

should be referred to arbitration, and that all Trades Union regulations should be relaxed. The situation was certainly improved, but it is worthy of careful note that the Trades Union regulations never were relaxed for a single instant.

Although the situation was better, it was certainly still far from satisfactory. In April an attempt was made to improve the organization of the industry, and an Armaments Committee was set up to deal with the engineering trade in the North-East coast, and another at Glasgow for the West of Scotland. Then came the revelations of May, and the nation at last woke thoroughly to the fact that the supply of shells was not sufficient. The Coalition Cabinet was set up, Mr. Lloyd-George was made Minister of Munitions and set forth on his crusade. It is needless to go into the long and embittered controversy which sprang up over this new step, nor try to place the blame for the lack of appreciation of the magnitude of the task before the nation. It may, however, be as well to quote the words of so responsible a paper as the *Statist*, which on September 11, 1915, spoke as follows: "If the Government had told the public at the beginning of the war how absolutely unprepared we were, and had appealed to the whole of the working classes, there is not the slightest reason for doubt that they would have been answered as splendidly as they were answered when the authorities foolishly and ignorantly appealed to the skilled workmen of the country to leave the mines, the workshops and the factories for the front. We cannot too often repeat the real blame lies with our public men and not with the workers."

In April came the realization of the desperate shortage of men for the munition factories, and the skilled workmen who had gone to the front were sent back again to the works. Then, for the first time, came that momentous movement among the women to take the places of the men at the front in the industries at home, a movement the significance and consequences of which are not yet apparent, and may not become fully apparent for many days to come. As an economic event it is of the gravest importance, for not only are women invading industries and filling positions, until now considered the exclusive reserve of the male worker, but they are demonstrating that in those industries which do not require a large expenditure of physical strength, women are perfectly competent to perform the same work as men, under almost precisely similar conditions, and, therefore, not only by reason of the force of logic, but also, and this is the really significant fact, by reason of the exigencies of the situation are surely and firmly establishing their claim for equal rates of pay for equal services rendered. It is yet too early to pronounce definitely as to whether this