

TIME AND TIDE.

ONLY one thing surely can justify the production of a newspaper—that those responsible for it are convinced that there is a definite gap in the ranks of the Press which none of the present organs are able to fill; and this must be equally true whether a paper is looked at purely as a financial speculation or from the wider standpoint of its ultimate value to the community.

TIME AND TIDE has, in the view of its promoters, come into being to supply a definite need. The great whirlwind which has just passed has left us standing in a new and unknown world. It follows naturally enough that those who have served us as guides in the past are in certain directions ill equipped to help us to understand our strange surroundings, or to supply the new needs which we find ourselves to have acquired. This is perhaps specially true of the Press; bred for the most part in Victorian or Edwardian days, tethered inevitably to its own past, it would often seem to find great difficulty in interpreting the changed conditions that lie—still but half realised—around us.

There is, for instance, a demand to-day for a more independent Press; one whose attitude is not dictated by any party or personal bias, but whose convictions and whose honest criticisms, untainted by any suspicion of preconceived partisan views, are stated without fear or favour, and therefore have the value which must always attach to honest independence of thought; a Press which shall aim at showing all sides of the national life, dealing with them solely on the ground that they are all interesting; and that we can none of us hope to succeed in our special bit of work unless we understand how it dovetails into the whole scheme. Such a paper TIME AND TIDE aspires to be.

That the group behind this paper is composed entirely of women has already been frequently commented on. It would be possible to lay too much stress upon the fact. The binding link between these people is not primarily their common sex. On the other hand, this fact is not without its significance. Amongst those to whom the need we have spoken of is apparent to-day are a very large number of women. Women have newly come into the larger world, and are indeed themselves to some extent answerable for that loosening of party and sectarian ties which is so marked a feature of the present day. It is therefore natural that just now many of them should tend to be especially conscious of the need for an independent Press, owing allegiance to no sect or party. The war was responsible for breaking down the barriers which kept each individual or group of individuals in a water-tight compartment. The past five years have taught the importance of that wider view which sees the part in relation to the whole.

There is another need in our Press of which the average person of to-day is conscious, but which must specially weigh with women—the lack of a paper which shall treat men and women as equally part of the great human family, working side by side ultimately for the same great objects by ways equally valuable, equally interesting; a paper which is in fact concerned neither specially with men nor specially with women, but with human beings. It must be admitted that the Press of to-day, although with self-conscious, painstaking care it now inserts “and women” every time it chances to use the word “men,” scarcely succeeds in attaining to such an ideal.

Again, there is the question which is a cause of consider-

able anxiety to the whole political world to-day—how is the new electorate going to swing? Not an easy problem, nor one which lends itself to wide generalisations, but one which women, not merely as women, but as newcomers to the political game, are perhaps peculiarly fitted to help in solving. What view will our new voters be likely to take on such matters as the great international questions which agitate the world to-day, or of the difficult problems which confront our own Empire? Again, what view will they take of such questions as are likely to come up for solution in the domestic sphere, such as the pressing matters of finance and economy, or the tangled diversity of problems with whose successful solution is bound up the well-being of our future citizens? What view will they take of the National Health Schemes recently adumbrated, touching as they must so many controversial points; or on the drink problem, or on the suggested alterations in the Divorce Law? Such questions require not one but a thousand replies, and must even so remain incompletely answered, yet we believe their elucidation might be carried some steps further than has hitherto been possible.

HOUSING BONDS.

WHEN will the authorities seriously turn their attention to Housing? It is one of the few questions which is arousing intense feeling throughout the country and has been doing so for many months past.

And what does the Government do? After months of irascible waiting on the part of the public, they sanction the issue of Housing Bonds. And the Housing Bonds fail to “go.” Of course they fail to “go.” Who, but a Government whose more intelligent members are, almost exclusively, interested in other questions would have expected them to go?

No one can grasp the point of view of the man in the street more quickly than Mr. Lloyd George when he chooses, but on this occasion it is clear that he has not chosen. Yet that point of view is simple enough.

So far as the man in the street is concerned (and the title would seem almost too appropriate just now), what he wants is houses; he wants them badly, very, very badly, and he has done so now for a very long while. He is not concerned to follow the intricate and tortuous ramifications of the policy which has not produced them. He is never concerned to follow complicated official calculations and excuses. Possibly he is, in this case, rather hard upon the Ministry of Health; possibly he fails to appreciate fully the very real difficulties which have paralysed action, except on paper, in that undoubtedly well meaning Department.

On the other hand, if he is a little severe it must be remembered that it is he who is the chief sufferer from the present state of affairs. Generally speaking, he is not unreasonable; his knowledge of official details may be nil, but he has an intuitive way of grasping the main issues of any public question. In this instance, his instinct tells him, rightly or wrongly, that there is no strong man in charge of the Housing Problem, and that not much will happen until there is. Having arrived at this conclusion, he is inclined to feel that it is merely adding insult to injury to ask him to subscribe to Housing Bonds. He is not in the habit of putting money into a business concern when he does not trust the ability and capacity of the Managing Director, whatever flourish of trumpets may announce its flotation.

It is to be feared that ten Mr. Bonar Laws and ten Guildhall Meetings would not convince him of the desirability of investing his money in Dr. Addison's Housing Schemes.

It would well repay Mr. Lloyd George to give half an hour's concentrated thought to the whole position.