

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
BEFORE 6 p.m.

WOMEN IN WAR INDUSTRIES

Speaking in London today (Thursday) to the Annual Meeting of the ELECTRICAL ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN, Mr. R.A. Butler, President of the Board of Education, said that already over 1½ million more women were being employed in munitions and other vital industries than before the war, when the number of employed women was something more than 4 million.

There were about 9 million children to be cared for, mainly in the homes of their parents, and there were only about 5 million single women between the ages of 18 and 64. The contribution of women to the national effort had been remarkable and was going to increase.

It was interesting to compare the contribution made, whether in part-time schemes of employment in Day Nurseries, for example, or in the Food Education Campaign, with the part women were expected to play in the national life a hundred years ago.

Florence Nightingale had said that women must bite hard on the realities of life if they were to be any use as saviours. They were certainly now getting down to the job.

Electricity itself had come as a vital current in the affairs of women and would act as a live-wire in the development of women's contribution to the national effort.

Mr. Butler referred in particular to the work of teachers in war-time, saying that the work of those who remain in the schools to look after our 5 million children is as much "front-line" work as any other.

"Teachers are taking on much extra duty, whether in assisting with Civil Defence or with the drive for extra meals and milk for the school-children. Do not let any teacher think that he or she could do better war work outside the school than they are doing in it!"

Discussing experiments in communal feeding and in the care of the children of women at work in munitions Mr. Butler said that those experiments which made a corporate life of collective feeding or care of the young would last. He was confident that the experiment of feeding in the schools had in it just that corporate value and would become a regular feature of our education.

Whatever might be the final decision of the Government on the subject of family allowances, the country should realise that much direct help was being given to children in the schools, and he was determined to see this help grow.

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BOARD OF EDUCATION