

Connecticut's Idea: Citizenship First

CONNECTICUT hasn't yet got woman suffrage, but it has an idea—at least, so affirms the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association in a pamphlet entitled "The Connecticut Idea," which it has just issued. And its contention seems to be justified, if one may judge by the results of the citizenship work which the association has done in the avowedly rock-ribbed, conservative State of Connecticut.

The Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association claims the distinction of being the first state in the Union to undertake in so deliberate and comprehensive a manner the education of its women in the meaning and methods of citizenship before they are given the franchise. Other states, after winning the vote, have carried on such work, and some unfranchised states are now taking similar steps, but Connecticut has developed an entire department of citizenship and employs a salaried

worker to give her entire time to the work.

This has not only interested women throughout the state in the machinery of state government, but has even secured the interest and support of the political parties of the state. Furthermore, the Connecticut citizenship work, say the suffragists, has attracted such wide attention in New England that the chairman of the department has been called to Maine and Massachusetts to present her theories. Now the Middle Western women are asking her to come to explain to them the workings of the government under which they live.

The Lady Who Started It

Here it is necessary to introduce the lady who is so much in demand. It is true that the idea for a citizenship department originated with the executive board of the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association, but, having originated the idea, it was

necessary that a competent person be secured to develop and carry out the plan. In February, 1918, Mrs. Nancy M. Schoonmaker, a prominent lecturer, author and suffrage worker from New York, went to Connecticut to take charge of the new work, with only a knowledge of the aims for the department and her own intuitive sense of the way in which they could best be carried out to guide her.

The purpose of the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association as set forth in "The Connecticut Idea" was threefold:

"1. To educate women for citizenship, in advance of full enfranchisement.

"2. To train as well as instruct them systematically by the development of a complete department of citizenship.

"3. To develop them, in cooperation with the political parties, by self-activity in practical issues.

"In short, to Americanize American women."

The need for such training is embodied in a further paragraph, entitled "Why?" which says:

"Facing a world at war, the Connecticut Woman Suffrage Association, in the spring of 1918, formulated the following principles:

"We believe that of all governments a democracy stands most in

need of an intelligent electorate.

"That it rests with the people, through their vote and their legislation, to crystallize and secure the principles of democracy for which our soldiers have been fighting.

"That with the spread of democracy all over the world, re-

important to begin our political and civic education and activity now, before the vote is won. This, we believe, will serve a double purpose:

"1. It will give proof of our ability and will allay the fears of those conservatives who honestly believe that women are too ignorant for political activity.

"2. It will, by placing accurate information in the hands of women, prepare them to take, immediately after the vote is granted, an intelligent part in their government."

No Good Textbook On Government

The first step necessary, therefore, under such a plan, was to give specific information to the women as to the prescribed processes by which laws are made and carried out and required changes are brought about.

When attempting to obtain such data for the subject matter of her lectures, Mrs. Schoonmaker discovered that no adequate textbook on the government of Connecticut had ever been published.

Consequently, she set about collecting, arranging, sifting and verifying the needed material. The process of unifying and making coherent the scattered facts which she was able to collect was a long and tedious one, for the general statutes were found to be full of errors, and

the knowledge had to be gleaned by hand, as it were, from old documents, histories, newspaper clippings and verbal reports from "old settlers," many of which were more amusing than illuminating.

The material thus collected was first issued in a set of six pamphlets for use in the classes which Mrs. Schoonmaker had been able to work up during the time her research work was going on. During the last few months such a great demand for the subject matter of her lectures has been expressed that she has somewhat elaborated the material of the pamphlets, and recently published it under the title "The Actual Government of Connecticut." The book already is being placed as a text and reference book in high schools, colleges, clubs and libraries.

The classes were first arranged through the cooperation of the suffrage leagues in the state. They were conducted in towns near to each other, and the lecturer made the tour once a week for six weeks. Each lecture took up a definite branch of government. The opening one dealt with "Town and Country Government." From there, Mrs. Schoonmaker took up in logical sequence "Borough and City Government," "State and National Government," "Political Parties and Elections" and "New Problems That Await Us."

The two lectures which have aroused most interest and comment

are probably those on "Political Parties and Elections" and "New Problems That Await Us." Reviews of her book have characterized her treatment of political parties as "rather bold," perhaps because she has pointed out that the principles which the parties have professed have not been adhered to. As an example, she points out that the Republican party, when out of power, stands for state's rights, and that the Democratic party in power supports Federal control!

Truth and Political Parties

During last winter the scope of the citizenship department widened to include classes at normal and preparatory schools, colleges, clubs and associations of all sorts. In all the classes care has been taken that the course should be straight instruction in citizenship, free from suffrage propaganda.

As a matter of fact, the Connecticut women believe the work has

been invaluable in instilling an idea of the necessity for the vote as a means of accomplishing the reforms to whose need women have been awakened.

The efforts of the association have been spent thus far in "Americanizing" American women before extending the work to foreign women.

The demand for citizenship lectures has so increased that Mrs. Schoonmaker is no longer able to fill all her engagements and is now training several assistants to take over the actual teaching in order that she may give her own time to further upbuilding of the department.

On the first of May Mrs. Schoonmaker began a three-weeks' lecture tour through Wisconsin, Minnesota and Missouri, to explain the Connecticut idea to various women's organizations.

Judging from popular results, then, the Connecticut idea has developed from an embryonic possibility to a successful actuality.

Jobs—and Pie

By WINIFRED DUNCAN WARD

THE Knights of Columbus—yes, of course, you know, and it's just splendid—but what about the women?

What are they doing?

If you want to know how much a small group of women are doing to help solve the big problem of our returning soldiers, drop in, as I did, at the K. of C. hut at Forty-sixth and Broadway, any Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday afternoon from 4 to 6, and you will see what it means to a job who has just landed and doesn't know who has cribbed his job or what's become of his family to have these huts to turn to, for it isn't only the refreshments that count and the shelter, but the sense of fun and comradeship which means so much to these boys during the period of waiting that they all must live through somehow.

This spirit of welcome is especially noticeable at the K. of C. hut, owing to the generous and able help which is being given there in the form of entertainments every other afternoon. How much the boys appreciate it one can see from the way they pack the hut to the very doors—and it isn't only Marie Dressler, Blanche Ring, Elizabeth Murray, J. W. Donovan and a dozen others who add to the entertainment, for Miss Elisabeth Marbury, who is responsible for all this jollity, sees to it that the boys themselves contribute.

It was a matter of deep regret to me to learn that I had missed a pie-eating contest which took place last Thursday, the pies all supplied, needless to say, free of charge, like everything else that the K. of C. supplies. The contest was won, I learned, by Private Eddie Wood, who ate his in one minute and a half; but there were so many other participants that we feel sure a good time was had by all.

When I slipped in last Tuesday

had modestly risen to say that he didn't need the five as much as his pals and would drop out, which resulted, of course, in a five on the spot from some one in the audience.

What is the meaning of all this, which is going on in dozens of huts all over the city? It means here in New York what it meant behind the firing lines, that boys from all over the United States are coming in touch, many of them for the first time, with the best which we have to offer them. They are seeing new kinds of people, getting new points of view, which will be of value to them all their lives; and with it comes a sense of how much the boys first gave to us. No one can fail to get a big thrill who sits in the little hut at Forty-sixth Street and hears those boys singing, with the late afternoon sunshine streaming in the windows as peacefully as though there had been no war, and the traffic of New York dividing around the K. of C. and mingling its roar with the boys' voices.

Two K. of C. men tend to what is perhaps the most vital corner of the hut—the office where the boys apply for employment. This department is in charge of the secretary, Mr. Rooney, and Mr. Chomel, and in their tireless efforts to get the boys employment they have some funny experiences.

"What can I do for you?" Mr. Rooney asked one day of a boy who seemed to be hanging around in a vague sort of way.

"Is there a pawnshop anywheres near?" inquired the boy.

"Right across the street," said Mr. Rooney, pointing across Broadway.

"Oh!" said the boy. "Well, ain't there any nearer than that?"

Another soldier presented himself to Mr. Chomel and said that he had relatives in New York and would like to see them.

"What are their names?" said Mr. Chomel.

"I don't know, sir," said the soldier.

resulting in the enfranchisement of women in every continent, the women of Connecticut may hope to have this new badge of service very soon conferred upon them also.

"It seems, therefore, wise and



When East and West shall meet

A Woman Civil Service Commissioner

By Celeste A. Rau

BUFFALO, May 16.

EVEN in this day of comparative enlightenment, when "a woman in politics" is mentioned there arises a picture of a tall, spare (not to say skinny) maiden lady, with hair drawn back into a scrubby little knot, emphasizing the lines of a bony face, with tightly compressed lips and piercing eyes behind tortoise shell glasses, tailored waists, with stiff, high collars, and, of course, big, flat heeled shoes.

But it's all wrong, especially when the particular woman referred to is Mrs. Charles Bennett Smith, recently appointed member of the New York State Civil Service Commission. Mrs. Smith is a big, motherly looking woman, with a pink and white complexion and soft gray hair. She has a charming smile and a most delightful way of talking, to which she adds a woman's crowning glory—a musical speaking voice.

Civil Service Commissioner! Sounds like a big job, and it is a big job, with vast opportunities. Furthermore, Mrs. Smith is the only woman this side of the Rocky Mountains to hold such a position.

"I realize," said Mrs. Smith in an interview given yesterday afternoon, "that making good isn't just a personal matter with me, but in me women all over the country stand on trial, and I owe it to the sex to 'make good.' One thing I am particularly anxious to accomplish, and that is to abolish all existing discrimination against women in the civil service department. I want to open many doors to women, asking not for special favors, desirous only of equal opportunities."

She Began With Suffrage

Until a very short time ago Mrs. Smith was known to the public only as "Congressman Smith's wife," and with that classification she was happy to help her husband with details at Washington, entertaining no personal ambitions. As far back as twenty years ago, however, Mrs. Smith was active in suffrage and always lent a helping hand in the forwarding of the great movement for women's votes. Sooner or later she knew her husband would not be returned to Congress—it happens to every Representative sooner or later; even Joe Cannon did not prove immune—and last fall when the thread which held

even then knowing just what was to happen. And it was a rather nervous, pink-cheeked lady who appeared before the Governor next morning and heard of her appointment to the position.

Is Commissioner of Examinations

Immediately afterward her name was sent to the Senate to be ratified and as a result on April 8 she became the official holder of a position held by a woman for the first time in the history of the commission. Mrs. Smith's coworkers are Colonel William Gorham Rice, of Albany, who is chairman, and Judge Clark, of New York City.

There has been a new division of the work, and to Mrs. Smith has fallen the branch which is unofficially known as the Commission of Examinations. This entails the obtaining of information necessary to make the applicant for a certain kind of a position most effective. It does away with the slightest danger of unfairness. Along with this special branch of the work there goes, of course, the regular work designed for the commission. This includes the all-important work of providing the material for civil service positions. Mrs. Smith is successor to Willard D. McKinstry, of Watertown, who resigned.

When Mrs. Smith met Governor Smith in Albany on April 2, in reference to the appointment, she told him that to her all this was very new and that she was entirely inexperienced in the workings of the system.

To this the Governor made only one answer:

"We're not worrying about that, Mrs. Smith. There is only one issue of real importance, and that is that you bear in mind I am anxious to bring the civil service in this state to the point of the highest efficiency."

To that point Mrs. Smith is striving, bending all her efforts to the work, in which she says the commission is being backed by the state. The officials find that the greatest burden of their work comes from efforts on the part of many persons to place competitive offices in the exempt classes. In some cases—especially those where the job entails much confidential work—this is really advisable, but on the whole it is deemed wiser to keep all positions in the competitive class based on the merit system.

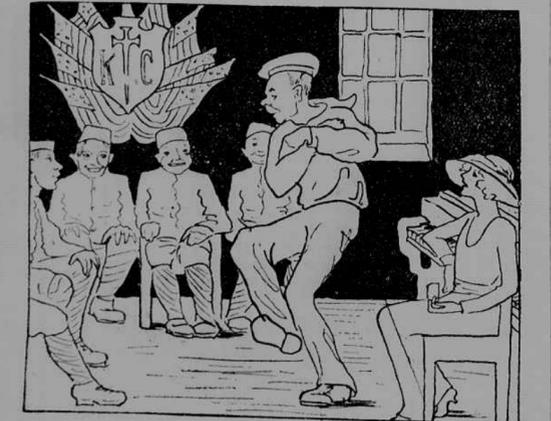
Woman's ambition, like Juliet's love, is boundless as the sea—and as deep. An organization formed of New York women members of the civil service is agitating to present to President Wilson the advisability of appointing a woman on the United States Civil Service Commission, but, as Mrs. Smith said: "The President has his hands quite full at present, and it's a little early to push that movement."



Mrs. Charles Bennett Smith

the sword of Damocles snapped, and Congressman Smith once more became plain Mr. Smith, his wife felt not a pang of real regret. In fact, she was rather glad, because the sword fell before her husband had grown old in the service, too old to begin in a line of new endeavor.

But even then she felt not the faintest stirrings of desire for a personal career. Consequently, when she heard that her name had been introduced as a prospect to fill the vacancy on the Civil Service Commission she was astounded, although, of course, immensely gratified. The day on which Mrs. Smith heard something really definite regarding the proposed appointment will stand out forever in her mind for many reasons.



Jobs and others

Miss Marbury was offering a prize of \$5 to the boy who would come up and do a hornpipe, and whether or not it was the three young lady judges that scared the boys I do not know, but they all jumped up and did with the greatest enthusiasm everything except a hornpipe; so the fearful question before the audience was, Should the hornpipe money be given to the contortionist, or the clog-dancer, or the barytone, or the monologist?

Who says there isn't talent in the army? The contortionist got the prize, but not before the barytone

Back to School!

THE New York City Back-to-School Drive Committee, organized in November, 1918, under the Children's Year Committee, has just made its final report to Dr. S. Josephine Baker,

head of the Bureau of Child Hygiene of the City Health Board and chairman of the New York branch of the Children's Year Committee. It undertook as its special task an investigation of the causes which led 1,000 children to procure vacation employment certificates last summer, under the new law permitting children of fourteen to apply for such certificates, whatever their school grades.

A part of its report follows:

"My dear Dr. Baker: The expiration of the children's year this month, 1919, has brought to a close the work of the back to school drive committee."

"One hundred thousand 'dodgers' were distributed, bringing home to parents in the simplest terms the dangers of industry to children and the advantages not only to the child but to the nation of giving to these children the maximum of education. Another line of attack has been addressing parents' meetings, teachers' conferences and children's assemblies in the schools in every borough except Richmond.

"The most detailed plan of action, however, has been the investigation of a group of children who secured vacation permits in Manhattan in the summer of 1918 and whose vacation permits had not been returned to the Board of Health, as required by law.

"About one thousand blanks were distributed for investigation among the various agencies associated with the back to school drive. Some eight hundred cases out of the one thousand distributed were investigated, and in most cases the investigation covered both the home and school life of the child.

"The ages of the children ranged from fourteen to sixteen years, as the qualifications for vacation permits are the same as those for employment certificates, except that the question of school grade is waived in the former. Yet the tabulation of these eight hundred cases show only ninety-five out of eight hundred below the sixth grade, figures which do not bear out the arguments of people who urged the passage of the law, because summer occupation would afford physical and mental outlet for children big enough to go to work but not able to reach the sixth



grade necessary for regular employment certificate.

"On the whole, the opinions of school principals are about evenly divided as to the effect of the summer vacation law on the truancy problem of the city. Principals presiding over schools in good residential districts, where parental control is good and the poverty question not pressing, are in favor of the law. In those schools the children returned to school promptly and were in no way harmed by their working experience. On the other hand, principals whose schools are in poor neighborhoods and whose children are mostly those of foreign born parents, where the economic pressure is serious and the lack of parental control conspicuous, are strongly against this law and would like to see it wiped off the statute books. They assert that it has caused them infinite trouble to get their pupils back to school and that many of them are still out.

"The chief probation officer of

the Children's Court states that the law practically doubled his work during the fall and early winter months, and feels that New York committed a grave error in permitting it to pass.

"The investigation tends to show that many of the children who returned to school, either voluntarily or involuntarily, have become restless and dissatisfied with their school work and are anxious to get out into industrial life again at the earliest possible moment.

"In conclusion it must be admitted that from the limited viewpoint of a Back to School drive only the drive was a failure, as it was unreasonable to expect that children legally qualified to work and holding positions which paid them abnormally high wages would relinquish their newly won independence and voluntarily return to school.

"But, though the Back to School drive was unsuccessful, the work accomplished as a Stay in School drive was distinctly satisfactory.

"Certain recommendations present themselves clearly as the outcome of this Back to School study:

(a) State or municipal scholarships for children whose natural attainments are of such standard as to warrant their continued attendance through high school, and if necessary beyond.

(b) For those children 14 years of age unable to meet the requirements of the law for obtaining employment certificates, but whose earnings are essential at home, child labor scholarships, such as are now provided by the New York Child Labor Committee, should also be provided by the state or city to enable them to remain in school without hardship to the parents until they are fully qualified mentally and physically to enter industry in safety.

(c) The number of visiting teachers attached to public schools should be greatly increased and they should be assigned to individual schools and not, as under the present system of the Board of Education, to a group of schools.

(d) Additional continuation schools are greatly needed. Moreover, the requirements of four hours a week attendance is insufficient to enable the child to obtain any real educational advantage from such continuation schools.

(e) More attendance officers are needed, as the principals assure investigators that not only were many of the children absent without leave when school opened, but were away many weeks before the attendance bureau,

swamped as it was with the truancy problem, was able to secure their return to school.

(f) In one hundred cases the investigator could obtain no information from the school as to the whereabouts of the child. This points clearly to the need of an annual revision in the school census—the best known means of discovering "lost children."

(g) A wider extension of vocational guidance work. If the principle of the Stay in School drive is to become of permanent value to school children they must have a chance early in their school life—through expert counsel—not only to learn the concrete advantages of education, but the lines of industrial and commercial opportunities opening before them if they pursue their educational advantages to the furthest possible extent.

Respectfully submitted,
JEANIE MINOR,
N. Y. Child Labor Committee

