

THE WOMAN'S LEADER

AND THE COMMON CAUSE

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NOTES AND NEWS.

Peace and Goodwill.

Mr. Baldwin's speech in the House last Thursday, described by Cross Bench in another column, amply restored our slightly shaken optimism of last week with regard to Indian affairs. Mr. Baldwin's tribute to Lord Irwin and his solemn avowal of his determination to help those engaged on the "almost super-human task" of finding a solution which will bring about peace and goodwill was welcomed with enthusiasm, and has greatly relieved the tension in India. It is now generally accepted, even we believe by Congress leaders, that the continuation of the Round Table Conference in London is in the best interests of final success. But much must be done in India before that takes place, and events there in the coming months will be watched with the deepest interest.

The University Vote.

The Government was unexpectedly defeated by four votes on Monday on the question of the University Vote. Our readers are probably divided on this question, though all would doubtless regret the loss, temporarily at least, of one of the few women Members which would be entailed if University constituencies were abolished. At present it is not yet stated whether the Government will attempt to reinsert the rejected clause on report stage or not.

Sentence of Death (Expectant Mothers) Bill.

We referred last week to Miss Picton-Turbervill's Bill, which provides that a death sentence should no longer be passed on an expectant mother convicted of murder, but that in such a case the sentence should be commuted to imprisonment for life. We are glad to hear that the Government is not only allowing time for the Bill, but is actually starring it. This means that it will take precedence over ordinary Private Members' Bills, and would have Government support. An interesting discussion of the Bill took place at the Annual Council Meetings of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, some objections being raised to the placing of pregnant women in a special category. It was pointed out that British law has always been against the hanging of a pregnant woman on the grounds that it would be destroying two lives. The Council,

therefore, passed a resolution by an enormous majority in support of the whole Bill, including the abolition of the "jury of matrons," with which abolition they entirely agreed.

Parish Council Elections.

Last week the annual parish meetings were held in the villages and the majority of parish councillors elected for the ensuing three years. Few parishes demanded a poll. A goodly number of women were among the candidates and at Eaton Bray (Beds), Kingswear (Devon), and Monkton (Northumberland) women were elected for the first time. In many counties the Women's Institutes took a keen interest in the Parish Council Elections, and at Perranpont (Cornwall) a bus was specially chartered to bring the members who were determined to express their views, with the result that two women were elected to the Perranzabaloe Council. Three parishes have also elected their first women members, who were returned for Castle Cresley (Staffs.), Thorpe (Surrey), and Westend (Hants).

A Parliamentary Conference on Women Police.

An important conference convened by Miss Picton-Turbervill, M.P., and other Members of Parliament, was held in a committee room at the House of Commons on Wednesday of last week. Miss Picton-Turbervill presided, and at least fifty M.P.s were present, as well as large numbers of women, many of whom were delegates to the annual meeting of the N.U.S.E.C. which opened on the same day. In a competent opening speech Mrs. Keynes briefly outlined the steps which had led to the present position. Miss Tancred urged the establishment of women police on a definitely legal basis by the application of the Police Acts to women, and asked for the summoning of a Police Council to consider the scope of duties, numbers, conditions of appointment, regulations, and the appointment of a woman to serve on such a council. Lady Cushendun (better known to our readers as Miss C. Margisson) submitted that with regard to the appointment of women police, local autonomy had absolutely broken down. Several Members of Parliament, including Sir Robert Hutchinson and Sir John Sandeman Allen, took part in the discussion. Some admitted that they had been prejudiced against the reform through misunderstanding of its purpose. Lady Iveagh moved a resolution calling on the Home Secretary and the Secretary for Scotland to draft resolutions for policewomen for submission to a Police Council, called and selected for that purpose.

The St. George's By-election.

An interesting feature of this notorious by-election which will be over before this paper reaches our readers is the fact that for the first time the League of Nations Union has made a definite pronouncement in favour of one candidate as against another. It supports Mr. Duff Cooper, not because he is the official Conservative candidate, but because he has answered the questions submitted by the Westminster branch of the Union with regard to the policy of the Union in International questions, while Sir Ernest Petter replied to the effect that owing to the important matters on which this election was run he had no time to do so. Of course, this action of the Union as a strictly non-party organization, was made possible by the fact that both candidates call themselves Conservatives. Even as it is a certain amount of criticism has been aroused in some quarters. For ourselves we would go even further and not hesitate to oppose any candidate of whatever party colour who refused to give answers to questions asked by bona fide electors on matters affecting the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

Sir Josiah Stamp and Equal Pay.

In giving evidence before the Royal Commission on the Civil Service Sir Josiah Stamp was asked by Lord Toulmin if, as an

economist, he had any views as to whether men and women in the same grade of service should receive equal pay. His reply was that he considered the claim for equal pay unfounded without a system of family allowances. Wages are paid not only for work but for the upkeep of social life. "If you had a system where all men of the same grade were paid equally, plus a family allowance, you would have the case for equal pay. Otherwise, it is quite illogical to pay it to the woman, even if her work is equally good."

A Woman Doctor May Apply.

The women's organizations in Cardiff have made a firm stand against the retrograde decision of the Public Assistance Committee in that city that permanent institutional medical appointments should only be open to men. When the City Council assembled last week and the minutes of the Public Assistance Committee were brought up for confirmation, the women's organizations were fully represented, and a delegation was formed which sought to be received by the Council. This was not allowed, but a letter was read from the Women's Guild of Empire stating the case for the appointments to be open to both men and women doctors. Several councillors spoke in support of a resolution to delete the word "male" from the advertisement inviting applications for the posts of first and second assistant medical officers at the City Lodge, and on a vote this was carried. We congratulate Cardiff women on the alertness which they have shown in keeping appointments open to women doctors in institutions where more than half the patients are women and children.

Training for Home Helps.

The success of training schemes for unemployed women has been shown in Preston where forty ex-mill girls have taken a three months' course of housewifery and domestic science, and have developed into capable maidservants whose services are eagerly competed for all over the country. The Preston Employment Exchange finds that at present there are ample vacancies for these girls locally, and most of them have already been engaged. The speeding-up of domestic training all over the country is urgently wanted both to relieve unemployment and the scarcity of efficient home-helps.

Byron and Long Skirts.

The suggestion that the Press should be asked to omit any allusion to the resolution deploring long skirts passed at the Annual Council Meeting of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship could hardly be taken seriously. It would have been too cruel to forbid the use of such an opportunity. Even the *Observer* seized it, and on Sunday, after referring to the Council resolution, announced as its prize competition three guineas for a Byronic stanza, preferably in the metre of Don Juan, on the return of the long skirt.

The Death Penalty.

We are glad to publish to-day an article by Mr. Roy Calvert on the death penalty. Our readers will remember that Mr. Calvert has recently issued two books dealing with this subject, one of which is a summary of the evidence submitted to the Select Committee which reported to the Government on this subject last year. A memorial has just been signed by over 200 Members of Parliament representing all three parties on the House of Commons asking for facilities for a discussion on this question at an early date "as it involves the issues of life and death".

Removal of Sex Disqualification in British Columbia.

If the Bill to be introduced in the Provincial Legislature by the Attorney-General of the Province comes into force, disqualifications against women on account of their sex will be swept away. Many inequalities have already been removed, but some enactments still discriminate against British Columbian women with regard to property ownership, and the holding of public offices. The fate of the Bill will be watched with interest by feminists all over the Empire.

Chinese Women's Demands.

The Peking Women's Union is asking for more representation in the Government of the country and asserts that many women are better qualified than men to receive some of the "plums" of office. The interest now taken in the part played by women

in the life of the country is shown by the fact that Dr. Hu Shih, China's leading philosopher and literary critic, has thought it worth while to lecture on this subject. He declared that the Chinese woman had exerted herself against all shackles and fetters, and had achieved a place in history. "She had managed homes and governed empires, had contributed abundantly to literature and the fine arts; and above all she had taught and moulded her sons to be what they had been. And if she had contributed no more it was probably because China had not deserved more."

Midwifery in China.

A correspondent draws our attention to the fact that a comprehensive scheme has been submitted to the Chinese Ministry of Health by Dr. Marion Yang, Director of the First Midwifery School in Peking, on Maternity and Child Welfare. Midwifery in China still labours under many disadvantages—scarcity of qualified physicians, lack of reliable statistics, and queer and out of date theories of obstetrics such as those said to be still prevalent on the Sino-Tibetan border, where the proximity of the mother to *cattle* at the time of parturition is supposed to be advantageous. Dr. Yang has a five years' programme which should commence immediately, its most important tasks being the collection of vital statistics, the establishment of five regional normal schools in Peking, Nanking, Hangchow, and Canton, and a provincial nursing school in each province. During the next fifty years Dr. Yang proposes to train 100,000 midwives.

Women on a League Committee.

We are glad to note that two women are among the members of the new permanent committee on arts and letters set up by the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation of the League of Nations. One of them is Mademoiselle Hélène Vacaresco, the Roumanian poetess, who has served for several years as a deputy delegate for Roumania at League of Nations' Assemblies, and who is a firm supporter of the work of the Committee on Intellectual Co-operation. The other woman member is Madame Nini Roll-Anker, the Norwegian authoress, who is still a newcomer to League circles.

QUESTIONS IN PARLIAMENT.

Thursday, 12th March, 1931.

HONG-KONG (MUI-TSAI SYSTEM).

Mr. Campbell asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies why the orders contained in dispatch of the Secretary of State dated 22nd August, 1929, to the effect that steps were to be taken forthwith to set up machinery for the inspection, control, and remuneration of the existing mui-tsai in Hong-Kong have not been carried out by the Governor.

Dr. Shiels: The hon. Member is under a misapprehension in thinking that the Secretary of State's instructions have not been carried out. I will place in the Library a copy of the regulations made by the Governor in Council on the 7th November, 1929, providing for the regulation and remuneration of existing mui-tsai in Hong-Kong.

Mr. Campbell: Have these regulations been carried out?

Dr. Shiels: Yes, as far as we know, they have been carried out in their entirety, and a report has already been placed in the Library giving the effect of the six months' working of these regulations. If the hon. Member has any case brought to his notice which suggests otherwise, I should be glad to know.

NATIONALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN BILL.

Viscountess Astor asked the Prime Minister whether the Government will find time for the remaining stages of the Nationality of Married Women Bill.

The Prime Minister: I fear I can hold out no hope of special facilities being provided for the further discussion of this Bill.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

The address of THE WOMAN'S LEADER on and after 25th March will be 4 Great Smith Street, Westminster, S.W. 1.

POLICY.—The sole policy of THE WOMAN'S LEADER is to advocate a real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women. So far as space permits, however, it will offer an impartial platform for topics not directly included in the objects of the woman's movement but of special interest to women. Articles on these subjects will always be signed, at least by initials or a pseudonym, and for the opinions expressed in them the editor accepts no responsibility.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT AND THE SELECT COMMITTEE'S INQUIRY.

By E. ROY CALVERT.

That capital punishment will be abolished in this country there can be no doubt. When is the only question.

And the events of the last two years have brought its abolition not only within sight, but within reach.

Dr. Johnson once said of a book that he would rather praise it than read it. Some of our modern journalists on the other hand have apparently taken the view that the recent Report of the Select Committee on Capital Punishment was to be abused rather than read. Certain it is that many of the adverse Press comments on this Report, which recommended the abolition of the death penalty for an experimental period of five years, would never have been made had their writers first read the Report itself and the volume of evidence upon which it is based.¹

The Select Committee was appointed in 1929 for the primary purpose of ascertaining facts, and particularly, facts about the experience of those countries where capital punishment had been abolished. The evidence before the Committee soon became a conflict between the opinions of English supporters of the death penalty and the actual experience of foreign countries. Most of the British official witnesses who gave evidence said that were the death penalty abolished burglars would carry firearms, and there would be a consequent increase in murders by professional criminals. No one would wish to deny the sincerity with which this opinion was held. But the Select Committee also arranged, through the Foreign Office, for some of the most distinguished jurists and prison administrators from the abolition countries of Europe—Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, and Italy—to appear before them, in most cases the representatives of their respective Governments. And every one of these eminent witnesses testified in unmistakable terms that the abolition of capital punishment in their countries over periods of twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years has not been followed by an increase in murder, or in the carrying of firearms. The only foreign witness who supported capital punishment was a judge from Chicago, where the death penalty is a feature of an administration of justice universally recognized to be inefficient and corrupt. Chicago is hardly a city whose example any country would desire to follow in this matter.

The Select Committee not unnaturally took the view that the evidence of these official witnesses from abolition countries, based upon many years of actual experience of abolition, was a more reliable guide than the opinions of British officials, however eminent, based upon pure supposition. Yet for doing so the majority on the Select Committee have been denounced as sentimentalists. Is it really more sentimental to base conduct upon knowledge and experience than upon opinion and supposition unsupported by any experience whatever? The Home Office witnesses told the Committee that were capital punishment abolished in this country, there would be a danger of lynch law. The Select Committee's inquiry established the fact that the States in America stained with the blot of many lynchings

NOTES FROM WESTMINSTER.

I finished these notes last week on the eve of Thursday's momentous debate on India. Most Members were feeling thoroughly angry with Mr. Baldwin for landing us in an unnecessary mess and depreciating the national credit in India. In that mood the House prepared to listen to his opening statement and the embarrassed and hesitating tones in which he began his defence showed, I think, that he felt keenly the general atmosphere of disapproval. Yet when he sat down, some twenty minutes later, there ensued a scene of such tumultuous applause and wild enthusiasm as I have seldom seen equalled in this Parliament. Much of this change was doubtless due to the intense relief of the Liberal and Labour Parties and of many of Mr. Baldwin's own followers at finding that he did not, after all, intend to surrender to Mr. Churchill, or to throw Lord Irwin and the Round Table Conference overboard. But much must also be attributed to Mr. Baldwin's own personality, to his faculty for convincing his hearers of his sincerity and of his real desire to put the good of the country and of the Empire above considerations of party advantage. The House is quick to feel and to respond to such qualities and they make up for many mistakes. How hardly Mr. Baldwin has been driven came out in his final passage, so charged with emotion that he had difficulty in giving it utterance.

¹ Report of the Select Committee on Capital Punishment with Evidence. (H.M. Stationery Office, 682 pp., 22s. 6d. Report only, 1s. 6d.)

are the very States which retain capital punishment, and inflict it most frequently, whereas lynch law had not followed abolition in a single country in the world.

If the reader were considering the desirability of any course of action, whose advice would he follow: the advice of those who had already achieved with success the step he contemplated or the advice of people who warned him against it, but admitted they had no personal knowledge of the results of previous action of the same kind? Only one out of the twenty-one British witnesses who supported capital punishment as a deterrent, stated that he had any personal knowledge of the experience of abolition countries, and it is significant that he favoured the reprieve of six out of seven persons sentenced to death.

It should, indeed, not be inferred that all the British officials who gave evidence favoured the retention of capital punishment, or that those who did, endorsed the present law and practice. Perhaps the most able doctor in the prison medical service favoured abolition, and the strongest appeal made before the Committee for the abolition of the death penalty came from a prison chaplain. Four out of the five prison governors who gave evidence advocated the gradation of murder whereby many of the crimes now punishable by death would be made non-capital, and several other officials proposed a drastic reduction in the number of executions. Few of our newspapers have recorded these facts.

Some people have attempted to dismiss the Report of the Select Committee because it was not unanimous, as if we have ever waited for unanimity before reforming our criminal law. Others have urged its rejection because six of the minority on the Committee withdrew from the proceedings. The circumstances associated with this incident have been examined elsewhere.¹ Here it need only be said that the main reason given for the withdrawal, viz. that the dissentients were denied reasonable time to prepare a statement of their views, is not borne out by the facts. But in any case important and well-written as the Report of the Committee is, it must necessarily be overshadowed, to the sincere student of this question, by the evidence upon which it is based. That evidence establishes what the National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty has always maintained, that the many countries which have discontinued capital punishment have not experienced an increase in murder. And if the Dutch and Danes, Swedes and Belgians, Norwegians and Swiss have demonstrated to the world that they can get on very well without this relic of barbarism, it is hardly a compliment to our national character to suggest that the Briton alone combines the ferocity to murder with the cowardice that makes death the only possible deterrent.

Just before her death, the late Dr. Ethel Bentham, M.P., who served on the Select Committee, said to the present writer: "Quite apart from our report, the emphatic evidence from other countries has killed capital punishment." Dr. Bentham was right.

"If there are those in our party who approach this subject in a niggling, grudging spirit, who would have to have forced out of their reluctant hands one concession after another, if they be a majority, in God's name let them choose a man to lead them. If they are in minority, then let them at least refrain from throwing difficulties in the way of those who have undertaken an almost superhuman task, on the successful fulfilment of which depends the well-being, the prosperity and the duration of the whole British Empire."

Subjected to a cool analysis, Mr. Baldwin's explanation of how the blunder had arisen was not, perhaps, very satisfactory. We were left reflecting that a stronger man would not under such circumstances have let himself be driven, even by a whole pack of hounds yelping and baying at his heels, into such a blunder as that of the previous week. But weakness and frayed nerves are deficiencies which few of us felt qualified to condemn very harshly.

On Friday, most Members dispersed to their several avocations in the calm belief that nothing very important was happening in the House, which might safely be left to transact its business with the aid of those whom it specially concerned. We were rudely awakened—those of us who were within reach—by a frantic ringing of telephone bells and dispatch of district messengers to announce the fact that the Government was in

¹ The Death Penalty Enquiry, by E. Roy Calvert. (Gollancz, 1931.)

imminent danger of a defeat and that those of us who wished either to assist or to resist such a contingency had better hurry back to our places. We did so in sufficient numbers to make the Government safe by five votes. The issue was one of Parliamentary life's little ironies. The Labour Government, pledged to resist the excessive remuneration of the few at the expense of the many, had found itself in this particular instance compelled to pay for the services of a mining expert, Sir Harry Gower, his alleged market value of £7,000 per annum. The Conservative Party, itself convinced probably to a man and woman of the need for high salaries in such circumstances, saw their opportunity. They played cleverly on the always easily excited feelings of the left-wing contingent, of whom a substantial number marched into the Opposition lobby, which presented such a queerly mixed crowd as one might expect to see at the Millennium. The result was as aforesaid.

This incident provided a fitting prelude to Monday's debate on the University vote. Ministers may perhaps have reflected what future Parliaments may be like, when the spirit which animated the insurgents of Friday might have asserted itself so effectively as to fill the Cabinet and the Civil Service from the rota of the unemployed, on the principle that one man is as good as another and that the contents of his head do not much matter, provided everything is right with his heart. On this principle, University graduates may find it a hard job to get themselves returned to the House of Commons by ordinary constituencies and those who are aspirants for office in future Labour Governments might have seen reason to regret last Monday's debate, had it turned out as they anticipated. To the intense surprise of everyone, the University constituencies were saved by a narrow majority of four. A few hours before, I had heard it variously predicted by various people (including Government Whips) that the Clause would get through by a majority of anything from ten to fifty. The huddled flock of University M.P.s, awaiting the sacrificial knife with the miserable consciousness that they were being offered up to a god which never existed (to paraphrase a bit of Lord Hugh Cecil's delightful speech), never for a moment expected salvation from the House of Commons. All their trust was placed in the Lords. The result was due, undoubtedly, partly to the excellent organization of the Opposition forces, but chiefly to the numerous abstentions on the part of Liberal and Labour Members, who had been heard to declare that while they had been coerced by their Whips into abstaining from the Opposition lobby, nothing on earth should drive them into that of the Government. Let us hope that the latter has learnt its lesson. "The University vote," as a Conservative M.P. was heard to remark, "is an anvil that has broken many hammers, and it will probably last long enough to break a few more."

CROSS BENCH.

"OPEN DAY" AT MORLEY COLLEGE.

Morley College for Working Men and Women (61 Westminster Bridge Road, S.E.) will hold an "Open Day" on Saturday, 28th March, from 3 to 11 p.m. Demonstrations illustrating all sides of the College activities will be given, including musical and dramatic performances. All are invited.

(Continued from next column.)

countries to and from which girls are taken for sale and these are regulationist countries. It is the regulation system and the exploiters we have to attack, not prostitutes, who are the people exploited. It has been suggested that the A.M.S.H. in opposing the proposals of the International Bureau is merely adopting a negative attitude. That is not so. There is already in existence the International Agreement of 1904 providing for voluntary repatriation of women and girls who come within its scope and who desire to be taken back to their own country. Our proposal is that this Agreement should be made effective, and, meantime, to challenge at all points the cause of the traffic, the system of State Regulation.

Voluntary repatriation is a measure which would meet with universal agreement, but the A.M.S.H. opposes all proposals to repatriate compulsorily "prostitutes", as such. In opposing them we give every credit to our opponents for their sincerity and good intentions, but good intentions do not alter the value of proposals which are in themselves bad. Nothing can humanize the regulation system or the traffic in women; the only remedy is complete abolition.

COMPULSORY REPATRIATION OF PROSTITUTES.

By ALISON NEILANS.

The Association for Moral and Social Hygiene is carrying on a campaign of protest against certain proposals, drawn up by the International Bureau for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children, asking for an International Convention to deal with the Compulsory Repatriation of Prostitutes. These proposals, which will be presented to the League of Nations as a basis for discussion in April, are:—

(a) To prevent "prostitutes" entering a foreign country to practise prostitution.

(b) The compulsory repatriation of foreign "prostitutes," limited, as a first step, to cases where a woman is guilty of a breach of any law, or of any municipal regulation dealing with prostitution.

(c) A provision making "prostitutes" liable to punishment if, having been repatriated from a country, they return to it.

There was no general understanding of the nature of the proposals put forward by the International Bureau and it would have been a serious matter if they had been allowed to go to the League of Nations, as being supported by British Societies, without receiving full consideration and discussion. A pamphlet has been prepared¹ in which the proposals of the International Bureau have been more fully considered than they can be here, and on 3rd March a well-attended conference convened by the A.M.S.H. was held at Caxton Hall, to protest against the proposals.

It has been suggested that, as these proposals have been put forward only as a basis for discussion, they need not be opposed, but if those who cannot accept them do not protest now it will be taken for granted by the League of Nations that there is no opposition, and this would not be true. The A.M.S.H., for instance, is opposed to the whole principle of these proposals because they are solely concerned with "prostitutes" as such, and therefore constitute "measures of exception" applied to certain women on account of their morals. Moreover, they confuse the public conscience in regard to responsibility for prostitution and traffic in women by diverting attention from the people who are responsible for the traffic, namely men who are willing to pay money for the hire of women; procurers and brothel-keepers who sell women; and Regulationist Governments who provide facilities in licensed houses for the sale of women and who also, by licensing and registering "prostitutes" label women as legitimate "articles of commerce." Any proposals, therefore, which advocate special restrictions and punishment only for "prostitutes" tend to make people believe that by such means the worst features of the traffic in women can be eliminated, thereby lessening the responsibility of both men and Regulationist Governments, although they and not "prostitutes" are, in fact, the cause of the traffic. Further, proposals of this nature lead people to think that, by making more and more laws for the supposed protection of women and girls by restricting their movements abroad, the operations of the traffickers can be restricted. This is a fallacy, for the League of Nations' Report shows quite clearly that, in countries where State Regulation of Prostitution exists, these laws are continually evaded or are rendered inoperative by the corruption of minor officials and the "moral police." The Report clearly shows, too, that in these countries traffickers can readily obtain or forge passports, identity cards, and other necessary papers to bring women in or out of a country for purposes of prostitution. There is no practical use, therefore, in framing yet another law for limiting the traffic in women when we know those already in existence are ineffective.

This traffic is only a serious problem in countries where the Regulation system is in operation, or, in other words, where Governments encourage brothel-keepers by licensing them for the sale of women. Yet it is just in those countries (where protection is most needed) that the laws against the traffic are most evaded—such countries as Algeria, Argentine, Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, Panama, Portugal, Tunis, Morocco, etc. These are the

(Continued in previous column.)

¹ Some Arguments Against the Compulsory Repatriation of Prostitutes, to be obtained from the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, Livingstone House, Broadway, S.W. 1.

WOMEN IN COUNCIL.

The annual meeting of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship had a new significance this year due to the influx of Townswomen's Guilds, which now number 96 as against 30 last year. The older societies were well represented, however, and it was only to be expected that so far as speaking was concerned they were more in evidence than the younger, less experienced guilds. Altogether over 100 societies from different parts of the country were represented; Scotland sent an unusually large delegation, including representatives from societies as far north as Thurso and Wick.

The formal business with which the proceedings opened struck a very optimistic note. The annual report presented by Mrs. Ryland showed a record of development of which any national organization might well be proud, especially in view of the drastic economies outlined by the Treasurer, Mrs. Van Gruisen, which the present financial stress had necessitated. The Presidential address already printed in this paper was a fitting prelude to the business of the Council.

Two important reforms on the immediate programme which are at present in the forefront of politics were dealt with at the opening session. The first of these, which dealt with the Wills and Intestacies Bill, was appropriately moved by the ex-President, Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P., the second on the nationality of married women by Mrs. Corbett Ashby in her dual rôle as President of the National Union and the International Alliance for Equal Citizenship, which has given much attention to this subject. A resolution condemning State regulation of prostitution and the infamous traffic in women was introduced by Miss Alison Neilans, who also moved a re-affirmation of the Council's last year's decision in favour of the Public Places Order Bill. Miss Picton-Turbervill, the other woman M.P. whom the Council can claim as its own, spoke on behalf of her Bill to abolish the sentence of death on expectant mothers. This was carried by a large majority though there was some opposition on the grounds that pregnancy should not be regarded as an abnormal condition. An amendment moved by the Edinburgh W.C.A. to a resolution of the Executive Committee dealing with inadequate sentences for cruelty to children and child assault, which urged the necessity for mental and medical examination, and if necessary, treatment, was accepted and the resolution carried. Another resolution on the care of the unmarried mother and her child was moved by Miss Musson in a speech full of practical suggestions. Other important and almost universally approved resolutions covered the Mental Treatment Act, 1930, a National Maternity Service, a Women Police Commissioner, training for local government officials, women house property managers, unemployment among women, and not least in order of importance the Greenwood Housing Act.

Turning to the region of controversy, several resolutions advanced for the first time had an unexpectedly easy passage through Council. The first of these, moved by Mrs. E. D. Simon, expressed satisfaction at the change of policy of the Minister of Health with regard to the provision of information on methods of birth control; some difference of opinion arose among the Scottish societies as to the retention of a sentence urging the Department of Health of Scotland to follow suit but the resolution was ultimately carried. A resolution moved by Mrs. Stocks urging the Government to establish a system of family allowances as a method of "diverting luxury expenditure to current expenditure on family needs" led to an interesting discussion, though a motion for "the previous question" prevented a division on the subject. The disinclination to vote was due not to any wavering on the part of the Council in the principle of family allowances but to its unwillingness to commit itself to a State scheme. The reception accorded to two entirely new subjects usually considered highly contentious showed the rapidity with which public opinion is changing. A resolution in favour of divorce reform on the lines recommended by the Royal Commission on the Divorce Laws or the Bill already approved by the House of Lords (giving as grounds of divorce for husband and wife equally, adultery, desertion, persistent cruelty or drunkenness, prolonged insanity or life imprisonment). This was carried by a large majority with only three dissentients, though some delegates did not vote. The second new subject to the Council was the legalization of voluntary sterilization of the unfit, which met with unexpected approval and went through with a large majority.

A final group of International and Imperial resolutions were reserved for the last morning. It was gratifying to see the lively interest taken by the Council in Miss Courtney's resolution on

the Disarmament Conference of 1932 and Mrs. Corbett Fisher's proposals for action. Miss Eleanor Rathbone moved a resolution dealing with the safeguarding of the status of Indian women. Miss Tainsh, on behalf of Glasgow, reaffirmed the Council's conviction that no women under the British Flag should suffer from any form of slavery. A resolution deprecating compulsion or pressure on boys to join the O.T.C. was fitly included in this International group.

Lastly, unfortunately but unavoidably postponed from its proper place, coming rather as a comic turn after such subjects as war, peace, and the continued practice of slavery, came a resolution deploring the return of long skirts, moved by Mrs. Stocks in a speech during which the Council rocked with laughter. Though misplaced, and on a subject which lent itself to witty handling, the intention of the resolution was serious enough, and in spite of some opposition on the score of frivolity it was passed by a large majority.

Taken on the whole it was an interesting and vigorous Council. There were no narrow divisions as in past years; indeed, on no occasion was even a count demanded. There was a fairly good average of speaking, with on most subjects the authoritative voice of experts, but the quality of the actual debating was less marked than in past years, possibly because differences of opinion are less marked.

CONFERENCE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

A very successful conference on Women in Local Government was held on Thursday afternoon, presided over by Mrs. Hornbrook, Chairman of the Local Government Committee. After short speeches from Miss Caton and Miss Berry, delegates reported on action taken in the different localities, and the proposal for regional surveys of activities was generally approved. The members of the Local Government Committee were much encouraged that such widespread interest was shown. Gratitude is particularly felt to a number of delegates, experienced in Local Government, who, after the arduous work of the Council, spent nearly three hours on Friday in order to thrash out details of the questionnaire, and who made valuable additions to it. The object of the Survey, it may be repeated, is two-fold. (1) To bring into force much necessary, but at present inoperative, legislation. (2) To promote active interest amongst women both as electors and potential candidates, by giving them the opportunity for real study of and contact with the work of the local authority. It is hoped that additional Societies will take part and will give in their names. The revised survey and any necessary literature will then be sent to them.

Note.—An article dealing with the subject will shortly appear in THE WOMAN'S LEADER.

CONFERENCE FOR TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD DELEGATES.

Friday, 13th March.

The Conference held, at special request, especially for members of Townswomen's Guilds was an immense success, nearly 200 being present. The meeting began with a practice of the Guild song "England," conducted by Miss Freda Harris. Mrs. Adrian Corbett took the chair until Mrs. Corbett Ashby arrived. Lady Cynthia Colville, President of the Townswomen's Guild Appeal Fund, was present, and addressed the Conference on the work that Guilds could do to help in the problem of Maternal Mortality. There was an interesting discussion on the various methods followed by individual Guilds in the use of the Monthly Letter. The singing of "Auld Lang Syne" ended the Conference, which everyone voted was a great success and expressed the wish for more time to be given to it on another occasion.

THE KEY OF PROGRESS

A Survey of the Status and Conditions of Women in India

By SEVERAL CONTRIBUTORS

With a Foreword by H.E. THE LADY IRWIN

Edited by A. R. CATON

Published by the Oxford University Press under the auspices of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.

Price 7s. 6d. net.

THE COUNCIL AT PLAY.

The lighter features of the Council Meetings were not less valuable this year than in former years in promoting friendly intercourse among the delegates. At the reception held in the now familiar hall of King's College for Women, Campden Hill, delegates were charmed and refreshed by the delightful selection of songs by Madame Milva. The Criterion luncheon grows larger each year, and a larger restaurant will soon have to be found. Unfortunately a critical House of Commons division deprived it of some of its usual Parliamentary guests, but Mr. Isaac Foot returned in time to give the first of the after-lunch speeches in which he, as a member of the Round Table Conference, referred to the needs of the women of India. Lady Iveagh, who made her first appearance at the luncheon, owing to inability to attend previously, spoke with special interest of the flourishing movement for Townswomen's Guilds. Miss Wilkinson pointed out the difficulties of women Members of Parliament and pleaded effectively for the women's point of view to make itself felt. Mrs. Corbett Ashby, who presided, in thanking the speakers, announced that it was hoped before long to announce a worthy memorial to Dame Millicent Fawcett.

GERMANY.

Miss Cicely Hamilton writes vividly, but, for reasons which she herself explains, somewhat inconsequently, about post-war Germany. Not the lowering, unhappy, self-absorbed, precarious Germany of the Ruhr invasion and the depreciating mark, which visitors learned to know in the early 1920's, but the inspired rejuvenated Germany of 1929 and 1930, whose aptest symbol is, as Miss Hamilton sees it, the tanned and sleeveless *Sportmadel*. Thus for those who intend to visit Germany this year, or next year, or even sometime, Miss Hamilton's new book may serve as a relevant and thought-provoking guide.

Three features of this new Germany strike Miss Hamilton with peculiar force. The first is the cult of bodily fitness as expressed in sun bathing, the revival of games, and the tendency to dispense with redundant clothing. One pleasant manifestation of this which Miss Hamilton does not mention is the confidence with which one can go about one's business in Berlin without a hat—a thing which it would be difficult to do unremarked in Paris or London. The second is the vitality and originality of German post-war building. And here, again, Miss Hamilton scents "the cult of the bare." Yet here, we suspect, there is something that she does not scent, and that is the extent to which this modern German architectural bareness is a kind of flaunting self-assertive positive bareness. Compare, for instance, the bareness of the Wäiblingen hospital, a photograph of which she reproduces on p. 97, with the bareness of an English Georgian country house. It is as the bareness of T. S. Eliot to the bareness of Walter De la Mare—and we find ourselves plagued with a certain doubt as to whether it is really as bare as it intends us to believe.

The third aspect of modern Germany which seizes the imagination of Miss Hamilton is the experimentalism plus the political and social content of German contemporary drama and stagecraft. It is this, as much as its musical pre-eminence, which makes Berlin to-day the amusement centre—as far, that is to say, as intelligent amusement is concerned—of the civilized world. This may be because, as Miss Hamilton suggests, Germany is using the theatre as an arena for debate—and doing it, astonishing as it may be in view of English experience—without rendering the theatre tediously dull. But there it is; and Miss Hamilton's chapter on the German stage and some of the bold dramatic experiments which she has herself witnessed, constitutes one of the most interesting sections of her book. Above and below its vivid descriptiveness its political and social judgments are perhaps less satisfactory; partly because Miss Hamilton writes, professedly, as an external observer. She has tramped Germany's highways and byways, haunted its inns, read its newspapers, conversed with its inhabitants, appraised its buildings, eaten its food. Clearly she has had a glorious holiday—and those who follow in her track will undoubtedly intensify and broaden their own experiences if they begin by giving ear to Miss Hamilton.

M. D. S.

¹ *Modern Germanies*, by Cicely Hamilton. (J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 7s. 6d.)

WOMEN COUNTY COUNCILLORS.

In addition to the names already given, the following women have been elected to County Councils:—

Berkshire	*Mrs. E. M. Davis, O.B.E., Ind., Unopposed. *Lady Mount, O.B.E., Ind., Unopposed. *Lady Smith, Unopposed.
Buckinghamshire	Mrs. Boyce, Lib.
Cambridgeshire	*Mrs. Scott Anderson, Ind.
Cheshire	*Mrs. Bromley-Davenport. Mrs. Henry Fildes, J.P.
Cumberland	*Mrs. Mason, Ind.
Essex	*Mrs. Iredale, Ind. *Mrs. Alderson, J.P., Ind. Mrs. Anderton, Lab. Mrs. Custerson, Ind. Mrs. Chisholm. *Mrs. Lester, Unopposed. *Mrs. McEntee, Unopposed. Miss Margaret Tabor, Unopposed.
Flintshire	*Mrs. B. W. Williams, J.P., Unopposed. Lady Kenyon. Miss Kitty Lewis, Lib. Mrs. Humphry Williams.
Hertfordshire	*Mrs. G. E. Attenborough, J.P., Ind., Unopposed. *Miss M. B. Blount, J.P., Ind., Unopposed. *Miss E. E. R. Bradford, J.P., Ind., Unopposed.
Lancashire	*Mrs. Garrett, M.B.E., Ind., Unopposed. The Lady Marjorie Dalrymple. *Mrs. Lomax, Lab. *Miss Whitehead, J.P.
Middlesex	*Mrs. Ithell, Lab.
Norfolk	*Miss Cozens-Hardy, Ind. Mrs. T. A. Cook. Mrs. E. G. Gooch, Lab.
Northumberland	*Mrs. Fisher, Ind. Mrs. Harrison, Mod.
Somerset	*Miss Jackson-Barstow, Unopposed.
Sussex, East	Miss Hampton, Ind.
Yorks, West Riding	Mrs. Haslegrave, Con.

We learn with much pleasure that Mrs. Barnes, J.P., of Acton, has been elected an Alderman by the Middlesex County Council.

WOMEN AND MINISTERS' POWERS.

On 11th March, at a meeting of the Committee on Powers of Ministers, held in the Chairman's Room, House of Lords, Miss Chrystal Macmillan gave evidence on behalf of the Open Door Council which has the support of various other organizations of women in the matter. The point round which her evidence centred was what she declared to be the "constitutional impropriety" of Parliament delegating power to affect the status of women relatively to that of men. In regard to this point the chairman, Lord Donoughmore, observed a little cryptically that "nothing that Parliament did constitutionally could be improper". Nevertheless, he showed an impartiality and readiness to appreciate new points of view, which sets a standard for all in similar positions. For the most part a genial atmosphere of give and take obtained throughout the proceedings. Among those present were three permanent officials, Sir Warren Fisher, Sir Claude Schuster, and Sir John Anderson, with Sir John Withers and Miss Ellen Wilkinson. Miss Macmillan was assisted by Mrs. Abbott, and the clarity of thought, legal knowledge, and acquaintance with the detail of their subject, evinced by them, created a favourable impression. Space forbids a full report, but among the points made may be mentioned that Trade Boards in forty-two trades, affecting some 1,500,000 workers in Great Britain, have fixed minimum wages, and that in the great majority of cases these minimums were very much lower for women than for men. The witnesses made clear that their objection was not to the fixing of minimums, nor of welfare precautions and restrictions in themselves, but always as they injuriously affected the status and freedom to earn of the woman worker, and, further, as witnesses before the Committee, their objections were not even to these things in themselves, so much as that the matters were delegated and not dealt with directly by Parliament, so that the safeguards of public opinion, fully informed, could function, as was proper in things affecting the position of more than half the population of this country. The validity of this argument was unintentionally but effectively reinforced by Sir Warren Fisher, who, in the course of a little speech, said that "no useful conclusions could be reached when people discussed something 'so purely metaphysical' as status." Most of the

Continued at foot of page 55.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

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

ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING, 1931.

A report appears elsewhere of the Annual Council Meeting which was held at King George's Hall, W.C. 1, from 11th to 13th March, and was attended by about 240 delegates from all over Great Britain. In connection with it there were the usual Reception on the first night, and the Luncheon which this year terminated the main meetings of the Council, a Conference on Local Government work, which lead to a second meeting of volunteers ready to help with the preparation of a proposed survey, and a Conference specially for Townswomen's Guild members.

OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 1931-32.

A ballot was held for the election of 21 members of the Executive Committee. The officers were returned unopposed. The following were elected:—

President: Mrs. Corbett Ashby.
Hon. Secretary: Mrs. Ryland.
Treasurer: Mrs. Van Gruisen.

Executive Committee:

Mrs. Blanco-White.	Miss Elizabeth Macadam.
Miss A. R. Caton.	Mrs. Helena Normanton.
Mrs. Adrian Corbett.	Miss Picton-Turbervill, M.P.
Miss K. D. Courtney.	Miss Eleanor Rathbone, M.P.
Lady Cushenden.	Miss C. G. Robinson.
Miss E. A. Dawson.	Mrs. E. D. Simon.
The Hon. Mrs. Franklin.	Mrs. Stocks.
Mrs. Hornbrook.	Mrs. James Taylor.
Mrs. Hubback.	Mrs. James Todd.
Mrs. Alfred Hughes.	Mrs. Wharton.
	Mrs. Williams.

Vice-Presidents.

The Council unanimously elected Miss Agnes Garrett, a pioneer of women's education and elder sister of Dame Millicent Fawcett, and Miss Megan Lloyd George, M.P., Vice-Presidents of the N.U.S.E.C., and re-elected those already serving as Vice-Presidents: Miss Margaret Ashton, the Viscountess Astor, M.P., Mrs. Auerbach, Lady Beilby, H. N. Brailsford, Esq., the Countess Brassey, Miss M. J. Buchanan, Mrs. George Cadbury, the Right Hon. the Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, Mrs. C. H. Corbett, the Hon. Mrs. Franklin, Mrs. C. A. Fyffe, Major the Right Hon. J. W. Hills, M.P., Miss Hovey, F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, Esq., M.P., the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Lichfield, D.D., the Rev. the Hon. E. Lyttelton, the Right Hon. the Earl of Lytton, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., Miss S. E. Mair, LL.D., Sir Robert Newman, Bart., M.P., the Lady Maud Parry, Miss Eleanor F. Rathbone, M.P., Mrs. Reid, the Lady Laura Ridding, Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson, Miss Maude Royden, Lady Scott-Moncrieff, the Right Hon. Sir John Simon, K.C.V.O., K.C., M.P., Miss Frances Sterling, Mrs. James Ward, Dr. A. N. Whitehead, F.R.S., Mrs. Wintringham, the Ven. Canon Wilson, D.D., F.G.S.

New Offices.

As reported at the Council Meeting the Headquarters are being moved from 15 Dean's Yard to 4 Great Smith Street, S.W. 1, which will be the address of the National Union after 25th March. The new offices, although not in such beautiful surroundings as in Dean's Yard, are equally conveniently situated, being within a few yards of the Abbey end of Victoria Street, and are quiet. Members will be very welcome at our bungalow, which we hope will be completely in order and ready for visitors after Easter.

CORRESPONDENCE.

APATHY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS.

MADAM,—It is most difficult to find out the real reason for the disastrous indifference of voters in the Local Government elections. I only offer it as a suggestion, but I think one of the reasons is a prevailing opinion that "it doesn't make much difference". It comes about in this way. Take the people whose Saturday and Sunday reading is the local weekly newspaper—a vast number. These people always look up the report of the latest Council meeting, note the speech by their own representative, or by friend or neighbour, then glance at the motions, etc. And this sort of thing

is, so continually, what they find: "The Mayor said they would have to consider the question of an additional Clerk for the Education Officer" (I purposely invent). "Mr. Dickinson asked why they should have an additional Clerk when daily help could easily be procured. Mr. Pemberton agreed, and said a girl could type all the extra circulars in one day. The Mayor:—'I am afraid, Mr. Pemberton, we are pledged to appoint a clerk.' Mr. Pemberton:—'Why?' The Mayor desired the Clerk to read the circular just received from the Government, and then said 'You see, gentlemen, we really have no power in the matter.' Mr. Dickinson:—'And so it is every time—wasting the ratepayers' money.' Etc., etc., etc."

The effect on ordinary readers, strong and indeed not fallacious, is that whatever Party be in a majority, much the same thing is bound to happen—that all the Council can really do is to register the decisions of the "Government".

Of course, those who are actually on the Council know well that innumerable decisions are taken, in which the independence, and intelligence, of the Councillors are of the utmost importance, but I am not speaking of what, actually, is the case, but of what appears to the average voter to be the case. Unfortunate before, this is now, thanks to a Conservative Government's slavery to officials, ten times more unfortunate. To get the necessary number of women on to the County Councils (at any rate) has been made a labour of Hercules. There simply are not the seats. To get a woman on, someone has probably got to be displaced, who is very likely admirable in everything except the fact that he is not a woman.

However, something must be done, and I agree with you, it ought to be begun now.

(Mrs.) M. SMITH.

Dinbren Hall,
Llangollen, N. Wales.

"FROM LAMBETH TO ROME."

MADAM,—In your issue of 20th February, Dr. Marie Stopes quotes the following passage from the Pope's Encyclical on Christian marriage: "Nor are those considered as acting against nature who in the married state use their right in the proper manner although on account of natural reasons either of time or certain defects, new life cannot be brought forth." Dr. Stopes goes on to speak of this as "the birth control method of the 'safe-period'". The point is that the use of the "safe-period" is not a form of birth control in the accepted sense of the term, which is understood by everybody to mean prevention of conception by mechanical means which frustrate the end of the natural functions. There is no such frustration in the use of the "safe-period," for here there is no interference with the order of nature, as the Pope clearly indicates in the passage quoted by Dr. Stopes.

Dr. Stopes is merely trying to throw dust in the eyes of your readers by insisting that the use of the "safe-period" is a form of birth control.

C. F. D.

Heythrop College,
Chipping Norton, Oxon.

"STERILIZATION OF DEFECTIVES."

MADAM,—My attention has been drawn to an article on "The Sterilization of Defectives" by Mrs. Welfare, in your issue of 27th February, and to Dr. C. P. Blacker's reply thereto.

I do not propose to deal with points 2, 3, 4, and 5 in the latter, since these do not appear to me to afford any answer to Mrs. Welfare's main argument, namely, the necessity for a full inquiry before embarking upon any panic legislation; but I should be glad if you would allow me to reply briefly to Dr. Blacker's first point, since this refers to a statement made by me.

Dr. Blacker complains that on the occasions on which I have stated that in my experience not more than 4 or 5 per cent of the total number of defectives are born of defective parents, I have failed to say whether such parents are *certifiable* or *certified* defectives, and he remarks that a good deal turns upon this point. I must confess that I am surprised Dr. Blacker should experience any difficulty with regard to this, for I should have thought that it was perfectly clear to anyone that a defective was a defective and was not made so by certification, and that consequently my statement meant precisely what it said. In order, however, to remove any possible misconception from Dr. Blacker's mind, will you allow me to say definitely that my estimate refers *not* to parents who are certified, but to those who are *certifiable*. If it referred to the certified only, the figures would be very much less.

A. F. TREGOLD.

25 New Cavendish Street,
London, W. 1.

Women and Ministers' Powers.—Continued from page 54.

seats allocated to the public were filled by women, and the general view appeared to be that Miss Macmillan with Mrs. Abbott deserved the warmest congratulations for their brilliant presentment of the case for securing that Parliament shall not delegate its powers when the status and liberties of the woman worker may thereby be jeopardized.

A. H. W.

COMING EVENTS.

B.B.C.

Tuesdays: 7.25 p.m. The Census. 24th March: "How the Census is taken."

Wednesdays: 10.45-11 a.m. 25th March: The Week in Westminster, Lady Iveagh.

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

Saturday, 28th March. 7 p.m. Miss Megan Lloyd George: "The Month in Wales."

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH LEAGUE.

24th March. 4 p.m. 17 Buckingham Street, W.C. Tea Party, guests include Dr. Jane Walker, C.H., Mrs. Burden (wife of Agent-General for British Columbia) and others. Hostess Mrs. Corbett Ashby.

NATIONAL UNION OF SOCIETIES FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP.

Acton W.C.A.

20th March. 3 p.m. Y.W.C.A., 51 Uxbridge Road, W. 5. Conference on "Domestic Work as a Career for Women". Chair: Lady Emmot.

Coulsdon and District W.C.A.

20th March. 8 p.m. Congregational Hall. Professor Henry Clay: "Unemployment."

25th March. 3 p.m. Friends Meeting House, Downs Court Road. Mrs. Dewar Robertson, J.P.: "Prison Reform."

Petersfield S.E.C.

24th March. 3.30 p.m. Bedales. Miss Corns: "L.C.C. Meetings."

PEDESTRIANS' ASSOCIATION.

28th March. 3 p.m. Westminster Cafe, Holborn. Annual General Meeting. Chair: Viscount Cecil.

SWEDISH EXHIBITION OF INDUSTRIAL ARTS AND CRAFTS.

To 22nd April. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Dorland House, 121 Lower Regent Street. Admission, 1s. 6d.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

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and Economics, Hansard, latest Government
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