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## EDITORIAL.

### WOMEN POLICE—ALL POLICE WORK SHOULD BE WELFARE WORK.

There is always a danger in making drastic changes—namely, the danger of sweeping away good things with the bad, the rooting up of the wheat with the tares. To foresee this potential danger, and to guard adequately against it, requires the long-headedness equally with the level-headedness of the true statesman. Economy and anti-waste are political cries which we have heard echoed, and re-echoed, down the vista of post-war years, and we have no desire to make any adverse criticism of necessary retrenchment to relieve our over-taxed country, but what we wish to point out, and to emphasise, is this: true economy, conceived in the mind of a true statesman, often means some measure of expenditure, a small measure of expenditure in order to save a greater. Secondly, we would wish to show that waste does not mean necessarily the waste of money; the waste of health, and the lowering of the standard of public morality is the most disastrous form of waste conceivable, and tends to the decadence of a nation. In our opinion, a great mistake was made in this connection by a British statesman, on the plea of economy, in the recommendation to disband the Women Police Patrols of London. Several able and intensely practical speeches were made in the House in Committee in opposition to the recommendation, on June 29th, notably by Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland, Mrs. Wintringham, Lady Astor, and Mr. Ronald McNeill. In discussing a remark made by the Home Secretary, and one which has been so often quoted, namely, that the work done by the Women Police Patrols is not police work, but welfare work, Mrs. Wintringham reminded

the Committee that the official instructions which the women receive when they enter the Force are that they are to deal with women and children who are ill, injured, destitute, homeless, victims of assault or in danger of drifting into an immoral life; she added that although such may be welfare work, yet very special training is necessary to enable them to do it properly. In the last resort, can it not be said that all police work is welfare work? It is not a question of terms, but of the inestimable value of the work these women have done. Their duties go, however, far beyond those above mentioned. Mrs. Wintringham reminded the members that "the Women Patrols may be employed in detecting offences in the White Slave traffic and other offences under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and disorderly houses; they have done a great deal of good work in connection with alien cafés, particularly where there are Chinese and black men. They can enter betting and gambling houses, visit licensed premises, visit night clubs attended by both sexes, carry out the Vagrancy Acts in the matter of fortune-telling, detect pickpockets, and assist in criminal investigations, in which they have done good work in the past with regard to the drug cocaine. "They can go *where no man has any access*, and recently they have secured six people who have been carrying on traffic in cocaine. . . . The League of Nations is at present grappling with this great curse, and, we think, in itself it is a justification for the existence of the Women Patrols that they should help the League of Nations to try to stamp out this traffic. The League of Nations needs the help of all Governments, and it is necessary that our Government should maintain these women police if for nothing else."

On very good authority, it is stated that one patient suffering from venereal disease

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