their licences to the effect that only films which had been submitted to and passed by the Board must be exhibited in the halls under their jurisdiction."

One of the theatres contravened this Clause, and an action was brought by the authority against the licensee. The case was heard before the Lord Chief Justice and two other Justices. They held that so long as a regulation was reasonable, it might be included in the licence, but they considered the regulation in question was unreasonable having regard to the fact that there was no appeal from the decision of the British Board of Film Censors. Their finding was to the effect that the regulation would be a reasonable and useful condition if made subject to the right of appeal to the Licensing Authority, and that a suitable form of words might read: "provided that no film which has not been passed for general exhibition by the British Board of Film Censors shall be exhibited without the express consent of the Licensing Authority."

This finding, which was only applicable in England and Wales, gave legal right to the Licensing Authorities on the one hand to review any decision of the Board, and on the other to insert in their licences any reasonable conditions respecting the nature of the films to be shown. There has been no similar test-case in the Scottish Law Courts, and the licensing authorities in Scotland do not consider that they are entitled to exercise powers of film censorship.

The difference of administrative responsibility in the neighbouring countries is undoubtedly a serious handicap to securing improved film standards, and the Enquiry Sub-Committee trust that some means may be found to remove this inequality. It must, however, be remembered that even if powers of film censorship

were assured for all the licensing authorities in Scotland as well as in England and Wales, they are of the nature of permissive powers, which may be exercised or not as each licensing authority may determine for their locality, and in such varying degree as they may decide.

The statutory authorities, as already stated, are the County Councils and County Borough Councils, many of which have delegated their licensing powers to local Justices sitting in Petty Sessions, to Watch Committees, or to local borough, urban or rural district Councils.

Thus, in England and Wales, the County Councils number 61, and the County Borough Councils number 83, but the actual number of local licensing authorities is over 700. This figure includes a small proportion of County and County Borough Councils which have not delegated their powers, together with hundreds of local bodies to which powers have been delegated.

At present, the Licensing Authorities only receive from the Board of Film Censors a statement of the names of the films passed and their respective category "A" or "U". If they wish for a synopsis of all or any of the films, they can require the licensees to supply such information and they may request a private view of any film before it is shown publicly. There is, however, usually very little time for this to be done. It was suggested to the Enquiry that the Board of Film Censors should supply brief synopses of the films when sending the list of those passed, so that the Licensing Authorities might have more time to view particular films if desired.

The censorship of film-posters has for some time been under consideration in the Cinema Committee, but it is not included in the present enquiry.

Democratic Character of the Present System.

The right of appeal from the decisions of the British Board of Film Censors is not infrequently used. For example, quite recently the Board refused to pass the film "Her Child," but on appeal to the London and Middlesex County Councils it was passed for exhibition within their areas. However, its pre-release run in London proved a failure, showing that in this case the public supported the opinion of the Board. On the other hand a film "Outward Bound," passed by the Councils in question after being banned by the Censor, proved an instant popular success.

The exercise of this right in effect throws the responsibility upon the public, and if the Censorship were conducted by a statutory body, or under any form of Governmental authority, this right of appeal could not in practice be sustained, while it might

be difficult to avoid the intervention of quasi-political influences.

The Sub-Committee are of opinion that the democratic form of control is better suited to the spirit of the British public, and ought to be adequate if the licensing authorities throughout the country would assume the full weight of their own responsibilities and powers, while keeping in closer contact both with one another and with the British Board of Film Censors.

There appears however to be a lack of co-ordination among the licensing authorities, and in some areas no public consciousness of a standard to be maintained in Cinema Exhibitions. Experience has shown various ways of dealing with this—e.g. by increased pressure from the Government Department concerned, through the force of example given by the more progressive local authorities, and above all by public demand in the district, more particularly at the times of local elections.

Regulations and Recommendations of the Home Office.

The Home Office has issued from time to time Official Regulations under the Cinematograph Act, 1909, with regard to the "building" used for Cinematograph exhibitions, the seating, exits, and all the necessary precautions for health, supervision, lighting, safety from fire, etc.

For example, the Regulations dated July 30th, 1923 (Statutory Rules and Orders, 1923, No. 983) which form a 15-page document, *must* be complied with by all licensees.

In 1930, as a result of the widespread feeling aroused by the tragic disaster in a children's performance at the Glen Cinema, Paisley, the following additional Regulations were issued (Statutory Rules and Orders, 1930, No. 361):—

"In order to secure the safety of the audience the licensee or some responsible person nominated by him in writing for the purpose shall be in charge during the whole time of any exhibition and he shall be assisted by a sufficient staff of attendants who shall be specially instructed by the licensee or such responsible person as to their respective duties, in particular in relation to the carrying out of the requirements of these regulations.

Where at any exhibition the majority of the persons attending are under fourteen years of age the number of attendants required by the foregoing paragraph shall be such as to enable them effectively to control the movements of the children whilst entering or leaving the premises and during the exhibition and to ensure the order and safe clearance of the hall in case of emergency.

All the attendants shall remain on duty during the whole time that the premises are open to the public.

All persons responsible for or employed in or in connection with the exhibition shall take all due precautions for the prevention of accidents and shall abstain from any act whatever which tends to cause fire and is not reasonably necessary for the purpose of the exhibition."

All such Statutory Rules and Orders are part of the law of the land.

Recommendations of Model Conditions in Licences.

The Home Office has also issued Circulars to the Licensing Authorities, containing various recommendations which the Authorities may or may not adopt. These relate to the films displayed and are commonly spoken of as the "Model Conditions" or "Model Rules." They have, however, been largely based on the actual experience of the London County Council and other active Licensing Authorities. In 1917 the following recommendations were issued:—

1. No film shall be shown which is likely to be injurious to morality or to encourage or incite to crime, or to lead to disorder, or to be offensive to public feeling, or which contains any offensive representations of living persons. If the Licensing Authority serve a notice on the licensee that they object to the exhibition of any film on any of the grounds aforesaid, that film shall not be shown.
2. No film shall be shown unless three clear days' notice, stating the name and subject of the film, together with a copy of any synopsis or description used or issued in connection with the film, has been given to the Licensing Authority: and the licensee shall within that period, if the Licensing Authority so require, exhibit the film to such persons as they may direct.
3. Films which have been examined by any persons on behalf of the Licensing Authority shall be exhibited exactly in the form in which they were passed for exhibition, without any alterations or additions unless the consent of the Licensing Authority to such alterations or additions has previously been obtained.
4. No poster, advertisement, sketch, synopsis or programme of a film shall be displayed, sold or supplied either inside or outside the premises which is likely to be injurious to morality, or to encourage or to incite crime, or to lead to disorder, or to be offensive to public feeling, or which contains offensive representations of living persons.
5. Every part of the premises to which the public are admitted shall be so lighted during the whole of the time it is open to the public as to make it possible to see clearly over the whole area.

In 1923 two additional recommendations were issued:—

6. No film (other than photographs of current events) which has not been passed for "universal" exhibition or "public" exhibition by the British Board of Film Censors shall be exhibited without the express consent of the Council.
7. No film—other than photographs of current events—which has not been passed for universal exhibition by the British Board of Film Censors, shall be exhibited in the premises without the express consent of the Council during the time that any child, under the age of 16 years, is therein. Provided that this condition shall not apply in the case of any child who is accompanied by a parent or bonâ fide adult guardian of such child.

On 16th December, 1929, a further Circular (No. 537, 429/3) was issued under the title "**The Cinema and Children**," in which most of the earlier recommendations were repeated, and certain others added requiring fuller announcement as to the category of the films to be shown.

In reference to No. 7 as above quoted, an explanatory statement was made as follows:—"the principle underlying this condition is that a child or young person should not be allowed to see an "A" film unless the parent or guardian accepts the responsibility of taking the child with him."

In order that they may not do so unwittingly, the Circular of 1929 recommends that:—

"Immediately before the exhibition of each cinematograph film passed by the British Board of Film Censors, a reproduction of the certificate of the Board, or, as an alternative if such certificate is not available, a slide giving the name of the film, stating that the film has been passed by the Board and giving the category ("A" or "U") in which the film has been placed, shall be exposed for at least ten seconds in such a manner that it shall be legible to all persons attending the exhibition."

Further it is recommended that there shall be displayed in the premises of the Cinema Hall a "notice, of dimensions not less than 36 inch by 26 inch, stating the *titles* of all films to be shown during the programmes, the *time* when each film will be exhibited, and the Category "A" or "U" in which each film has been placed by the British Board of Film Censors.

These recommendations of the Home Office might well be regarded as the minimum standard to be adopted and enforced by every licensing authority in the country.

The Enquiry Sub-Committee endeavoured to find out to what

extent they had been adopted, and prepared a Questionnaire which was issued by the National Council of Women to the County Councils and County Borough Councils in England and Wales. The replies showed that of the 83 *County Boroughs*, 34 had adopted the Rules and 34 had not; 15 sent no reply.

In the case of the 61 *County Councils*, 20 had not delegated their powers; 7 had adopted all the Model Rules, and 4 had partly adopted them; 9 gave no reply.

Of the County Councils, 28 had delegated their powers, and only 4 of these stated that the Model Rules had been adopted by the bodies to whom these powers had been delegated. 8 County Councils stated that the Rules had not been adopted; 16 gave no reply.

The Enquiry Sub-Committee notes with satisfaction that the Home Office is now obtaining full information on this point from all the licensing authorities. Meanwhile it was felt that it might help to expedite matters if an urgent appeal to adopt the model conditions were sent to all those who had not replied in the affirmative, and as the London Public Morality Council had dealt with this question at a representative Conference held in January last, this appeal was issued jointly by the two organisations. The Branches of the National Council of Women were also urged to do everything possible in their own localities to push forward the adoption of the "Model Conditions."

It ought to be stated here that in Scotland no similar "Model Rules" have been issued by the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Attendance of Children at "A" Films.

The model condition No. 7 has been applied by a considerable number of the licensing authorities, but they find that notwithstanding children manage to get into the theatre under the wing of older people who are neither parents nor bona fide guardians.

One or two of the licensing authorities have therefore recently forbidden the presence of any children, whether accompanied or unaccompanied, during the exhibition of "A" films. In October, 1930, the Liverpool Licensing Justices made it a condition of granting the Cinema licence in their area that "A" films should not be exhibited to persons under 16. This condition was contravened by the Burlington Cinema Company, Limited, of Vauxhall Road, Liverpool, by showing a film "Red Pearls" to persons under the age of 16 without having obtained the permission of the Liverpool Justices.

The case was taken to Court and the judgment upheld the action of the Licensing Justices. The Burlington Cinema was fined £10 and the Licensee £2. An appeal against this decision proved unsuccessful.

Referring to this law-case, Sir E. Hesketh Bell, in writing to the "Times" deplored

"the vulgar and sensational pictures that are being presented daily and nightly to millions of our people. . . . Up to recently one was inclined to put all the blame on films of American manufacture, but it is sad to have now to confess that many of our recent British productions are just as bad, from the point of view of morals, as those of foreign origin."

Many people are of opinion that this last statement is justified. The explanation offered is that the American film producers had established a precedent before the British producers started work. Even now about 90% of the films displayed in this country come from America, and in the keen competition, it is scarcely possible for the British producer to hope suddenly to alter the nature of a public demand that has been built up during the past quarter of a century.

The cinema "fans" in this country are educated to American productions: British productions are still on trial. Now is the time therefore when a determined struggle must be made to encourage the better kind of films, whether they are produced here or in any other country, especially as it has been estimated that 75% of the Cinema audiences in the U.S.A. are under 25 years of age, and as the same is probably the case here.

Hence the influence of the film has to be regarded side by side with that of the home, the school, the playground and the sports field as a primary influence in the development of the mind and character of the individual, in fact as part of the training-ground of the British citizens.

In considering the action of the Liverpool Licensing Justices, the Enquiry Sub-Committee, while sympathising with the desire to restrain children from attending "A" films, felt that the only really satisfactory line of advance was to endeavour to keep up the standard of the "A" films themselves. At present the category includes all grades, from the very best to the very worst films, regarded from the point of view of moral influence; and the films of finest technique and dramatic effects are among them.

The issue will have to be faced by the film-producing firms and renters as to whether they will refrain entirely from films appealing to the baser elements in humanity, so that no "A" film could legitimately call forth objection, or whether they are prepared to run the gauntlet of public opinion which has already in certain areas led to the banning of "A" films for children under 16 years of age, and consequently to the exclusion also of many of the parents.

General Conclusions.

The conclusions of the Enquiry Committee are as follows:—

(1) That the present voluntary system of film censorship is on the whole superior to a statutory system, since it accords better with the democratic principles and traditions to which British people are accustomed.

(2) That closer contact between the Board of Film Censors and public opinion should be secured by the establishment of a Consultative Committee, composed mainly of representatives of the local licensing authorities, and including representatives of the Home Office, the Board of Film Censors and the Board of Trade Film Advisory Committee; such Committee to keep in touch with the trade interests on the one hand, and the general public on the other, and to encourage the maintenance of the better-class standards in films.

(3) That the action of the Liverpool Licensing Authority, in ruling that unless a film has been passed for *universal* exhibition children under 16 shall not be allowed to see it, even if accompanied by a parent or guardian, has established an important precedent, and one which will probably be followed by some of the other licensing bodies. While such stringent action is not likely to be generally adopted, in the opinion of the Committee it is of paramount importance that a minimum standard of licensing conditions should be recognised by all Licensing Authorities throughout the country, a standard not below that indicated by the Model Rules of the Home Office.

(4) That little good can come of any attempt to persuade exhibitors to arrange their ordinary programmes entirely on "A" or "U" certificate lines, owing to trading conditions governing the release and booking of films.

(5) That not only is it essential to protect children from the detrimental influence of many films, but it is equally important to keep in view the unwholesome influence of a number of the "A" films upon young people in the impressionable years of life between 16 and 25; nor can the effect of such films upon older people be disregarded.

The Committee would therefore urge the need to maintain the "A" films at a more uniform standard and so to provide for the whole population a clean Cinema, showing plays with sound dramatic and artistic qualities.

The Committee believe that this can only be achieved by bringing to bear upon film producers and licensing authorities alike the pressure of a strong public opinion. They are confident that if the licensing authorities take initiative as a body to adopt uniform minimum standards, they will have the cordial support of all the leading social organisations and of widespread individual opinion now being voiced throughout the country.

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