

Domestic Training Schools: A Canadian Lack

By EDITH LANG



A STATISTICS ENTHUSIAST.

Mrs. W. R. Lang, who Recently Addressed the Social Study Club of Toronto, on the wide Theme of "Women in Industry." Mrs. Lang is a trained economist and is engaged on a series of articles at present for the Woman's Supplement, of which the one on this page is the first.

were in season or not in season, or the wholesale prices of any of the commodities she bought retail, was responsible for unstable and chaotic markets.

Many women, however differing in other interests, worked together in a common desire to help solve the "living" difficulty. They enlisted the sympathy and substantial support of the entire community and were successful in getting a bill passed for the right of buying all food-stuffs, including vegetables, by weight instead of the arbitrary measure. There is, included in the bill, a provision which permits the setting aside of the clause requiring sale by weight, if the customers give their assent in writing. As a result of the wonderful success of the League, other similar leagues were formed in several of the largest American cities.

A FEW weeks ago some two hundred women gathered at the Windsor Hotel, Montreal—not to discuss women's rights—but to discuss the splendid work accomplished by the New York Housewives' League. The meeting was under the auspices of the Montreal Women's Club, which has done many big things for civic betterment and more from which big things are yet expected. Mme. Heliodore Fortier, president of the Women's Club, outlined the origin of the League in New York and said she believed firmly that the same good would result in Montreal, where conditions are not unlike New York conditions, by the establishment of a local Housewives' combine. The meeting was held on February 19th, and the resolution which marked the birth of the new organization was proposed by Mrs. Alfred Ross Grafton, seconded by Mrs. James Thom, and carried unanimously.

The aim of the League is to lead in intelligent study of the market conditions, which will serve as a protection, incidentally, against exposed, unwholesome and adulterated foods. Already it has sought and has been accorded the co-operation of the various clubs, and civic and business associations which are already working for the city's progress, and not the least of this support has come from the Federation Nationale.

The League in Montreal is the outcome of the recent visit of Mrs. Julian Heath, president of the American Housewives' League, who was invited to address the Montreal Women's Club. At the close of her talk many women, representative of the various organizations of the city, recorded their approval of the housewives' enterprise, and gave their names in as future members of a Housewives' League in Montreal. A bill is now being drafted along lines similar to those of the American League, and will be presented to the Legislature.

The officers of the League are Honorary President, Lady Van Horne; President, Mrs. George Kohl; Vice-Presidents, Mrs. Henry Joseph, Mrs. C. H. Cahan and Mrs. Thomas Fessenden; Corresponding Secretaries, Mrs. David Seath and Mrs. J. A. Dale; Treasurer, Mrs. Theodore Wardleworth.

FROM every side of Canada there comes the same pathetic story of unemployment. labour leaders and Government reports tell us that not only unskilled but skilled men are seeking jobs and finding none. Many reasons have been alleged for this state of things, but whatever the cause, one very definite result has followed and that is, that the womenfolk have been, in thousands of cases, "keeping the home together." Partly because of this increased supply of female labour, and partly because of the money stringency which is also affecting the trades employing women, the female labour market is now overstocked and large numbers of women are out of work. So much is this the case, that in Toronto and other places it has been found necessary to open an employment bureau for women, and many have been the stories of work sought for eagerly, but sought in vain.

One's first instinct on hearing this is to blame these girls for not entering the one profession for which every girl is supposed to be fitted, viz., that of domestic service. Surely that is not overstocked, say those whose perpetual grievance is their inability to get and to keep good maids. But that is exactly where the hitch is. Good, well-trained domestics are indeed always in demand. Housekeepers, like everyone else, are cutting down expenses this winter, and those who usually keep two or even three domestics, are finding that it pays better to keep one really good one, even at a slightly higher wage than they usually pay, but they refuse to pay the inflated price for inefficient and untrained help, and it is this untrained female labour which is at present without a livelihood.

Every large city in this Dominion should have a school for domestic workers, where girls could get a thorough, all-round training in the domestic arts, which would result in a greater pride and joy in their work, and raise domestic service to a place among the skilled trades. In which connection it



MRS. E. F. B. JOHNSTON, OF TORONTO,

National Vice-President of the I. O. D. E., who received with the President, Mrs. A. E. Gooderham, at the recently-held "Rose Ball," given by the Order in Columbus Hall.

is interesting to note experiments which have been carried out along this line in other countries.

Many years ago a public-spirited woman, Lady Cathcart, carried on, at her own expense, a training home for girls in Aberdeen. With the object of assisting girls of the fisher and crofter class to better themselves and to give them a better start in life, she furnished and equipped a small house to which she brought a few girls at a time, placed them in charge of a woman of experience, undertook the cost of their board and residence, and gave them in addition a course of lectures in cookery and laundry work under the Aberdeen Educational Trust. The majority of these girls turned out well, and in a short time they were in great demand. One at least worked her way up to a responsible position in a royal household, where she remained until she left to found a home of her own in which her late employers continued to take such an interest that the eldest baby has a royal godmother.

The Congested Districts Board for Scotland took up this question of training country girls for domestic service in 1905. They took a house, also in Aberdeen, big enough to take twelve girls, and put it in charge of a matron. The house was furnished on the lines of a small middle-class home, and here the girls did all the work and also attended certain lectures. The course lasted for three months, at the end of which the girl received an outfit—made by herself under the matron's supervision—and a situation was found for her.

SCHOOLS of a similar kind are numerous in Ireland under the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, and recently a similar attempt has been made in London, England, to train working-class girls for children's nurses.

So far the Domestic Training Schools in the Old Country have not been self-supporting, but there does not seem to be any reason why the girls here should not pay high enough fees to cover all expenses, and it would be quite simple to work out a system for necessitous cases by means of scholarships or a loan fund, to which the girl could pay back a share of the higher wages which she would certainly be able to command in return for her greater efficiency.

A Royal Commission has recently been sitting in Canada to take and collect evidence regarding the need for technical and vocational training. People all over the world are coming to realize that the day of unskilled labour is past; efficiency must be won for the young people who are on the threshold of their working life, or they will have no chance of "making good." If training is denied to girls for domestic service it will go down and down in the scale of professions and the best type of girl will refuse to enter what will be considered, and rightly, too, an unskilled profession, one for which the state does not think



ROSES AND "A BUD."

Miss Vera Chatterton, who has just concluded her "First Season" as one of the debutantes of gay Toronto. She was recently "presented" in Ottawa.