

# THE FEDERATION JOURNAL

"Listen to our Clarion Watchword—We are Lifting As We Climb"

VOLUME 10

MARCH-APRIL, 1953

NUMBER 2

## A Statement on the Status of The Women of the Republic of Liberia

By

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The first cooperative move on the part of the Liberian women towards their political rights began in 1931 when a group of Liberian Women's League under the presidency of Mrs. Sarah Simpson George. Their first step was to assist government during those dark and dreary days when the autonomy of Liberia was threatened, in cleaning up the streets of Monrovia and in helping to better the sanitary conditions. This assistance was welcomed by officials of government, citizens and residents of the capital city. When the note of suffrage for women was touched, the wildest cry ever made was heard in very loud tones—"Away, away with them, these would-be-men."

Later in 1932 another group of women under the leadership of Mrs. Maude A. Morris petitioned the national legislature requesting the amendment to the constitution to extend suffrage to the women. This was likewise treated with laughter and contempt.

In the year 1942 during President Edwin Barclay's administration upon his recommendation a "referendum act" was passed by the legislature and approved by President Barclay to amend the constitution granting women the right to vote at city elections. This also met with rebuff by a certain political party's convention in January, 1943. As a result the act was never referred to the constituents. It therefore died a natural death.

However, in 1942 President William V. S. Tubman in his platform on policies which he would adopt in case of election as President of Liberia, had as one of the planks of said platform the extension of equal political rights to the women of Liberia. Mr. Tubman was elected an sworn in office January 3, 1944. In his Inaugural address he said: "We shall therefore persevere with our endeavor to extend to the women of Liberia full participation in the affairs of government and its political activities, including the right of female suffrage." In his first annual message to the national legislature, November, 1944, President Tubman recommended the amendment to the constitution to grant

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## What of The Mentally Retarded Child?

By

MRS. J. S. BROWN

More and more, leaders in the field of education are planning, and reorganizing educational programs to more nearly meet the needs of pupils living in the complexities of our modern world.

Many new courses have been added to the curricula in recent years where-by students may gain practical experiences in the high school and elementary school in the development of skills and knowledge which were with-held until later in their educational career previously. This in itself is commendable and could be established on a much broader scale if facilities were adequate.

However good the intention of these leaders, the fact is evident that so far the needs of a great number of children have not been affected by the provision made for a few. This is the reason that the problem is so acute in certain sections of our country.

From a recent study of the results of psychological test, given at the Morrison Training School where I. Q's in the past nine months range from 47 to 103, with at least one-half the cases below 70, it is appalling to note that grade placements for these boys range from first through tenth.

Social promotions? Perhaps a good name to call it but I should like to name it administrative frustration. The question is passed from one to another, "What can I do with him?" I hold that any school needs a psychologist, in most cases a psychiatrist to study each child's capacities before he has any grade placement. This would help the teacher immensely and perhaps eliminate the maladjustment of the child as he grows up.

According to our records many sources of juvenile delinquency originate in the child's inability to progress in proportion to the other members of his class. Hence, he becomes a truant from the school—the place where he is embarrassed because of his incapacities.

Who wants to live where he is humiliated and made to feel inferior by his own acts?

Now that a battery of tests may help determine the capacities of each child, would it not be wise to establish types of schools to meet needs of the types of mental capacities? Would it not over a

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## Hands Across The Sea

By

ESTHER L. COKER

We are women and girls of the Y. W. C. A. of Sierra Leone. Our headquarters are at No. 22 Charlotte Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone. Over 200 of us have lit candles on a triangle and we are extending our glow. There are flickers here and there, moving towards the Blue Triangle on all sides, so as to reach the base from where to give a steadier glow.

### THIS MUCH WE DO.

We have a "Play Centre" of over 40 children aged 2 to 6 years. See them come in on Saturday mornings, brought by mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, or nurses, at 9 o'clock. They are left in the ground floor of a school building owned by the Cathedral Church. We take care of them up till 11 a. m., while mothers get their marketing or housework done, and feel confident that their little ones are safe in our care. We teach them hymns, songs, games, handicrafts, and tell them Bible stories as well as other stories. They have a drink of milk or fruit juice for a break, and when kind donors give it they get a biscuit or sweet occasionally. At Xmastide they have a party, where they receive toys and a lot of eats, while they in turn bring presents to be taken to sick children in the hospitals.

We have a "Junior Group" aged 8 to 12 years—and also the "Y" Teens" aged 13 to 18 years. See them come in to the Community Centre at 5 p. m. on Thursdays full of life and glee each out to get the best fun of the evening. They settle down to games, cooking classes, handiwork, listen to talks, have quizzes, folk dancing—They elect their officers, president, secretary, treasurer, and other office bearers, annually. Not a year goes by without some outing or picnic. They also take their turn during the big event of the year in the Y. W. C. A. 'Y' week in November with older members of the association, when they exhibit or sell whatever handiwork they have done in the year.

Our "Young Adult Group" is a live wire. Lately it has become the orbit of the association. We only wish we had more qualified club leaders. Still, in this group we watch future leaders take their form. We endeavour to watch out for the seeds that have been sown in the earlier groups come to fruition. There are those in the plan. You see they are the 18 plus. We train here also the would be wives and

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