

# The Common Cause

The Organ of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Prime Minister's Pledge ... ..	499
Women and the Professions ... ..	499
Fifty Years of Irish Suffrage (I.) ... ..	500
A Letter from the U.S.A. ... ..	501
Women's Work in the Devastated Provinces of France	502
The Solution of the Wheat Problem ... ..	503
Mothers' Pensions in U.S.A. ... ..	504
Correspondence ... ..	506
Reports, &c. ... ..	506

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## Notes and News.

### French Suffragists see President Wilson.

President Wilson has, within the last few days, received three deputations of French women, who waited on him to enlist his support and sympathy in the solution of their problems. The first of these was a deputation of working women's organisations, and the other two were representatives of Suffrage societies. Madame de Witt Schlumberger, speaking in polished English, which she is known to command, begged Mr. Wilson to make public his opinion on the question of representation of women's views at the Peace Conference. She said that suffragists desired to know what he thought before they drew up the motion which they hoped to bring before the Conference. They felt that there could not be a People's Peace unless women were allowed to have a word in the framing of it. The President replied that it would be unthinkable for the Conference not to grant a hearing to women's claims in view of the extraordinary character of the services rendered by them during the war. "All I can do shall, of course, be done. I only hope you took my answer as certain before you came." This was the kind of statement that we fully expected from Mr. Wilson, and we congratulate Madame de Witt Schlumberger and our other fellow Suffragists in France on obtaining it.

### International Discussion of Labour Conditions.

In commenting on the official announcement that Mr. Henderson, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Bowerman, Mr. Stuart Bunning and Mr. Shirkie have been asked by the Government to go to Paris to consider proposals on matters affecting the conditions of employment from the international aspect, the *Manchester Guardian* says: "There is nothing new in international conventions on labour conditions. For years there have been international treaties prohibiting the employment of women on night work and the use of amorphous phosphorus in the manufacture of matches. The latter as well as the former treaty concerned women's work, and it is rather curious that in this case no woman representative has been called into consultation, though Miss Sanger and Miss Margaret Bondfield are both in Paris, and Miss Bondfield, like the others, is a Trades Union Congress delegate to the International Labor Conference. Why not the women delegates?" Since a woman was not called, we are at any rate glad to know that the women's case is in the hands of such good feminists as Mr. Henderson, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Stuart Bunning.

### The Labour Party and the Emancipation of Women.

We deal in our leading article with the Government pledge for removing the existing inequalities as between men and women. We are glad to know that the Parliamentary Labour Party also intends to take the first opportunity of pressing this question. They have drafted a Bill for the emancipation of women, and Mr. Adamson, who has been elected Chairman of the Party, states that he is in favour of the enfranchisement of women on precisely the same terms as men, and of their free admission into the professions now closed to them. He also thinks that in every profession and industry into which women enter there must be equal pay for equal work. He believes that the whole Labour Party agree with him in these opinions. We welcome his statement, but we wish that the Labour Party would make plain its attitude about the free entry of women into those trades and industries (as distinguished from professions), from which they are now excluded by Trade Union customs, and their free right to remain in these trades in which they have worked during the war. The position of women in industry is at the moment very much more important than their position in the professions, and it is ridiculous for anyone to speak of emancipating women, who can tolerate the economic servitude which is imposed on them by the denial of their rights to work at engineering or any other skilled occupation in which they may wish to engage.

### Unemployment Among Women.

Exact figures with regard to the unemployment among women are not easy to procure. At every Labor Exchange throughout the country, however, there is now a considerable list of unemployed women workers, and for the moment it seems the only work offered to them is domestic service or laundry work. It is an important question whether the Unemployment Donation is to be withheld from a woman who has been doing skilled engineering work because she refuses to enter domestic service. It is obvious that her Government donation ought not to be refused on these grounds, and test cases on this question are being brought in various parts of the country. The demobilization of clerical workers does not seem to be proceeding so rapidly, and the demand for them is still good. The W.R.A.F. has announced that it will shortly begin recruiting again, and in other directions the prospects of the employment of women seem more hopeful; but the position of the industrial women in what used to be known as "men's trades" is critical and important in the extreme.

### Women and the Forty-seven Hour Week.

The position with regard to the engineering trades, while still sufficiently difficult, seems somewhat easier within the last week. There have been a number of Conferences between the employers and the Trade Unions concerned, and although a general agreement has not been arrived at yet there is every hope that the disputes arising out of the working of the forty-seven hour week will be adjusted, including the question of the payment of the same rates to women. From Newcastle, Barrow, and other parts of the country serious reports reach us of the attitude of the men towards the continued employment of women. Although officially the Unions are waiting for the action of the Government with regard to the restoration of pre-war conditions, there seems to be a disposition on the part of shop stewards, foremen, and other workshop organizations to take immediate steps to drive the women out of the trade.



### The New Register.

The new register of electors is now in preparation. The qualifying period ended on January 15th, and the Register will come into force on May 15th, that is, one month later than the date specified in the Representation of the People Act. The Local Government Board have, we understand, impressed on the Registration Officers the great importance of a personal house to house enquiry for the compilation of a complete list. Last year's Register will be used as a basis, and the opportunity will be taken of correcting the mistakes in it. A new form has been prepared for householders to fill in. Every man or woman qualified to vote has a personal responsibility for seeing that his or her name is on the Register. They should remember that as at present announced the Register will be published on February 22nd, and that the last date for claims is March 8th, or for absent voters March 27th. We hope that our readers will remember these dates, so that when the Register comes into force on May 15th it may include the names of all those who are qualified to vote.

### Qualifications for the Franchise.

It may be useful here to repeat once again the qualifications for the franchise for women. Every woman of thirty years of age and over, who has occupied a dwelling house of whatever value, or land or premises of five pounds yearly value for the six months ending January 15th, in the same County Council area or County Borough, is entitled to the Parliamentary vote. A woman who is entitled to a Local Government vote as a householder in her own right is also entitled to a Parliamentary vote if she is thirty years of age; but if she wishes to qualify as an occupier of land or premises other than a dwelling house, the value of these must be at least five pounds per annum. If the premises are of lower value than five pounds per annum, or if she is under thirty years of age, but over twenty-one, she is not entitled to a Parliamentary vote, but is entitled to a Local Government vote. A married woman of thirty years old is entitled to the franchise if her husband is the occupier of a dwelling house of any value, or of land or premises of the annual value of five pounds, and is a Local Government elector. It is important to note that women who attained the age of thirty between April 15th, 1918, and January 15th, 1919, now become entitled to vote if they are qualified as occupiers or wives. There will, therefore, be a number of new voters on the present Register. We understand that the Parliamentary Department of the N.U.W.S.S. is willing to give advice to women who are in doubt about their qualification, or about how to get on to the Register. Enquirers should write to the Secretary, N.U.W.S.S., 62, Oxford-street, London, W.1., not to THE COMMON CAUSE.

### Women in Local Government.

Mrs. Laney, for many years Honorary Financial and Organising Secretary to the Bournemouth Branch of the N.U.W.S.S. (which organisation supported her campaign), has just been successful at a bye-election for the Bournemouth Borough Council by a majority of eighty-six votes in a total of nine hundred and eighty voters. Mrs. Laney has done a considerable amount of useful public work in addition to her suffrage activities. She is a member of the National Insurance and Food Control Committees. We may be sure, from her past record, that the interests of women, as far as they come within the scope of municipal politics, will find in Mrs. Laney a warm and most efficient supporter. We also warmly congratulate Mrs. Egerton Stewart-Brown, the news of whose election by a majority of a hundred and eighty-five votes for the East Ward, Sefton Park, Liverpool, reaches us as we go to press, and who is likely to be a valuable member.

### London Women Teachers.

We are glad to know that the London Women Teachers are opening another campaign for equal pay. The London Unit of the National Federation of Women Teachers has, we understand, sent a resolution to the London County Council calling on it to fulfil a promise made last year, that the scale of salaries should be revised in a few months. Our readers will remember that, as a result of the London Teachers' last campaign, a flat rate of war bonus was conceded to women and men alike. The women teachers then stated that the decision as to the war bonus must not prejudice future discussion as to the salary scale. The Council accepted this reservation, and the teachers do not intend to let the matter be put aside. The Federation has, we believe, nominated three candidates for the L.C.C. election: Miss Bathurst and Mrs. Ayres Purdie for Chelsea, and Miss Lamartine Yates for Lambeth.

### The Law Society and Women.

We learn from the *Daily Telegraph* that at the meeting of the Law Society which is taking place this week there will be a good deal of discussion on the question of the admission of women to the legal profession. Mr. P. E. A. Bell will ask the Council what attitude they propose to adopt to the Bill about to be laid before Parliament on this subject. Mr. H. P. Gisborne will move a resolution which, while its main object is to bring about a complete fusion between the two branches of the legal profession, also, in express terms, advocates the admission of women to the whole of it. Sir Walter Trower, an ex-President of the Society, will give notice of a resolution which he proposes to move at the annual meeting in July: "That in view of the pledge of the Prime Minister to remove all existing inequalities of the law as between men and women, and to insure for women the opportunities they seek in our schools and Universities to fit them for the trades and professions in which they can suitably engage, they be admitted to the Society's lectures and classes." This motion, it will be observed, comes short of actually suggesting that women should be allowed to practise as solicitors, but, logically, it appears that that must be the intended result, for there would be no purpose in giving women the instrument for earning a living, if they were to be barred from the opportunities for using it.

### Women J.P.s.

At the quarterly meeting of the London Justices, Mr. F. S. Henwood gave notice that at the next meeting he intended to move that the time had now arrived when women should be appointed to the county bench on the same terms as men. The motion was lost by a two-to-one vote. The actual merits of the case for women J.P.s were not discussed, and, as might have been expected, the objections to accepting the notice of discussion were vague. One gentleman "ventured to suggest that at present it (the discussion) would be improper," and that "although the time would come, this was an inopportune moment." We wonder why? These nebulous suggestions of impropriety and inopportune have a familiar sound; they have been brought forward to combat every advance in feminism, every loosening of the restrictions on women. We hope that Mr. Henwood will continue to raise this question on every possible occasion.

### V.A.D.s and Child Welfare.

The leading article in this month's *Maternity and Child Welfare*, entitled "An S.O.S. Call to the V.A.D.," is a very clear and strong appeal to those girls who were at the outbreak of war drawn by patriotism from idleness into work, to make use of their experience and training in the interests of what the writer of the article calls "of all industries . . . the pivotal industry." "Without child welfare work," the article goes on, "all other welfare work is so much waste of time." We hope that this and similar appeals will be given wide publicity and reach the hearts and brains of hundreds of V.A.D.s, and that many of those who go in for the newly founded scholarships will have infant welfare work specially in mind. Lady Amptill's letter, which is being sent out with the forms concerning these scholarships to home and foreign service V.A.D.s, states that a limited number of scholarships to cover the fee and cost of living will be given to those who pass the qualifying examinations with special proficiency, but that in other cases it is hoped to assist materially those members who wish to be trained for their various professions in centres all over the country.

### Women and the Land.

The Sub-Committee of the Agricultural Reconstruction Committee, which is to deal with women's work, is to enquire into their economic part in the future development of agriculture, and to suggest what steps the Committee could take in regard to land-women. Mrs. Roland Wilkins, Chairman of the Women's National Land Service Corps (which organisation supplied the first thousand women workers for the Government Land Army) is Chairman of the above Sub-Committee. The Women's National Land Service Corps was an offshoot of the Women's Farm and Garden Union; one of the chief bits of work of the W.N.S.C. was the harvesting of the flax. When the Belgian and Russian flax areas were overrun by Germany, it became necessary for England to produce her own crop. In order to persuade farmers to sow a large number of acres, the British Flax Growers' Association had to guarantee the labour for harvesting. The Corps was appealed to, and thousands of University and training-college women gave their holidays in response.

## THE PRIME MINISTER'S PLEDGE.

ON November 22nd Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Bonar Law addressed to the electors of Great Britain and Ireland a manifesto outlining the programme of the Coalition. It contained the following words:—

"It will be the duty of the Government to remove all existing inequalities in the law as between men and women."

The Coalition has been returned to power by an immense majority; Mr. Lloyd George has formed his Government, and the Parliament in which he will have the opportunity of carrying out his programme will meet on February 4th. We hope that the pledge given in November will be repeated in the King's speech, and that the Government will, without loss of time, introduce and carry through Parliament legislation which will remove some at least of the existing inequalities between men and women.

At the moment the most glaring inequality of all, and the one which most seriously affects the lives of women, is probably the industrial one. And here there is a very grave danger that if the Government does not bear constantly in mind its pledge to the women, as well as its pledges to men, it may so act as to increase the inequality. This may easily happen in legislation "to restore pre-war conditions." Women workers have already shown that they are most willing to relinquish jobs which were previously done by men, who gave them up to go to the war, and have now come back. It would be a bitter injustice if these men, when they wanted to return to their positions, found them closed to them. But the greater number of the jobs that women have done during the war are ones to which men could not return because they never held them. The industries which have been carried on by women during the war have been to a very large extent new industries, or extensions of old industries, and have never, therefore, been worked by men. Some of them have come to an end with the war, some are still going on. We hope that the Government will not countenance any attempt to exclude women from them. We may also point out that, although before the war women's right to work was

limited by custom and by trade union regulations, this was a different matter from *statutory* restrictions. Legislation forbidding women to work in certain trades would not be a 'restoration of pre-war conditions,' but a new legal inequality imposed upon women, and contrary to the whole spirit of the Prime Minister's pledge.

This is no time at which to impose a fresh economic inequality on half the people. It is more necessary than ever before that the nation should make use of its full inherent strength. In order that it may be able to do this, we call on the Government to fulfil its pledge. All political positions, public functions and Civil Service appointments should be open to women on the same terms as men, including those of Privy Councillors, Members of the House of Lords, Justices of the Peace, juries, police, and the higher grades of the Civil Service. All professions should be open to women. The Status of married women should be raised; parents should be equal joint guardians of their children; women should have the same rights of nationality and naturalisation as men; and the income of married women should be reckoned separately from that of their husbands for purposes of taxation. The law dealing with moral offences should be based on the equal moral standard, and the present solicitation laws should be abolished.

And then there is the great question of the political franchise. We can perhaps hardly expect the Government to bring in a new reform bill immediately, but we hope the time is not far off when it will see the necessity of giving women the Parliamentary vote on the same terms 'as it is or may be granted to men.' In Germany all women over twenty have just voted. Are British women less to be trusted? And should youth really be a disqualification in the new world which Mr. Lloyd George is helping to build up? We think not, and we believe that he will soon think not, too. In the meantime, we hope that the Government will at once set to work on those of the existing inequalities whose removal is plainly most urgent, and that, in no legislation affecting either the industrial situation or the moral question, will it permit any fresh inequalities to be imposed upon women.

## Women and the Professions: A Problem of Reconstruction.

(We shall be glad to consider further contributions on the subject of this article, which states a problem for discussion.)

As we turn to the work of national reconstruction it is well to take stock of the material which lies to our hand, and to scrutinize closely the foundations laid, consciously or unconsciously, well or ill, during the stress of war. In no connection is such a scrutiny more urgently needed than in the position attained by women in the professions during the past four years.

The general impression is one of an almost incredible advance. Women have penetrated into almost every sphere of public and professional activity. Where they have been definitely excluded from the practice of a profession, they have at least shown their capacity in the exercise of functions commonly reserved to members of that profession. All this has been brought about not through the painfully slow process we have looked for in the past, through every conceivable opposition and discouragement, but, as it would seem, freely, almost triumphantly. The pioneers have given place to the settlers. Nor has generous public recognition of the work done been lacking.

On the other hand, in spite of all this, and as a direct outcome of the conditions which have rendered progress of this nature possible, the position has not yet been consolidated. The period has seen the crowning act in the political emancipation of women. The economic status of women has yet to be modified in accordance with the facts of the twentieth century.

It is this which lends their peculiar importance to the problems of professional organisation amongst women.

The most cursory examination of existing conditions shows only too clearly the difficulties and dangers of the present situation. Women can fairly claim that they have shown capacity of a high order in every sphere to which they have been called, but nowhere have they made good their claim to equal opportunity and equal remuneration with men. They have been admitted to spheres hitherto closed to them, not by ones and

twos but by tens and hundreds, but as an emergency measure and on emergency terms. They have, in many cases, been without the training and experience which would normally have equipped a man for the same or similar work. They have, almost without exception, been admitted at differential rates, whether on the plea of lack of experience, lack of qualification or restrictions imposed by war conditions. Finally, in a large number of cases where good work has been done the women must now give place to the men for whom they have been acting. Thus, in too many cases, women will be forced to look for new openings after demonstrating with perilous success the efficiency of services rendered at something under the customary remuneration.

The contention so far has been that the position of women in the professions is still unsatisfactory and insecure. A brief survey of the position in typical professions will illustrate the point. For the purpose of such a survey it is perhaps permissible to discard the more accurate classifications in favour of a grouping according to the position at present occupied by women in each vocation.

At one end of the scale we have the recognised "women's profession," at the other the "closed profession," from the practice of which women are excluded by statutory or customary bars. Midwifery and nursing and the Law are the recognised types. Between the two extremes it will be sufficient to cite three professions as typical—teaching, clerical-administrative and medicine. In the first, men and women are employed side by side on similar duties, sometimes in distinct spheres, but sometimes in direct competition. In clerical and administration work it is customary to reserve the higher administrative posts for men, whilst admitting free competition between men and women in the lower grades. Medicine offers an example of the "closed profession" opened to women on equal terms with men.



For the women's professions we find; first, remuneration so low and conditions of practice so exacting that the efficiency of the service is almost miraculous; second, failure to secure effective control of the profession as generally understood; third, a tendency to display the very weaknesses which have proved most fatal to the development of professional associations amongst men. Thus we have the belated demand for reform in the nursing service, the failure of the midwives to secure effective representation on the body which regulates the entry to and practice of their profession, and the opposition between a democratic and an aristocratic faction amongst nurses.

Teaching has so long been practised by both men and women that it should surely present a type of equal opportunity, yet for similar duties requiring identical qualifications men and women receive different remuneration, and this is the case even in the field where direct competition between men and women is the rule.

In the clerical-administrative field, although the services rendered by women during the war would seem to constitute a fair claim to equal opportunity, and in spite of the safeguard offered to the men by a rigid enforcement of the principle of equal remuneration, it seems unlikely that the customary restrictions will be relaxed for the present, and differential rates still prevail in the field where competition is more or less free.

It is true that the practice of medicine is open to women, and that women take their place with men on equal terms in the professional Association. But equality of opportunity has yet to be conceded. Thus the opening of some of the older medical schools to women has been a war measure, and may yet be declared temporary.

If the present position of professional women has been fairly estimated in the course of this summary it is clear that united action is necessary to remove the disabilities to which professional women are still subject. The fact that these disabilities exist in the women's professions as well as in the professions where more or less free competition with men has been established suggests that something more than equal remuneration and equal opportunity is needed. The definition of this need, the formulation of the problem, is the first and most pressing duty of the women's organisations. It is for this reason, primarily, that the present time seems favourable to the establishment of organisations of professional women distinct from if not independent of existing professional organisations of men.

It is not suggested that the ultimate solution of the problems incident to the full and free participation of women in public and professional life will lie with sex organisations. The inference is rather that it is for women to see to it that the extraordinarily difficult and complex problems which confront the professions quite apart from those discussed in this survey shall not be further complicated by the introduction of a set of new problems which have not even been formulated. What is required is a clear issue, and a clear issue can only be obtained if women will do a certain amount of arduous and difficult work on their own account. The insight and experience to be gained in the process will in themselves be of no small value when the time comes for the absorption of the women's organisations in the professional organisations of the future.

A. L. LAWRENCE.

### Fifty Years of Irish Suffrage.—I.

A PRESS-CUTTING book lies on the table. The leaves are faded, the edges frayed with many years of use, and it is somewhat unmanageable in size. The book is the record of the life work of Mrs. Haslam, the pioneer of Irish Suffrage, and the founder of the first Irish Suffrage Society. It should be handled respectfully and with care, for it contains the history of that struggle for the enfranchisement of Irish women which began in 1866 and gained its first partial victory when Clause 44, confirming the application of the Representation of the People Act to Ireland, passed the Committee stage in the House of Commons. English readers may scarcely realise what an uphill struggle it has been in Ireland. The work must have been sufficiently difficult in Great Britain, but politics in Ireland mean something quite different from what they mean in England. The years from 1866 to 1918 include four periods of upheaval: the Fenian Rising of 1867, the Land War of the 'eighties, with the arrest of C. S. Parnell and his colleagues, the anti-Home Rule agitation of 1911 to 1914 in Ulster, and the Dublin Rising of Easter Week, 1916. Political parties in Ireland are not playing a game between Ins and Outs: they are fighting each other for causes which they consider vital to the national well-

being. Any individual or organisation which seeks to distract attention from the party issue has always been regarded as that worst form of traitor, the enemy who masquerades as a neutral. This has been the special difficulty of non-party movements in Ireland; as George Birmingham has said: the non-party worker is regarded by the Unionists as a Nationalist in disguise, and by the Nationalists as a particularly dangerous type of Unionist. Thus, in the recent elections, the non-party candidates were, one and all, snowed under. The Suffrage movement, which is at once political and non-party, has always been handicapped in this way.

Still, the pages of the old press book tell of much work done. First, there is the Irish share in the great petition of 1867; amongst the signatures are twenty-five contributed by Dublin, Belfast, Waterford, Cork, and Galway; and so from the very first Suffrage in Ireland brings North and South together. In 1868, two Petitions were sent to Parliament from Dublin with nearly 3,000 signatures; and in 1870, Mr. Jacob Bright mentioned, at a meeting of the London Society for Women's Suffrage, that Dublin, next to London and Manchester, had sent more signatures to petitions than any other place in the United Kingdom.

This was followed by a great public meeting in Dublin, in which English and Irish Suffragists co-operated, an instance of that generous help from English Suffragists for which their Irish fellow workers owe an infinite debt of gratitude. It is with a thrill of emotion that one notes the name of the principal speaker at this meeting, "a young lady who came to speak of her rights, and of the rights of her sex," to quote the mover of the vote of thanks. The "young lady" was Mrs. Fawcett, and the name, honoured wherever women work for the cause of womanhood, thus links English and Irish Suffrage together. Professor Fawcett was also present at the meeting, and in his speech referred to the legislators who said:

"when the Suffrage question should come on for debate, there would be such fun that they would give up a dinner party to be present at it."

With the natural confidence of a noble mind in the speedy victory of the right, Professor Fawcett went on to say:

"Unless some strong arguments were raised against the extension of the franchise to women, they might depend upon it, within two or three years, the right of women to record their vote would be conceded to them."

The movement was too new to arouse press hostility, and the meeting was well reported. Sir John Gray, proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*, was amongst the speakers. His statue stands in Sackville Street commemorating his public service in securing the magnificent water supply which makes Dublin tea and Dublin stout the envy of the world. A jarvey in Sackville Street remarked:—

"Bedad, it's wathery sthreet they should call it wid them statues in it; Gray that brought in the Vartny wather, and Father Mathew that said you should drink nothin' but wather, and Parnell that was always in hot wather."

Suffragists have often shared the fate of Parnell, but in the early days the "ladies" (never the women) met with much sympathy and commendation in Ireland. Many meetings were held during the 'seventies. In 1873, Miss Beedy of the London Central Committee, and Miss Tod of Belfast, spoke at a series of meetings in Dublin and in the North. In Dublin, the chair was taken by the Lord Mayor, and in Belfast by Mr. W. Johnston, M.P., popularly known as "Johnston of Ballykilbeg," a redoubtable Orange leader. In unconscious anticipation of Sir Edward Carson's policy of "equalisation with England," Mr. Johnston demanded for the women of Ireland "the municipal franchise enjoyed by the women of England." The present Ulster leader limits his demand to Ulster alone.

These meetings were followed by the formation of the Dublin Women's Suffrage Association, with Mrs. Haslam as its first Honorary Secretary. The work of the Association followed the usual routine of Suffrage Societies. Meetings were held, petitions (then a favourite method) were signed, deputations waited on M.P.'s and Parliamentary candidates. The *Freeman's Journal* report of one of these contains some amusing touches. The victim on this occasion was Dr. Lyons, M.P. The *Freeman* reporter agrees with Mrs. Haslam that "a woman's delicacy will suffer no diminution by the act of dropping a ballot paper into a ballot box. Still, if the Act were passed we might see in future elections side cars drive triumphantly up to the polling booth bearing excited lady voters who would be loudly cheered, or perhaps unfavourably greeted, by the throng of idlers round the polling place; we might see—

"Spinsters trembling for the nation's fate

Neglect their stockings to preserve the State."

The report also mentions that the movement had secured the support of many Irish M.P.'s, notably of Mr. W. Shaw,

Mr. Parnell, and the Lord Mayor, E. Dwyer Gray, M.P. From this point followed a period of agrarian outrage and Coercion Acts; the only comment from the Suffrage point of view is that of Mr. Shackleton at a meeting of the Association in 1882: "The present Parliament had shown a determination in some respects to place women on the same footing as men, for the Government insisted on giving women the 'right' of being arrested under the Coercion Act, and also of extending to them the provisions of the ancient Act of Edward III.; of being required to give bail, or in default to be sent to prison. As, therefore, women were liable to the same penalties as men, and were subject to the same liabilities, they were entitled to equal rights."

DORA MELLONE.

### A Letter from the United States of America.

(By the courtesy of the INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE NEWS we are enabled to publish the following letter from Mrs. Husted Harper.)

ON the morning of the day when this letter is written the country has been startled by the news of the sudden death of former President Theodore Roosevelt. He had been in the hospital seven weeks, suffering from a severe attack of inflammatory rheumatism, and had returned home the day before Christmas in order to have the holidays with his family. While not entirely recovered, he plunged into work with his usual zeal and interest. He had a quiet, pleasant Sunday, and went to bed in good spirits, glad to be at home. His devoted wife sat by his bedside until he fell asleep at midnight. At two o'clock she slipped into his room and found him sound asleep, breathing easily. A few minutes past four she was hastily summoned by his attendant, but he had passed into eternal sleep.

His death came to me with an especial shock, as I had received a cordial letter from him on Saturday, and it will be a pleasant memory for Suffragists that almost the last thought of Colonel Roosevelt was of the Federal Suffrage Amendment. He enclosed in his letter a copy of one which he had just sent to a prominent Senator urging him to cast his vote for this amendment, and in it he expressed his personal fondness for some of the Senators who had worked and voted against it, and his deep regret at their opposition. This he called "a misfortune from the standpoint of the war and from the standpoint of party expediency"; and he said:—

"It is coming and it ought to come. When States like New York and Illinois adopt it, it cannot be called a 'wild-cat experiment.' I very earnestly hope you can see your way clear to support this amendment."

It will always be remembered by women, that in the midst of pain and illness and the many duties that pressed upon him, Colonel Roosevelt could have time and thought for their enfranchisement. Before the vote was taken on this amendment, October 1st, he appealed to his personal friends in the Senate with all the vigour for which he was noted to give it their support, and for many years he lost no opportunity to use his influence in its favour. While Colonel Roosevelt always believed in the principle of Woman Suffrage, he gave no assistance to the cause during his eight years as President, although importuned to do so by its leaders. I remember going with Miss Susan B. Anthony and Mrs. Harriet Taylor Upton, Treasurer of the National Suffrage Association, to call upon him by appointment on November 15th, 1905. He was, at that time, nearing the close of his second term as President, and his influence was greater than that of any other man in the United States. He received us with the utmost cordiality in the room where the meetings of the Cabinet were held, and granted an interview of half-an-hour, while distinguished callers waited impatiently outside. Miss Anthony said in the course of her appeal: "Mr. President, your influence is so great that just one word from you in favour of Woman Suffrage would give our cause a tremendous impetus." In the intensity of her feelings she leaned forward, and, laying her hand on his arm, exclaimed: "Mr. Roosevelt, this is my principal request—it is almost the last request I shall ever make of anybody—before you leave the Presidential Chair recommend to Congress to submit to the Legislature a Constitutional Amendment which will enfranchise women, and thus take your place in history with Lincoln, the great emancipator. I beg of you not to close your term of office without doing this."

Four months from this day Miss Anthony was at rest in beautiful Mount Hope Cemetery at her home city, Rochester, N.Y., and a year later Mr. Roosevelt had left his high office without a mention of Woman Suffrage.

In 1912, when he helped to found the Progressive Party, as a protest against the old reactionary Republican Party, which had just refused to put a Woman Suffrage plank in its platform, he made this question one of the leading issues of his campaign. His platform contained a demand that the women of the United States should be enfranchised. It thus, for the first time, became a national question and received an impetus, which has carried it forward to its present position. Although four years later the Progressive Party merged into the Republican, its influence was sufficient to compel that party to put into its platform a declaration for Woman Suffrage—an example which the Democratic Party was forced to follow.

Thenceforth Colonel Roosevelt never wavered in his advocacy of this measure, and he never did anything half way. He spoke on the Suffrage platform at mass meetings again and again; he advocated it in the Press; and he used his powerful influence on members of Congress in favour of a Federal Amendment.

The example of Colonel Roosevelt inspired many other prominent Republicans to support this amendment, just as its advocacy by President Wilson has encouraged eminent Democrats to give it their support. When Mr. Wilson was elected President he was a pronounced opponent, but with the open mind, which is one of his leading characteristics, he was willing to hear its advocates, and the first delegation he received was one of Suffragists of which I happened to be a member. I shall never forget his look of amused interest as each of us in a few words gave the arguments in its favour. I remember that my own consisted chiefly in extracts from his book, *A New Freedom*, which, I said, if applied to women must necessarily give them a vote. The President received other Suffrage deputations after that, and there is reason to believe, made a careful study of the question. The result was that two years later he had become so far converted to its merits that at the autumn election in his own State of New Jersey, he voted in favour of amending its constitution so as to enfranchise women. Stimulated by his example, most of the members of his Cabinet also declared themselves in favour.

President Wilson, however, still held to the Democratic principle of the State's right to determine who should exercise the Suffrage within its boundaries, and that there must be no interference by the Federal Government. It was not until he saw amendments defeated in State after State, and realised the powerful forces that could act upon the individual voters, that he became convinced that Suffrage for women in all of the States could only be obtained through an amendment to the National Constitution. Therefore, when a vote on this amendment was about to be taken in the Lower House of Congress last January, he made his first declaration in favour of it, and it is generally thought that this was responsible for its adoption, as it had the narrow margin of one vote.

The utmost efforts of the President, however, were not sufficient to obtain the two votes lacking in the Upper House when the vote was taken, October 1st. The readers of THE COMMON CAUSE could have no stronger proof of the tremendous opposition to this Federal Amendment than the fact that the magnificent address of President Wilson did not change a single vote. It is doubtful if he expected it to do so, but he is a sufficiently astute politician to know that, as the case stands now, the Democratic Party is discredited on the question of Woman Suffrage, as three-fourths of the Republican Senators are recorded in favour of this amendment and less than one-half of the Democratic Senators. This Party cannot afford to go before the millions of women voters in the United States at the next election bearing the responsibility of having defeated this Federal Amendment, and President Wilson made the address for the purpose of counteracting the situation.

The Senate is now apparently on the eve of taking another vote on this amendment. It was not possible to have this Christmas, as the Revenue Bill was still under consideration, but it has now been sent back to the Lower House and there is time for the Suffrage Amendment before other great measures come up. The two much needed votes have been obtained through the last election, and the question now is to secure a date for it. The only chance for the opposition is to keep the question from coming up, and if they cannot prevent this, then they will try the favourite method of a "filibuster"—that is, they will consume with long speeches the time allotted. It is the general belief that this will not be tolerated by the public sentiment of the country, which now demands that an end shall be made of the long delay and that the Congress shall do what it can to give the United States its rightful place among nations in respect to the enfranchisement of women. Even should the amendment be approved by the Senate, it still must run the gauntlet of forty-eight State Legis-



latures, so that this will necessarily be one of the last great nations to give the vote to women.

The National Suffrage Association has been quietly at work for the past year to assist the women of various States in organising a pressure on their Legislatures to ratify the amendment as soon as it is submitted to them. Those of about twenty-five States are counted upon to do this at once, but this leaves eleven of the necessary three-fourths yet to be obtained, and these, of course, must be secured where there will be considerable opposition. The road to be travelled before success is obtained is not an easy one. The first great requisite is to get the amendment through the Senate and safely on its way. We are, of course, prepared for disappointment but the situation never was so favourable as now.

Fortunately for the Suffragists, the Prohibitionists are fighting the battles which would have been ours had our amendment been submitted by Congress before theirs. The enemies of Prohibition, having been defeated in their herculean efforts to prevent the submission of a Federal Amendment, are now employing the best legal service and using every possible means to prevent the Legislatures from ratifying that amendment. First, they are insisting that, as it received only a two-thirds' vote of the members of the two Houses who were present, it is illegal, as it should have had two-thirds of the entire membership. They will not succeed in this, as every amendment ever made to the National Constitution has received only a two-thirds' vote of those present, and this is accepted as the law. Their second effort is to prevent the Legislatures from acting on the amendment until it has first been subjected to a referendum of the voters, and if they give a majority against it the Legislature shall not ratify it. This cannot succeed because the Federal Constitution itself provides that an amendment shall be submitted to the Legislatures for ratification and, when it shall be approved by three-fourths of them, it shall be declared by Congress a part of the Constitution. The Prohibitionists may be obliged to take both of these cases to the Supreme Court of the United States for decision, which may delay the ratification of their amendment and also that of the Suffrage amendment, but we will not cross that bridge until we come to it. Our sole object is to get our measure through Congress.

The first act of the Michigan Legislature when it assembled last week was to ratify the Federal Prohibition Amendment, making the sixteenth State to do so. Very few of these representative States that are already "dry" by Statute Law and are, therefore, sure to be in favour of a Constitutional Amendment. The Prohibitionists announce that they are confident of having the ratification of the necessary thirty-six Legislatures by February. The amendment will go into effect one year after the thirty-sixth Legislature has ratified it, and it seems almost certain that by the Spring of 1920 there will be total Prohibition of the manufacture, importation, and sale of intoxicating liquors in the United States.

IDA HUSTED HARPER,  
Editorial Chairman, Leslie Suffrage Bureau.

New York,  
January 9th, 1919.

### Women's Work in the Devastated Provinces of France.

PERHAPS few people who have remained in England during the war can really picture fully the misery of the life of a refugee. All over Europe there are thousands of old men, women, and children to whom the four years of war brought nothing but a seemingly endless waiting, in conditions which were well-nigh intolerable, and to many of them the armistice has brought no relief as yet—their homes are in ashes and they must draw upon a still further supply of patience till they can begin real life again. In France they have been crammed into every available—and that includes every unsuitable as well as suitable—room, in hundreds of towns which may be said to be supersaturated with them. In England we know the seriousness of the housing problem, due alone to the paralysis of the building trade during the war—what would it have been had we, in addition, had to house in the Midlands and the South the industrial population of the North? In the last days of December I visited in Holland one of the saddest groups of refugees I have seen at any time during the war—the refugees from Douai and Cambrai, who, unable to make their way through the Allied armies during the retreat of the Germans, were sent back by the latter, and, after more than three weeks' walk through Belgium, arrived at last in Holland, where provision was hastily arranged for them in a

recently emptied military camp. Every day it was expected they would leave, so no improvement was made in their condition, and for two months—as they crowded round to tell us—they had remained in these miserable barracks, two hundred in each, with no privacy of any kind even for each family. Sloping boards were arranged for their beds, with a flat place at the bottom to serve as tables and chairs. No school was held because of infectious diseases, with the result that the children mixed as freely in the barrack and yet had no occupation. Happily this nightmare is ended, for in the early days of the year transport back to France was arranged for them, though to what accommodation I know not, for their homes are destroyed.

To the women workers of the Friends' War Victims Relief Committee every type of sad case is known, for they have lived amongst the people during all these long years, trying to help them to help themselves. Personal friendship and the giving of work, not doles, has been the keynote of this help, and it has taken many and varied forms. Let us describe the work of a typical relief centre in a French town. First there is the visiting of the people in their homes, without which little help can be given, and information gained thereby is carefully tabulated on a card index. Perhaps the most important branch of relief is the sale of goods at three-fourths cost price. In the war zone it has been well-nigh impossible to purchase furniture retail, and this kind of relief has enabled large numbers of families to exchange the disastrous system of paying exorbitant prices for miserably furnished rooms for that of living in cheap rooms and paying gradually for furniture which will be ready for their new homes whenever they can acquire them. It speaks volumes for French honesty and thrift to know that we have hardly had any bad debts. Strict rules have to be carried out by our workers as to the amount each family may purchase, for every purchase makes a call upon our funds, and equality must therefore be insisted upon. Altogether a great deal of work is entailed—enquiries, decisions, purchases, storing, book-keeping, and distribution. In the same ways materials are retailed, many of which have to be procured in England. In the district around Verdun, where henceforth our activities are to be concentrated by the request of the French authorities, this kind of work will probably be extended still further. Co-operative shops are to be started—indeed, co-operation is to be introduced wherever possible into the new society which must be built up on the ruins of the old. It is our great desire that what is buried of the past shall be not only lost, but that some of the results of the old system may be destroyed as efficiently as were, alas, its happy homes. Another important branch of relief work is the embroidery industry, both white and coloured. The former is the continuation of an industry in existence before the war—the beautiful fine linen embroidery which was to be found in the best Paris shops. Owing to the war the workers were dislocated from their employment, and it was of great help to them to provide them with work and pay them at once, incidentally giving them new and perhaps prettier patterns. Enforced idleness has been for many people one of the great trials of the war—idleness which gives time for sorrow—and it was partly to alleviate this that the coloured embroidery was started. The French have an artistic instinct, and to give them an outlet for this has been a great blessing, it brings colour actually and metaphorically into their lives.

Turning now to the medical side, the oldest institution—dating from December, 1914, is the Maternity Hospital at Chalons, where eight hundred babies have been born. Mothers have been brought in from all sorts of cruel abodes—often cellars where they have found refuge from shells—and yet the percentage of deaths has been lower than all but the very best Maternity Homes. It is greatly desired that this should be a permanent memorial of Friends' help to France, and that sufficient money should be put aside to endow it, at all events for a time, so that it may be kept on, on the same lines as hitherto; such an institution would be very useful in France, in addition, as a training centre for the best type of nurses.

Several other hospitals and convalescent homes have been maintained, including a surgical hospital at Sermaize, where one thousand operations have been performed with only fifteen deaths. These, like the relief work, will soon be concentrated in the Verdun area. Another happy establishment has been a home for fifteen old ladies in a delightful farm-house—a refuge from the terrors of air-raids.

In addition to this continuous work there have all along been emergency calls, which have meant heavy additional strain on already fully worked helpers. Such calls have been the result of evacuations owing to military necessity, when the sad

stream of refugees on foot and with carts has filled the roads. They have been helped in many ways—by canteens to feed them, by care at their improvised sleeping quarters, by amusement for the children, and by lifts for the infirm in our motors.

The nature and need of this part of our work can, perhaps, best be described by the following extract from a report from one of a group of our workers, who had been sent to a village in the Ardennes, a short time after the declaration of the Armistice: "The conditions are so bad. The people are sleeping on mud floors in outhouses and sheds; many have died of pneumonia, and there have been five cases of diphtheria. The filth of the village is quite indescribable, and in the mud and on the rubbish heaps you could pick up among the rags and tins any number of unexploded shells, cartridges, and incendiary bombs. Looking out of the little room where we sat, and where was the German Kommandatur a fortnight ago, I can see a little boy with his face bandaged up, part of it having been blown away by a bomb he was playing with.

"There is no means of communication with any other place from here. The road to Sedan has been mined in five places. One of our women workers managed to motor there with the officer-in-charge to try to get help for these people in the form of lorries to send them to their own villages. Everything in their own villages has been looted by the Germans, but they have their houses at least. The car had to make a détour into the fields each time they came to a place where the road was blown up; it would have been impossible for a lorry to pass that way. "There are still over a thousand people here. Fourteen people of one small village have died since they came here a fortnight ago; more die every day. Yesterday nearly two hundred left; they have to push their baggage in barrows along an absolutely impossible road to the highroad, where some lorries were waiting. Many people got stuck, were obliged to leave all their things in the road and come back.

"In the face of such misery the most we can do seems but little. We are, however, going round with food, condensed milk, soap, trying to help those who are ill. The most urgent thing seems to be to get them away from here, but in the villages food is the difficulty, and some have had everything pillaged."

Conditions have improved considerably since these words were written, but the work is not nearly finished; we may hope that there are no worse tangles in the skein, but the work of reducing it again to order must be a very complex and slow one, and the workers who have lived with the people through their weary waiting time are eager to see them once more established in happier circumstances.

That is the task which lies before us, a task which will make the utmost demand on our experience and resources. America is helping to bear a part of the financial burden, as well as in sending experienced workers. We, nevertheless, need more than ever British support in this work, if we are to meet all the requests which are made to us by the French Government to relieve the sufferings of these unhappy folk.\*

A. RUTH FRY.

### The Solution of the Wheat Problem.

By C. W. SALEEBY, M.D., F.R.S. EDIN.

It has been evident for many decades that the growing nations of Europe and America must in time be faced with an absolute shortage of wheat, which is, according to contemporary physiology, as it was named thousands of years ago, "the staff of life." This incomparable plant, which provides mankind with the most valuable nitrogenous food, necessarily must find enough nitrogen in the soil if it is to do all it can for us. The nitrogen compounds which the wheat takes from the soil must be replaced. One long known and practised method is the rotation of crops, whereby other plants, grown in other years, prepare the soil for the years in which wheat is grown; and another is to add to the soil the nitrates which are principally found in Chili—so long as they last, and so long as they can reach us in Europe.

Four-fifths of the atmosphere, however, consist of nitrogen, "free as air," and, because free, useless alike for us and for plants unless and until it be somehow fixed or harnessed to other elements, when it at once becomes the very foundation of the food supply of the wheat which is man's best food. The problem is how to capture this nitrogen, which is everywhere, so that with it we may feed the food, the wheat which is to feed us. Thanks to the genius of British chemists—to be more precise, of chemists, three in number, who all belong to the Royal Institution of Great Britain and Ireland—that problem has been solved.

\* Contributions in aid of the Friends' War Victims Relief Committee's work may be sent to A. Ruth Fry, F.W.V.R.C., Ethelburga House, 91, Bishopsgate, London, E.C. 2.

The first of these chemists has long been world-famous, and his name will be remembered to the end of time. Very little moves in the modern world that does not owe its motion to the experiments of Faraday in the Laboratory of the Royal Institution in London. Building upon the earlier work of the great Italian pioneers, Galvani and Volta, and upon the fundamental chemical conceptions of the Frenchman Lavoisier, Faraday laid the foundations upon which his successors in all countries have established the great physico-chemical forces of the modern world, alike for peace and for war.

A worthy successor of Faraday is Sir William Crookes, the *doyen* of all living chemists. In 1892 he made an experiment in which he succeeded in burning nitrogen—that is to say, in combining it with oxygen by means of a strong electric current passed through the air so that it took fire, burning with a powerful flame, and producing those compounds of nitrogen and oxygen which are the chemical foundations of the food of man.

Six years later, now twenty years ago, Crookes took the wheat problem, which is the heart of the food problem, as the theme of his Presidential Address to the British Association. He showed that a shortage of wheat threatened Europe and ultimately even the New World, but he predicted that, ere famine arrived, the chemist might come to the rescue, and provide us with nitrogen, fixed in and from the air, so as inexhaustibly to feed the food-plant upon which indeed modern civilisation depends. In the course of that address, which caused an immense sensation throughout the whole civilised world, Crookes described his experiment of six years earlier—the burning of the air and the fixation of atmospheric nitrogen by means of an electric current. He followed his description of this experiment with the following words, of which, in the light of present facts, it is not too much to say that they exemplify the human intellect at its greatest:—"This inconsiderable experiment may not unlikely lead to the development of a mighty industry destined to solve the great food problem."

Twenty years later that prediction has been entirely fulfilled. But for the Englishman's work, applied in Germany during the war, that nation would soon have surrendered, starved out by the British Navy, which has completely prevented her from importing Chilean nitrates—of all the output of which before the war Germany imported one-third.

In the past years of peace we were content in Britain to use our ships for the import of nitrates from Chili, and had not concerned ourselves to develop for practical purposes the epoch-making discovery of Crookes and the additions to it made by his colleague, Lord Rayleigh, also at the Royal Institution. But the war changed all that. Immediately there arose a double need, to the magnitude and duration of which no man could set limits. There would be a food problem and there would be an explosives problem. Both as a fertiliser and in the making of explosives fixed nitrogen is indispensable. Without it, thanks to the British Navy, Germany was compelled to use British brains in order to fix the nitrogen of her own air to feed both her men and guns. Though Chilean nitrates could still reach us, we had many other uses for our ships, and the quantities of fixed nitrogen we needed in order to manufacture munitions not only for ourselves but notably for Russia, were stupendous. It must be admitted, moreover, that the work of Crookes had not received sufficient attention from his fellow countrymen, even though he had published his British Association Address in the form of a small volume called "The Wheat Problem." In 1906 I had asked him to contribute to a scientific series a treatise on this great theme—the fixation of nitrogen to feed the Western World. But at the age of seventy-four he felt himself too old to comply with my request.

By July, 1915, however, the British position regarding food, explosives, and tonnage, was already becoming very serious, and I published an article in one of the weekly reviews drawing attention to the great work of Crookes, and suggesting the immediate necessity for a thorough revision of his book, incorporating all the new facts of chemical advance in order that practical action of the wisest kind should be undertaken. Within three days of the publication of my article there reached me a generous offer to pay for the proper re-writing of Crookes's book by a thoroughly competent *savant*, and for its republication. This offer, which to-day is yielding the most splendid consequences, came to me from that unique man of business and science, the late Lord Rhondda, who was at that time still merely minding his own business in Cardiff and not the Allied business in London. But even then, when none could know that two years later he was destined, as an incomparable administrator, to save our food and finally to give his own life as the price for it—even then, I say, Lord Rhondda was studying such considerations as my article set forth, and was ready to spend large



sums of money, as he did, in order that public and official recognition of these considerations should enable our country, by fixing the nitrogen of her air, to feed her men and her guns. That, indeed, is much to understate the case. The more recent development of this creative chemistry enabled Lord Rhondda so largely to dispense with the need for Chilean nitrates and for imported food as to free much freight space in our ships for the transport of American soldiers during 1918, and it was also invaluable in making possible last year's contribution of food to our noble Allies, France and particularly Italy, so that more recently the world has been able to see that the Italian calamity of 1917 was due only to lack of food, and that when the Italian army was once again fed, as any army must be fed in order to fight at all, the Austrian invaders were unable even to hold that which the failure of the Italian food supply in 1917 had permitted them to seize.

The present situation as regards the fixation of nitrogen has been reached, slowly at first, but very rapidly thereafter, through the work of the Nitrogen Products Committee of the Ministry of Munitions. That Committee was formed in October, 1915, three months after the publication of my article. Sir William Crookes himself honoured with his presence the first meeting of that Committee. Thereafter this wonderful veteran, who is now in his eighty-seventh year, set himself to work upon the task for which in 1906 he had thought himself too old. The result is to be found in the new edition of "The Wheat Problem," published at the end of 1917, with a masterly introduction by Lord Rhondda, to whose public spirit, generosity, and appreciation of the national value of science we and our Allies owe this precious volume, the food which is now almost literally growing out of it, and limitless supplies of explosives.

Let us observe now the present position of the wheat problem and the magnificent promise of the future. Our Legislators in this country have, during the war, increased the area under wheat. That, no doubt, is well; but our science is achieving something more fundamental, and of no less value to our Allies than ourselves. We must increase the yield of wheat per acre, and we have done so. Thanks to the work of the Cambridge School of Agriculture, new varieties of wheat have been bred, yielding ten per cent. more grain per acre than other varieties, without sacrifice of any valuable quality. Second, thanks to the long work of our agricultural botanists at Rothamsted, the need for the rotation of crops has been disposed of. By the proper supply of fixed nitrogen and other compounds to the soil, our experimenters have secured yields of wheat exceeding the national average from experimental plots continuously every year for eighty years, and now their methods are being successfully applied to continuous wheat growing elsewhere, on the farming scale.

Thirdly and finally, the creation of the fixed nitrogen needed for such results has been achieved by our chemists. It is true that in Germany, and notably in Norway, which was first in applying the discovery of Crookes, such practical advance had been made even before the war. We had thought that our comparative lack of water power prevented us from developing for ourselves the work of our chemists. Latterly, however, we have learnt that nitrogen can be fixed on an immense scale without any need for a cheap supply of electricity. I think it is safe to say that the latest reports of the Nitrogen Products Committee place Great Britain in the van of this subject, where she assuredly should be in view of its history. One figure alone will suffice to show the reader that I am justified in calling our record no less than the solution of the wheat problem. In past years, without anything like adequate use of fixed nitrogen, the British farmer fed from forty-five to fifty persons per hundred acres, while the German farmer, with a poorer soil and climate, fed from seventy to seventy-five, and the Belgian farmer far surpassed the German. But, as Crookes shows, the German farmer was using nearly three and a-half times more fixed nitrogen per acre than the British. Those days have passed. We are now using the brains of our great men for the great purposes of freedom. Ere very long our farmers should be far surpassing the Germans, thanks to British soil and climate and brains.

As for the United States, who, during these years, have generously fed Western Europe, even there also, despite their immense area and rich soil, the pioneer labours of British chemists are about to yield a rich harvest, for it is announced that one hundred million dollars have lately been allocated in that great country for the fixation of atmospheric nitrogen on an unprecedented scale.

The ancient science of chemistry has been put to infamous purposes enough by the enemies of mankind in this war. Let us now learn and remember that chemistry has also been put to

noble purposes, and let us pay homage to the profound and subtle genius of the English *savant* who, now nearly a nonagenarian, has lived to see his creative dreams come true.

Tout vient à point à qui sait attendre—*et travailler.*

## Mothers' Pensions in the United States of America.

(Continued from last week.)

### ADMINISTRATIVE WORKING.

(a) *Administration by Existing Authorities.*—As previously stated, many of the laws provide for administration by the Juvenile or County Court. In actual working it has often been found that the courts are not adapted for the work, and that other bodies must be set up to do it. For instance, in 1911 the judge of the Juvenile Court in Chicago appointed an Advisory Committee composed of private persons, and later a committee of representatives of the more important charity organisations of the State. Later a special "Funds to Parents Department" was established in connection with the Court. In New Jersey the administration is carried out by the State Board of Children's Guardians, under the authorisation of the judge of the County Court. In Massachusetts, the administration of the new law was made a function of the existing Poor Law Officer, under the control of the State Board of Charities. This is, however, the only State in which the Poor Law Officers are entrusted with the work, and it is provided that the pensions are to be "non-pauper assistance." In a few States the payment is carried out by the educational authorities.

(b) *Administration by Special Bodies.*—In New York State it was decided after discussion to separate the administration of pensions from Poor Law relief. The work is carried out by the Board of Child Welfare in each county, except in Westchester, where it was transferred to the Superintendent of the Poor. The members of the Board of Child Welfare are generally appointed by the County Judges, but in New York City they are appointed by the Mayor. In Pennsylvania the law is administered in each county by five or seven women appointed by the Governor with a State supervisor attached to the State Department of Education. In Maryland the law provides for a special Board to be set up for Baltimore, but also permitted the duties of the board to be transferred to the Supervisor of City Charities, which was done by the City Council. The Arizona law provides for local Boards of Child Welfare in each county; that of Delaware for a State Mothers' Pension Commission; that of Maine for local Boards of Mothers' Aid, with supervision vested in a State Board of Mothers' Aid.

(c) *Investigation before the Pension is Granted.*—Persons charged with the duty of investigating applicants are, in some cases, the probation officers, and in some cases they are agents of the special body which administers pensions. In Massachusetts investigation is made first by the Poor Law Officers; and afterwards independently by the State Board of Charity; in New Jersey by Officers of the State Board of Children's Guardians; in New York City by the Board of Child Welfare; in San Francisco, a Widow's Pension Bureau has been established.

(d) *Supervision of Assisted Families.*—This is generally carried out by the same group of Officers who make a preliminary investigation. Supervision is considered to be most necessary, but it is sometimes curtailed on the grounds of expense. In reporting in 1916 on the two and a half years' administration of the law in New Jersey, the President of the State Board of Children's Guardians stated that experience had shown that:—

"Where the State is obliged to assume the responsibility for family life, its full duties can be performed only by keeping in close touch with the family by frequent visits, when advice, sympathetic but explicit, can be supplemented by control, and, when necessary, by coercion, which becomes the right of the State when it assumes the financial burden; that such a system can prove effective only through the employment, the training and direction of a corps of women receiving sufficient salaries to ensure the highest intelligence and efficiency; that such a corps will necessarily prove expensive; and that the public, and through the public the legislatures, must be educated to realise that the expenses of administration must bear an apparently disproportionate relation to the amount given in relief."

The lack of supervision in the outlying counties in Illinois was responsible for many illegal practices in the administration of the pensions; in some instances the women used the money to board out the children while they themselves undertook employment.

### THE PROBLEM OF EMPLOYMENT FOR MOTHERS.

There are differences of opinion with regard to the mother's employment when the children do not require her full time and attention. The majority of indigent widows are women accustomed to work in their younger years, and in many cases they supplemented the household income even during married life. Such women often resent being prevented from working.

On the whole, work for the mothers does not seem to be discouraged provided that the employment is suitable, and done under suitable conditions.

### EFFECTS OF THE MOTHERS' PENSION SYSTEM.

(a) *Social and Moral Effects.*—The danger that mothers' pensions may lead to the weakening of family obligation and the lessening of family responsibility is pointed out in the report of the Bureau of Municipal Research. Whilst the active supporters of mothers' pensions insist that there is a real distinction between pensions and relief, and assert that the mothers are entitled to a pension, it is urged that the extent to which women are to be encouraged to apply for aid must, in view of such a danger, be seriously considered. On the other hand, it is held that there are many women who, even though in need, would not ask for Poor Law relief or charity, but who would, and do, apply for a public pension. Recognition is given to this attitude in New York where, in granting the pension, the city authority says:—

"This allowance is not granted to you as a matter of charity, but in accordance with the laws of the State."

The Massachusetts law provides that mothers and their children in receipt of pensions "shall not be deemed to be paupers by reason of receiving aid as aforesaid."

There is no information available to show the effect of the pensions on desertion, where deserted wives are eligible for allowances.

(b) *Effect on Women's Wages.*—There does not seem to be any information under this heading.

(c) *Economic Effects.*—The direct results of the pensions, inadequate though they are in many cases, on the economic position of the families concerned, is generally considered to be satisfactory.

### PRINCIPLES ON WHICH MOTHERS' PENSIONS ARE BASED.

There seems to be some confusion as to underlying principles of the movement for mothers' pensions. The two principal theories held are: first, that the pensions are a payment for service rendered to the State; and, secondly, that they are a new form of public relief. In the official report of the Massachusetts State Commission on the support of dependent children of widowed mothers, published in 1914, the following passage occurs:—

"The Commission rejects the principle of payment by way of indemnity for loss. It proposes the principle of payment by way of subsidy for the rearing of children. The terms 'pensions,' 'indemnity' and 'compensation' are irrelevant, but the term 'subsidy' implies that a condition exists which, aided, will result in positive good for the State. Subsidy makes it possible that children should stay with their worthy mothers in the most normal relation still possible when a father has been removed by death. It is not primarily for those of least adequate incomes under the present system of aid, but for the benefit of the worthy poor. What a good mother can do for her own children no other mother can do, and in her task she deserves all honourable aid."

### ALTERNATIVE MEASURES SUGGESTED.

Various alternative measures to mothers' pensions have been suggested; for example, a scheme of social insurance which would embrace the whole community; measures for preventing industrial accidents and reducing preventable disease; and general social improvements. Some of the States have gone deep into the question of why there are so many widows, and it has been found that deaths from industrial and preventable diseases form a large proportion of the total.

All this Report is very interesting, and should be studied now in full. Two points which stand out are (1) that the principle of mothers' pensions has been generally recognised in the United States of America, although it is based upon different reasons, by different people, and in different States; and (2) that on whatever cause claim to the pension is based, it never seems to be paid as a matter of course, but always with some limitation and with a certain amount of State supervision. It seems to be generally felt that the pensions have worked well. If it were not so, the principle would not have spread so rapidly. It is early to judge of the effects, but so far as they go they appear good.

We are grateful to the Intelligence Department of the Local Government Board for the Report which we have here summarised.

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Correspondence.

THE FUTURE OF THE N.U.W.S.S.

MADAM,—If I am not mistaken, there was a certain amount of correspondence in THE COMMON CAUSE not very long ago on the subject of the future of the N.U.W.S.S. I do not know how many members of the Union still subscribe regularly for the paper, but if they do, would it not be a good thing for some of their views on this question to be ventilated in your columns? Those of secretaries of societies and members of committees would surely be particularly valuable in helping the Union to make up its mind about its own future.

MOTHERS' PENSIONS.

MADAM,—In your last issue you published the first part of a Summary of the Report on Mothers' Pensions recently issued by the Local Government Board.

May we, through your columns, say how cordially we welcome this evidence of departmental interest in a scheme which has done so much in most of the United States of America to promote the happiness and well-being of the necessitous widows of civilians and their children?

For more than a year the State Children's Association has been disseminating information regarding Mothers' Pensions, with the result that warm approval of the principle is widespread. Over one hundred and twenty Metropolitan, Town and Urban District Councils, including those of Bethnal Green, Finsbury, Poplar, Holborn, Islington, St. Pancras, and Shoreditch; Sheffield, Portsmouth, West Ham, Cardiff, Oldham, Stoke-on-Trent, Huddersfield, Gateshead, and Willesden, have passed resolutions in favour of the adoption of such a scheme and urging on the Prime Minister and the Minister of Reconstruction its immediate promotion. Infant Welfare Centres from all over the country, including those of Nottingham, Croydon, Sunderland, Manchester, Liverpool, Leicester, Leeds, and Perth, have taken similar action. Strong approval and support of the proposal have also come from such bodies as the National League for Health, Maternity and Child Welfare, the National Baby Week Council, the Women's Municipal Party, the Babies of the Empire Society, the Women's League of Service for Motherhood, and the Women's Civil Corps.

Many Parliamentary candidates were approached on this important matter, and two hundred of them expressed their interest and approval, several mentioning the subject in their election addresses and speeches. A considerable number of these candidates—nearly seventy—has been elected and a strong Parliamentary Committee will, it is hoped, be formed to promote the necessary legislation—legislation which will prevent that separation of the mother from her children which does such incalculable harm to both, and will also abolish the present uncertain, unequal, and too often inadequate system of out-relief.

Tragic instances of the need for such a measure reach us constantly. The Press has always shown itself in sympathy with this primary duty of Reconstruction, and we ask the help of your readers in securing for British widows and their children that steady improvement in health, in mental and moral development, and above all in happiness, which the Pensions scheme makes possible for the widows and children of America.

Yours faithfully,

- LYTTON, Chairman.
HENRY BENTINCK, Vice-Chairman.
ALBERT SPICER,
LOUISE OLIVER Hon. Treasurers.
FRANCA BUXTON
HENRIETTA O. BARNETT, Hon. Secretary.
State Children's Association,
53, Victoria Street, S.W. 1.

Women's International League. MEETING

In Support of President Wilson's Policy
CENTRAL HALL, WESTMINSTER
Wednesday, February 12th,
At 8 p.m. (Doors open 7.30)

Chair: Mrs. SWANWICK.

Speakers: Mrs. DESPARD, Major H. J. GILLESPIE, D.S.O.
Mr. GEORGE LANSBURY, Mrs. PETHICK LAWRENCE
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Parliamentary Franchise extended to Women, Feb. 6, 1918.
The Anniversary Service of THANKSGIVING and DEDICATION
Will be held at ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS
(By kind permission of the Vicar)
on Thursday, February 6th, 1919 at 8.30 p.m.

Preacher: The Right Rev. The LORD BISHOP of OXFORD.

For handbills apply to The Secretary, The League of the Church Militant
(formerly the Church League for Women's Suffrage), 6, York Buildings, Adelphi,
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Headquarter Notes.

The following resolutions with regard to the Conference of Representatives of Suffrage Societies in the Allied countries, which it is hoped to hold in Paris on February 10th, were passed by the Executive Committee at their meeting on January 23rd. (The N.U.W.S.S. delegates are Mrs. Fawcett, Mrs. Oliver Strachey, and Miss Rosamond Smith):—

That the National Union send Delegates to the Conference in Paris on the following conditions:—

- 1. That it should be understood that this Conference is summoned independently of the International Woman's Suffrage Alliance.
2. That the Conference does not make part of its discussion the attitude of the Suffrage Societies in Allied Countries to those in Enemy States.
3. That the National Union Delegates confine themselves—
(a) to forwarding the cause of Women's Suffrage.
(b) to forwarding other points on the National Union Programme, giving particular attention to those which can be most suitably pressed at such a Conference.

That these points should be pressed if possible by urging that the consideration of the position of women in any country shall be one of the points that shall be taken into account in determining whether it shall be admitted to the League of Nations."

The Executive Committee also passed the following resolution, and directed that it should be sent to Frau Stritt, the President of the German N.U.W.S.S.:—

"The Executive Committee of the N.U.W.S.S. has now seen the message of the German Suffrage Society in the Staatsbürgerin for December, which has just reached this country.

The Executive Committee expresses its deep sympathy with the sufferings of the women and children of Germany, and of the other nations affected by the war, and its satisfaction in believing that the Committee of Representatives of the Allied Food Council is taking energetic steps to relieve the sufferings."

Arrangements are also being made for a telegram to be sent to the German Women's Suffrage Society, congratulating them on their enfranchisement. The N.U.W.S.S. will sign it, and it is also hoped that several of the Societies represented on the Consultative Committee will agree to do so.

A CORRECTION.

Headquarters very much regret that in last week's notes they stated in error that the suggestion of devoting the first part of the Council to a conference on the future of the N.U.W.S.S. originated with the officers of the Union. In reality this suggestion came from the Committee of the SUNDERLAND SOCIETY, and was gladly adopted by the Executive Committee.

Literature Department.

The following new publications are stocked by Literature Department:—

MINISTRY OF RECONSTRUCTION.

- Report of the Machinery of Government Committee ... 6
Juvenile Employment During the War and After ... —
Fourth Annual Report of the Local Government Board 1917-1918 ... —
Education Act of 1918 Explained. (A. Rowntree) ... 2
The Education Act, 1918. (Sir Montagu Burton) ... 1 6
Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1917 ... — 1 6
Interim Report of the Women's Advisory Sub-committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction of the Vocational Training of Women ... —

News from Societies.

NEWPORT.—A successful Whist Drive was held by the above branch just before Christmas in aid of Headquarters Fund, and another on New Year's day, the proceeds of which were given to the Women's Citizen Association.

During the autumn a number of ward meetings have been held by the Newport W.C.A. which has now nearly three hundred members, and addresses on the following subjects have been given, viz:—

- 1. What is a Women Citizens' Association?
2. The Government of the Country.
3. The Factory Girl and Welfare Supervision.
4. The Endowment of Motherhood.
5. Home and Citizenship.
6. Laws Relating to Child Life.

After each address a useful discussion took place. The Women Citizens' Association is taking a keen interest in the Housing question, which is very pressing in Newport, and held recently a well filled meeting in the Town Hall Assembly Room on this subject.

N.U.W.S.S. Scottish Women's Hospitals.

In a letter recently received from Belgrade, Miss Dillon of the 1st Transport Column writes:—"The 2nd Transport Column has just been through on its way to Sarajevo. While they were here the Prince inspected us both and gave us medals. Miss Robinson had the 5th and I the 4th class St. Sava, and all the rest were given the gold medal "for devoted service." He made a very kind speech in which he said that we had done more than could have been expected, and gave us many thanks."

Medals have also been presented by the Serbian Red Cross Society to the three former members of the staff at Headquarters, namely—Miss Edith A. May (Secretary), Miss Muriel Craigie (Press and Appeals Secretary), and Miss Isabel Bassett (Provincial Organiser), and also to the present Press and Appeals Secretary, Miss Geraldine Cooke. The medals were accompanied by a kind personal letter from His Excellency, M. Jovanovitch.

Considerable extensions have been made to the Elsie Inglis Hospitals at Sallanches. In addition to the Grand Hotel, Villa Beau Sejour, close at hand has been taken over and a Baraque has been erected in the grounds. For this last, gratitude is due to the American Red Cross Association. All is now in full working order and both additions are described as being most comfortable.

Subscriptions are still urgently needed, and should be sent to Mrs. Laurie, Hon. Treasurer, S.W.H., Red House, Greenock, or to Headquarters, 2, St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh. Armistice has now been declared, but the Sick and Wounded are still on our hands, and will need to be cared for, for some time to come. The Committee therefore urge the necessity of continued and even greater support from the public, to meet the many demands that are still coming from the various Units. Cheques should be crossed "Royal Bank of Scotland." Subscriptions for the London Units should be sent to the Right Hon. Viscountess Cowdray, or to Miss Gosse, Joint Hon. Treasurers, 66, Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W. 1.

- \*Glasgow and West of Scotland W.S.S., per Miss M. C. Robertson, Hon. Treas. (December donations): \*Collected in Bearsden, per R. B. Speirs Esq. (£19 12s. 6d.), Proceeds of Children's Entertainment per Mrs. Downes (£50), \*Proceeds of Drawing-Room Sale, per Mrs. Lusk (£50 10s.), \*Miss Dunlop Biggar, for upkeep of "Biggar" Bed (£50), \*Queen Margaret Students' Union Association, for upkeep of the "Queen Margaret Students' Association" Bed, per Miss V. M. C. Robertson (£25), \*Staff and Students, Glasgow and West of Scotland College of Domestic Science, per Miss Melvin, for upkeep of bed in Salonia (£25), \*Ardrossan Academy Old Girls' Club, for upkeep of bed, per Miss Stitt (£25), \*Staff and Pupils, Laurel Bank School, for upkeep of bed, per Miss Thomson (£25), \*Miss A. McD. Teacher, for upkeep of "Elizabeth Teacher" Bed (£25), Sale of Waste Paper and Old Iron in Milngavie and District, per Mrs. Charles Ker, Organised by Mr. David McMillan, and Mr. John Gillespie (£25), Half Gross Proceeds of Concert given in Milngavie, by the 24th Glasgow (Bearsden) Troop Boy Scouts, per A. Wilson, Esq. (£14), Proceeds of Miss Vera Holme's Meeting in Motherwell, per Mrs. Jackson (£10 3s. 6d.), \*Mrs. Crookston, per Messrs. Robb & Crosbie (£10), \*M. B. and M. G. B." (£10), \*In Memory of Walter, Matthew, and Struthers Findlay" (£10), \*Miss Wylie (£10), Sir Harry McGowan (£10), \*Further proceeds of Jumble Sale, per Miss Armour (£5 5s.), \*Miss Fraser (£5 5s.), \*Mrs. Young (£5), \*Miss Guthrie (£5), \*Mrs. Scott (£5), \*Mrs. Ellen S. Scott (£5), \*Wigton Flag Day, per Mrs. Shaw (£5), Miss Annie F. Rankin (£5), \*M. C. R." for Serbia (£5), \*Collected by the Misses Catherine and Marian Gordon (£2 2s.), Mrs. J. M. Smith (£2 2s.), \*Miss Watson (£2 2s.), \*Wm. Wallace, Esq. (£2 2s.), \*Mrs. Eadie (£2), \*Miss Mackay (£2), \*Mrs. Risk (£2), Collection taken at Albert Street, U.F. Church Lecture, per Miss Martyn Johns (£1 1s.), \*Mrs. Turner (£1), Anonymously (£1), "A Friend" (£1), "J. I. S." (£1), \*Miss Lyall (£1), \*Mrs. Greig and Friends, per Miss Ker (£1), \*Miss A. M. Cross (10s.), \*Mrs. Dishart (10s.), \*Mrs. Cochrane (Collecting Box) (8s.), \*Miss Fleming (5s.), Rev. J. C. MacKellar, D.D. (5s.), Rev. R. MacMillan (4s.), \*The Misses Smith (3s.), Workmen's Scheme: \*Messrs. D. M. Stevenson & Co. (£50), \*Employees, Messrs. Yarrow & Co. Ltd. towards upkeep of "Sheila" Bed, per A. Hill, Esq. (£12 10s.), \*Messrs. Barclay Curie & Co. Ltd. (£10), \*Employees, Messrs. Wm. Simons & Co. Ltd. (£7 4s.), \*Messrs. Stewart & Lloyds Ltd. (£5), \*Messrs. Biland Bros. (£5), \*Machine Shop Employees, Messrs. J. & T. Boyd, Shettleston (£4), \*Employees, Messrs. Cassel Cyanide Co. Ltd. (for two months) (£4), \*Shell Workers of Messrs Mayor & Coulson Ltd. (£3 8s.), \*Paisley Fund: Employees, Messrs. Campbell & Calderwood, Paisley (£3), \*Head Office Staff, Messrs. Nobels Explosive Co. Ltd. for Serbia (£3 18s. 6d.), \*Messrs. Hay Bros. Ltd., Confectioners (£2 2s.), \*Employees, Messrs. Alexander Jack & Co., Motherwell (for two months) (£1 12s. 8d.), \*Messrs. Wm. Martin Sons & Co. (£1 1s.), \*Messrs. A. L. Scott & Sons, Mile End Shoe Factory (£1 1s.), \*Messrs. The Dennistoun Forge Co., Dumbarton (£1 1s.), \*Messrs. Wm. Cooper & Neplews (£1 1s.), \*Messrs. David Lockhart & Sons (£1 1s.), \*Messrs. Eastman's Ltd. (£1 1s.), \*Messrs. J. McNeill & Sloan Ltd. (10s. 6d.), \*Messrs. North British Machine Co. Ltd. (5s.), Messrs. McCulloch, Barrowfield, Upholsterers (£2s. 6d.), Collection taken at "Coliseum Theatre" (£32 17s. 10d.), Sale of Paris Model Costume (£20 15s. 6d.), Collection taken at "Kings" Theatre (£11), Lecture in North Kelvinside U.F. Church Hall, per Miss Wood (£2 10s.) ... 780 9 6
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Miss E. G. Sinclair ... 2 0 0
Per Miss Geraldine Cooke, Miss Hilda M. Cox, in lieu of Flag Day at Meigle (£300) Proceeds of Carol Service held in St. Andrews U.F. Church, Edinburgh, per Marcus Dodds, Esq. (£7) ... 207 0 0
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Table with columns for names and amounts in £ s. d. format. Includes entries for Anonymous, Laurie (Monthly donation), Share of Christmas Collection, etc.

Forthcoming Meetings (N.U.W.S.S.)

- JANUARY 31.
Brighton—Chapel Royal Hall—Speakers: Miss K. D. Courtney and Miss Froud—Subject: "Equal Pay for Equal Work"—Chair: The Bishop of Lewes 8 p.m.
FEBRUARY 3.
Walworth—Browning Hall, York Street, Walworth Road—Speaker: Mrs. Bond—Subject: "Women's Power in the Vote" 2.45 p.m.
Bridport—Speaker: Miss Margaret Jones—Subject: "Some Aspects of Women's Citizenship."
FEBRUARY 4.
Bristol—Women's Institute, Alveston—Speaker: Mrs. W. H. C. Cross 5 p.m.
Bristol—Thornbury—Speaker: Mrs. W. C. H. Cross 7 p.m.
Bournemouth—5, Lansdowne Road—Annual General Meeting of the Bournemouth W.S.S.—Speaker: Miss Margaret Jones 3 p.m.
FEBRUARY 5.
Leytonstone—The Forum—Speaker: Miss Margaret Jones—Subject: "Equal Pay for Equal Work."
Lewisham—Evergreen Club, Hither Green Mission, Nightingale Lane—Speaker: Miss Helen Ward—Subject: "Sex Inequalities under the Law" 2.30 p.m.

Coming Events.

- FEBRUARY 6.
St. Martin-in-the-Fields—Church League for Women's Suffrage—Thanksgiving Service 6.30 p.m.
FEBRUARY 9.
Covent Garden—King's Hall—First Performance of the 8th Session of the Pioneer Players. Entertainment will include two short plays: "Trifles," by Susan Glaspell, "The Home of Vision," by Constance Holme.
FEBRUARY 12.
Central Hall, Westminster—Women's International League Meeting in support of President Wilson's Peace Policy—Speakers: Mrs. Despard, Major H. J. Gillespie, D.S.O., Mr. George Lansbury, &c.—Admission Free, reserved and numbered seats 2s. 6d. and is from the W.I.L.L., 14, Bedford Row, W.C.1.
FEBRUARY 13.
North Islington—Blenheim Congregational Hall, Blenheim Road, Hornsey Rise—Speaker: Miss Ruth Young—Subject: "Queen Elizabeth" 8.15 p.m.
FEBRUARY 15.
Royal Albert Hall—Public Meeting—National Federation of Women Workers—Tickets can be obtained from the N.F.W.W., Dike House, Mallet Street, W.C.2—Doors open 6.45, no seats reserved after 7.15 Meeting commences 7.30 p.m.

MISS MAUDE ROYDEN preaches in the City Temple next Sunday at the 6.30 p.m. service. Subject: "The Kind of World we Want: III.—The Purpose of the Christian State."

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

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WOMEN CITIZENS' DIARY.—There are still a number of Women Citizens' Diaries on sale at the Literature Dept. of the N.U.W.S.S. (62, Oxford-street, W.1), price 1s. 6d. (cloth), 2s. (leather). This Diary will be found of the greatest use to every busy woman. Besides the usual information, space for memoranda, &c., it contains a complete list of addresses of Women's Organisations. You are advised to ORDER EARLY, before the stock is exhausted.

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