

THE VOTE,  
JANUARY 31, 1919.  
ONE PENNY.

## WOMEN and the COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

MARIAN BERRY.

# THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE

VOL. XVIII. No. 484.

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FRIDAY, JAN. 31, 1919.

**OBJECT:** To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the power thus obtained to establish equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

### WHAT WE EXPECT OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

"It will be the duty of the New Government to remove all existing inequalities of the law as between men and women."

### NO SHIRKING !

ELECTION MANIFESTO signed by  
**MR. LLOYD GEORGE**, Prime Minister. **MR. BONAR LAW**, Chancellor of the Exchequer

### THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE AND THE PRIME MINISTER.

The following letter was sent on January 28 to the Prime Minister regarding the removal of inequalities of the law as between men and women:—

Rt. Hon. D. Lloyd George, M.P.,  
10, Downing-street, S.W.1.

Sir,—The Women's Freedom League wholeheartedly endorses the statement made in the election manifesto signed by yourself and by Mr. Bonar Law that "it will be the duty of the new Government to remove all existing inequalities of the law as between men and women"; and we urge you to include in the King's Speech the promise of a measure which will remove at one time all women's political, civil, professional, and economic disabilities.

A Bill containing the following clauses would, in our opinion, meet the case, and we urge upon the Government the advisability of introducing it as

early as possible in the new session of Parliament and carrying it through all its stages with the least possible delay:—

Clause I. In all Acts of Parliament relating to the right to vote at parliamentary, municipal, local and other elections, words importing the masculine gender shall include women.

II. No person shall be disqualified from being elected or appointed to, or from filling any office or position, merely by reason that such person is a woman.

III. That all professions and trade unions shall be open to men and women on equal terms.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

FLORENCE A. UNDERWOOD.

The same letter was sent to the Rt. Hon. A. Bonar Law, M.P.

**I**F you Believe in Equal Rights and Opportunities and an Equal Moral Standard for Women and Men,

**Join the Women's Freedom League.**

Fill in your name and address and send it, with subscription (minimum 1s.) to the Secretary, Women's Freedom League, 144, High Holborn, London, W.C. 1.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Women's Freedom League.

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS: W.F.L.



DARE TO  
BE FREE.

### LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Wednesday, February 5.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Whish. Subject: "The Humorous Side of Journalism." Chair, Miss A. A. Smith. Annual Meeting, Golder's Green Branch, at 5, East Holm, Addison-way, 8 p.m.

Thursday, February 7.—Dance at the Institute, Hampstead Garden Suburb (arranged by the Golder's Green Branch), 7 p.m. till 11 p.m. Tickets 2s. each. Refreshments at moderate prices.

Tuesday, February 11, 7 p.m.—Political Meeting, in Minerva Café, "What We Think of the King's Speech."

Wednesday, February 12.—Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. M. W. Nevinson. Subject: "Election Experiences."

Thursday, February 13.—Conference on "The Endowment of Motherhood," Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, 7 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Despard, Dr. Alice Vickery, and others.

Saturday, February 15.—National Executive Committee Meeting, 10.30 a.m., 144, High Holborn.

Saturday, February 22.—London Branches Council Public Meeting to forward the candidature of women for the L.C.C., Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, 3 p.m. Speakers: Mrs. Ayres Purdie and others.

Saturday, April 5th.—Women's Freedom League Annual Conference. Caxton Hall, 10 a.m.

### PROVINCES.

Saturday, February 1.—Nottingham Branch Meeting at the Theosophical Hall, Park-street, 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss Dorothy Evans. Subject: "The Demobilisation Peril." Chairman: Miss Gunston.

Monday, February 3.—Middlesbrough. Public Meeting, Suffrage Club, 231a, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road. Speaker: Miss F. A. Underwood. Subject: "Women Candidates at the Recent Election and the Need for Women M.P.s."

Tuesday, February 4.—Bexhill. Speakers' Class, at 19, Marine-mansions, 3 p.m. Teacher: Mrs. Pertwee. Chair: Mrs. Williams.

Wednesday, February 5.—Hastings. Speakers' Class, at 51, Marina-street, St. Leonard's, 3 p.m. Teacher: Mrs. Pertwee. Hostess: Mrs. Jowers.

Southsea.—Public Meeting, 2, Kent-road, 3.15 p.m. Rev. G. W. Thompson on "The Principles of Free Trade." Chair: Mrs. Layton.

Ashford.—Speakers' Class, at Cruden House School, 7 p.m. Teacher: Mrs. Pertwee. Hostess: Miss White.

Friday, February 7.—Nottingham Adult School Room, Friar-lane. Special Meeting of Committee at 5.45. Special Members' Meeting at 7 o'clock.

Monday, February 10.—Westcliff Branch Public Meeting, Labour Hall, Southend. Subject: "The League of Nations."

Tuesday, February 18.—Manchester Political Meeting for Women only at Milton Hall, Deansgate, 7.30 p.m. Speaker: Miss M. I. Neal. Subject: "Why we must have an Independent Women's Party." Open discussion. Admission free. Silver collection.

Wednesday, February 22.—Southsea. Practice Debating Class, 2, Kent-road, 3.15 p.m. Discussion: "The Child's Claim on the State." Opener: Mrs. Whetton. Chair: Mrs. Barber.

Monday, March 10.—Westcliff Branch Meeting, 30, Sattin-road, 7 p.m. Speaker: Miss Munro, on "Housing."

Wednesday, April 2.—Middlesbrough. Café Chantant and Sale, Suffrage Club, 231a, The Arcade, Linthorpe-road.

### SCOTLAND.

Thursday, February 6.—Glasgow. Branch Meeting, 212, Bath-street. Speaker: Miss F. A. Underwood.

Saturday, February 8.—Edinburgh. Social Meeting, at 13, South Charlotte-street. Speaker: Miss F. A. Underwood.

## OTHER SOCIETIES.

Sunday, February 2.—Nottingham Cosmopolitan Debating Society, Mechanics' Hall, 2.45. Speaker: Miss Dorothy Evans. Subject: "Fair Wages for Housewives." Ashford P.S.A., Wesleyan Church, 3 p.m. Speaker: Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck, on "Penal Reform." Chair: Mr. Herbert Lee, J.P.

Thursday, February 6.—British Dominions Women Citizens' Union, Indian Section, Minerva Café.—Debate on the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. Admission 1s. including tea. 3.6 p.m.

Church League for Women's Suffrage. Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, 6.30 p.m. Service conducted by the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard. Address by the Bishop of Oxford.

Russian Society of Social and Economic Reconstruction.—Meeting, Daere House, 5, Arundel-street, Strand, 6 p.m. Speaker: Mr. R. H. Pawney, on "Adult Education in England." Chair: Dr. Pinkus.

Saturday, February 15.—Catholic Women's Suffrage Society. Annual Meeting in Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, 3 p.m.

Monday, February 24.—Women Writers' Suffrage League Annual Meeting at 144, High Holborn, W.C., 3 p.m.

### We call special attention to—

Mrs. Whish's lecture on "The Humorous Side of Journalism," in the Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, 3 p.m.

## ENDOWMENT OF MOTHERHOOD AND THE FAMILY.

"Are you in favour of the endowment of motherhood and the family, and what do you believe would be the effects of such legislation?"

### A Symposium of Opinions.

Dr. Alice Drysdale Vickery Fears Increased Recklessness in Reproduction.

"The idea of holding a conference on the question of the Endowment of Motherhood and the Family appears to me to be eminently judicious. I shall certainly hope to take part in the discussion on the date you mention. From my point of view (a Malthusian point of view) the endowment of the mother and of the family would not be a step in the right direction, except perhaps for a strictly limited period during the time of reconstruction to which many of us are looking forward hopefully.

"It would seem to be reasonable that disabilities of women should first be removed, and the effects of their new freedom be realised before any hurried or ill-conceived legislation of the character of the endowment of motherhood or of the family should be introduced. First let us clear the way of all artificial limitations and obstacles which prejudice and tradition have coiled about the path of women before we proceed to enmesh ourselves and our successors in the coils and intricacies of new and untried schemes which may prove the sources of innumerable evils in the future.

"The endowment of motherhood and the family would scarcely tend to check that recklessness in reproduction which is the great fault and misfortune of our poorer classes. The working mother enjoys no period of rest and recuperation between the birth of one child and the next. Therefore with each successive pregnancy her physique deteriorates, and the later children suffer proportionately. Thus do we as a nation, while desiring an A1 population, practically favour the production of a C3 population."

Miss Maude Royden Replies to the Charge of Desiring an "Endowment of Propagation."

"You say—'The proposal would practically endow propagation by the poor at the expense of the well-to-do, and so would encourage the process by which the nation's future generations are raised chiefly by those who have least chance of bringing them up under satisfactory conditions.' If we are asked, 'Who are the best classes from which to breed the race?' the answer surely cannot be, 'Only the well-to-do.' The 'best' classes must include

\* *The Economist*, January 4, 1919.

## Conference, Thursday, Feb. 13.

Minerva Cafe, 144, High Holborn, London, W.C., 1., 7 p.m.

The time is ripe for these conflicting opinions to be brought together and a scheme evolved that will avoid all the pitfalls that are being foreseen by able and public-spirited women. Tell all your friends of our conference on "State Endowment of the Mother and the Family." An open discussion of varying opinions, in which Mrs. Despard, Dr. Alice Drysdale Vickery, and others will take part.

DOROTHY EVANS,  
Hon. Secretary of the Conference.

## Montgomery Boroughs Campaign.

A series of very successful meetings to protest against any return of State-controlled vice, and to advocate the recognition and maintenance of an equal moral standard, have been held during the last week in Montgomery Boroughs, two at Llanfyllin, and at Welshpool, Berriew, and Newtown. In spite of rain and cold and darkness the meetings were well attended, and the protest resolution always carried unanimously. Mrs. Margaret Wynne Nevinson, L.L.A., was the principal speaker at all the meetings. Miss Alix M. Clark presided. Montgomery has so far been a clean living district, syphilitic disease being almost unknown to her hills and valleys, and it is to be hoped the return of the soldiers will not impair the health of her population. Mrs. Nevinson dealt with the subject with her usual force and eloquence; the impression she made on her audience was visible by their rapt attention. Those who came to mock remained to pray, and regulationists voted for the resolution. The subject would naturally appeal to the deep religious nature of the Welsh, their Celtic sympathy and enthusiasm being at once roused by any tale of injustice and wrong; no audiences are so responsive.

The Rev. David Morris and the Rev. Howell Williams, both former Army chaplains in France, spoke very strongly from intimate knowledge against the abominations of the "Tolerated Houses" in France, and the physical and spiritual ruin of our unfortunate men. Speeches were also given by Miss Amy Jackson, B.A., a member of the Friends' Association for the Promotion of Social Purity, spoke for the first time on the Women's Freedom League platform; her speeches were full of fervour and earnestness, and we hope, as she is resident in Newtown, we shall often have the pleasure of hearing her. The Rev. Ll. Richards and the Rev. W. R. Roberts also spoke in support of the resolutions.

In Berriew the meeting was organised by Miss Dylis Davies; the hall was charmingly decorated, and we are grateful to her for her zeal and energy. Many new members were enrolled, and, as usual, THE VOTE and "Josephine Butler" sold well.

ALIX M. CLARK  
(Hon. Organiser).

## Why has a Married Mother no "Obligation" in the Eyes of the Law?

The attention of our readers is directed to the following paragraph which appeared in *The Daily News*, January 24:—

A young married woman who applied at Stratford Police Court yesterday for an exemption from vaccination for her twins, saying that her husband was too ill to attend, was told that he had had time to come before he was taken ill, and that in any case he could apply up to February 11. "I am not going to relieve a father," said the magistrate "of the obligation cast upon him by law."

the hand-workers, especially, no doubt, the skilled artisan class. No Eugenist, however anxious about the future of the race, would wish to exclude all but the well-to-do from the business of reproduction. Personally, I should wish to exclude only the idle and dissipated rich and the idle and dissipated poor. All the rest of the community has a right to the happiness of parenthood (I am not here considering the question of physical fitness).

"Now, of these two classes the idle and dissipated rich would not be affected by the endowment of motherhood, the amount being in any case too small to influence them. The idle and dissipated poor, on the other hand, are already producing children at a rate which cannot be accelerated, since they are entirely without the restraints imposed by forethought or consideration for the welfare of the mother, and it is physically impossible for a woman to have a child more than, say, once a year.

"On the other hand, having regard to that great mass of people who come between these two extremes, the endowment of motherhood would not be an inducement to have children to those who do not desire them for their own sakes, since the amount proposed is only equivalent to the actual physical needs of the child. It would, however, make it possible for people who desire to have children to have them without robbing those already in the world, or placing an unbearable strain of toil and anxiety on the parents."

### The Countess Markievicz Writes:

Holloway Jail, Jan. 24, 1919.

Dear Miss Evans,—I am very emphatically in favour of the endowment of motherhood and the family.

A properly organised State that recognises the danger of race suicide must see that the entire support of an increasing family should not remain a burden on the stationary wages of the husband and father, and that it is inhuman to ignore the difficulties of unmarried mothers and their children. The argument of "having a family to support" has not brought great increase of remuneration to men, but the contrary has been one of the reasons urged for keeping the wages of women low. It is unthinkable that wages could ever be based on family necessities; by no just or logical argument could you justify the forcing of employers to increase wages or salaries with the birth of each child; inversely to reduce a man's wages on the death of a child is too absurd even to consider, and the question of unemployment remains untouched. Therefore it seems obvious to me that the only logical solution a State can come to, once it has become democratically self-conscious, is that if it wants children it must provide for them.

I consider that the effects of State endowment of motherhood and the family would be:—(1) A check on the growing spread of Malthusian practices; (2) the improvement of the race. It would give to the nation a rising generation better developed both mentally and physically by sufficient food, and morally by the good influence of happier and less anxious home lives on the young. (3) The diminution of abortion and child murder. (Experience gained in a convict prison taught me that the economic conditions of married women with large families and that of friendless unmarried mothers is largely responsible for both these crimes.) This subject is one I have been thinking of when considering how to build up a free Iceland, and I am convinced that it is of the highest importance, and the Women's Freedom League has my fullest sympathies in their noble efforts towards a better life for women and a chance for the children of their own country.

CONSTANCE DE MARKIEVICZ.

## THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, January 31st, 1919.

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To the Advertising Manager—on advertising.  
To the Secretary—on all other business, including Votes orders, printing, and merchandise, etc.

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Telegrams: "DESPARD, Museum 1429, London."  
EDITORIAL.

The Editor is responsible for unsigned articles only. Articles, paragraphs, or cuttings dealing with matters of interest to women generally will be welcomed. Every effort will be made to return unsuitable MSS. if a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed, but the Editor cannot be responsible in case of loss.

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## WOMEN AND THE COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

The question of the moment is to ensure that women are returned in the coming London and other County Council elections. Our readers will be pleased to know that Mrs. Ayres Purdie is standing for Chelsea, and we hope soon to give the names of other well-known women who have become candidates.

Probably many more would stand if they knew the conditions and responsibilities of the position. We are grateful to Miss Marian Berry for contributing the following article, which answers the questions on the subject now being asked by so many thinking women, and we know our readers will welcome her helpful contribution, which runs as follows:—

During the first week of March the elections for county councils will take place through England and Wales. The present councils were elected in 1913, when out of seventeen women candidates three were elected—two in London and one in Westmorland. The London County Council elected three women as aldermen, thereby increasing the total number of women county councillors to six.

At the present time twelve women are serving on county councils; six in London and the remaining six on the following councils:—Cambridgeshire, Cumberland, Flintshire, Somersetshire, Suffolk (West), and Westmorland.

It is natural to ask why the number of women candidates standing in 1913 was so small, and there are several explanations. Outside London the constituencies for county councils are single-membered, and this makes the adoption of women candidates a difficulty. In 1913, with the exception of one or two electoral areas, married women were not electors, and it was not until August, 1914, that the County and Borough Councils (Qualification) Bill, which provided a residential qualification alternative with the electoral for county and town councils, became law. Owing to the war, elections for local government bodies have been suspended, and there has been no opportunity for women to avail themselves of the residential qualification.

### The Question of Cost.

The Representation of the People Act has greatly enlarged the local government electorate, and there are now at least 5,000,000 married women electors. The limitation as to the selection of candidates for county councils is therefore removed. But the chief difficulty, namely, that of expense, remains. In fact, owing to the increased electorate, the high cost of printing, paper, and clerical labour, the expenses will be far heavier than in 1913.

The expenses of election to a county council are strictly regulated by Act of Parliament (the Municipal Elections Act, 1884), and must not exceed £25 for the first 500 electors and 3d. a head afterwards. The amount is reduced by one-fourth if there are two candidates standing jointly. A strict return of the candidate's expenses has to be made after the contest to the clerk of the county council, and vouchers presented for all amounts over £1.

From the figures quoted it will be realised that in many London constituencies the sum of £250 to £300 will be necessary to support an independent candidate. In provincial constituencies the amount will vary, and often need not exceed £50 to £60. But the money question must be faced, and local organisations responsible for the candidature of women to local authorities ought to raise an Election Fund, so that suitable women, who have not the means and who wish to serve the community as county councillors, may have the opportunity.

In this country the county and county borough councils are the two chief authorities for local government, and work on either of these bodies may lead to a large sphere of usefulness. The work of reconstruction will largely devolve on these authorities, and it is therefore essential that the members shall include women as well as men.

In an interview with the new President of the Local Government Board on the Ministry of Health, reported in *The Observer* of January 12th, Dr. Addison stated:—

"For many purposes affecting health services the administrative unit must be a large one—a county, say. The parochial handling of health matters has not been an enormous success in the past, and the larger the area is, within reason, the more easily will some services be handled. For it will contain within itself the means of dealing with its own necessities. A small area cannot possibly be self-contained in a medical sense; it cannot have resources sufficient to meet all its emergencies."

### Health, Housing and Education.

The organised women in the country have pressed for the creation of a Ministry of Health, and they must co-operate in administering measures dealing with public health. Women desire to take their share in planning the new houses which must be built in every county; they know the needs of the family and the improvements which must be made if the standard of the nation's health is to be raised and household work reduced to a minimum. We want women on county councils who will realise the need for a central heating system in urban districts and for adequate bathing and cupboard accommodation. Women spend the greater part of their lives in the home, and they desire that the houses should be built with a sunny aspect and sufficient window space. The output of the world would be increased if every worker had a bright and sunny-room in which to work and to recuperate.

County councils are the authorities for elementary, secondary, and technical education. In view of the recent Education Act, the work will be much extended. Education cannot in any way be efficient unless women in sufficient numbers take their share. Special schools may be provided for afflicted children who cannot be taught in ordinary schools. Outside London few Trades schools have been established, and such schools need to be largely extended. Care must be taken that the Trades Schools established for girls are not exclusively for domestic training. Girls should have an equal opportunity with boys in training for a career which will appeal to them and which will provide future economic independence. It is most impor-

tant that the women candidates should believe in and work for the same educational opportunities for girls and women as for men and boys.

Many institutions are under the control of county councils, including all Reformatory Schools and many residential Industrial Schools. Places of public amusement are licensed and regulated by the councils.

County councils employ many women among their employees, and women ask that women officials should be treated on an equality with the men in their rate of pay, opportunity for service and promotion.

The county councils, with the county borough councils, are the supervising authorities for the administration of the Midwives, Insurance, and Mental Deficiency Acts, all of which demand women's co-operation. The Mental Deficiency Act only came into force in 1914, and owing to the war it has not been possible for local authorities fully to exercise their powers under the Act. Homes must be established for those who are mentally deficient, the majority of whom are at present under no control and living among the general public. Women should press for the strict administration of the Mental Deficiency Act, as it would improve the moral condition of the streets and do much to prevent the spread of venereal diseases. Lunatic asylums are under county councils, and the female inmates need the supervision of women councillors.

The administration of Old Age Pensions and War Pensions is an important part of the work of county councils. Under War Pensions, questions of education and vocational training for adults and juveniles will be of great importance, and women must take their share in helping to solve the problems which may arise.

### The Cry of the Country.

In rural areas the need for land for allotments and for the settlement of ex-Service men will be of vital importance to the nation as demobilisation proceeds. If the countryside is to be really reconstructed the attitude of many councils in respect to land, housing, and rural industries must be changed without delay. County councils ought to aid schemes for increased transport in rural areas, otherwise the improvement in the country's agricultural system cannot be maintained; and they should in the future develop schemes for co-operation for dairy produce, such as have been so successfully established in Holland and Denmark.

Women, who have already proved their capacity for service, and who have large and receptive minds, should come forward as candidates. In some county constituencies, where the seat has been occupied by some worthy old gentleman since the formation of the council, one is told that it would be considered "unneighbourly" to stand as an opponent. But if rural reconstruction is to be carried out suitable men and women must stand even at the risk of being considered "unneighbourly"!

There is little time to lose and much work to be done if women are to stand in any numbers at the March elections. Every effort should be made so that these elections—the first that have been held for six years—may show that women are ready, nay eager, to come forward and to take their part in the local government of the country. In conclusion, may I say that advice and publications relating to the work of all local authorities can be obtained from the Women's Local Government Society, 19, Tothill-street, Westminster.

MARIAN BERRY.

Miss Maude Royden preaches in the City Temple on Sunday, February 2, at the 6.30 p.m. service. Subject: "The Kind of World We Want: III. The Purpose of the Christian State."

## OUR "WEDNESDAY'S,"

The lecture given by Mr. G. K. Devadhar, M.A., in the Minerva Café last week on "The Position of Women in India and what they are Learning to do for Themselves," was full of enlightenment and interest. For ten years Mr. Devadhar has been connected with the Poona Seva Sadan (Home of Service), the object of which is to train girls and women to take their full share in social progress and service. The life of Indian women to-day is not merely poetry and romance, but consists also of hard facts, and Mr. Devadhar contrasted the comparative freedom granted to girls and women in some provinces with the lack of it in others, contending that the general position of women in India at the present time might be regarded as very similar to the position of women in this country some fifty years ago. He claimed that whether a woman remained in her father's house or went to her husband's home she was a citizen, and should be taught to work as a citizen. Mr. Devadhar related some of his experiences in 1907-1908, when, as a member of the Servants of India Society, he undertook famine relief work in the United Provinces. He had to arrange for many things for women which could have been done so much more satisfactorily if there had been trained women to carry it out, and on his return to Poona Mr. Devadhar succeeded in converting women to this point of view, his method being to change the mental vision of both men and women on these matters. In 1909 he established two classes, meeting for two hours a day, which were attended by twenty married women; now there are forty-two classes, attended by 575 women. Women themselves contribute largely to the finances of these classes, and eighty have taken part in the full college training supplied. Women can get complete training as teachers, nurses, and midwives, and others take advantage of the workroom classes, where they learn to knit and to sew, both by hand and by machine, to embroider and take up other handicrafts. Mr. Devadhar laid much stress on the necessity of persistent effort to introduce new ways of thinking. He insisted that women would be great factors in determining the future of the country to which they belonged, and claimed that every facility should be accorded to them for useful social and patriotic work.

An animated discussion followed this lecture, and those present at the meeting congratulated Indian women on having such a champion as Mr. Devadhar for the emancipation of the women of India. Miss A. A. Smith presided.

## East and West: A Demand for Votes for Indian Women.

An address has been forwarded to Lord Southborough, chairman of the Indian Electoral Franchise Committee, urging that some women should be included in the new electorates in India. It is pointed out that Indian women have themselves made this claim, which is supported by a large body of Indian gentlemen. The special session of the National Indian Congress passed a resolution advocating this reform, as did also the Muslim League.

The committee urge the right of franchise (1) on general grounds, because women form half the human race, and without their aid the practical problems of education, marriage, and the family cannot be successfully dealt with by any Government; and (2) as particularly helpful to India, where, from a variety of causes, the inherent civilisation of the country lies largely in the hands of the women.

The main objections which have been put forward to the grant of the franchise to women in India are

(1) the custom of purdah and (2) the lack of education, in its Western sense, among the women of India. To the first objection the Indian Women's Education Association urges that purdah is a social custom, and that many women in purdah are well-informed and capable of voting intelligently on the subjects which come before the elected councils. Attention is drawn to the fact that women already vote, and are eligible for election to local councils in several parts of India. In answer to the second objection, the appeal affirms that "there is an education of life as well as of letters," and it heartily endorses the opinion expressed by H.H. the Aga Khan, who says: "An assembly to the election of which Indian women had contributed would keep nearer to the facts of life, to the real and actual in the country, than one selected by men alone."

It is recognised that for some time to come universal suffrage cannot be practicable in India, and that "while educational and property qualifications provide the standards, the number of women voting will be relatively small, but it would be invaluable to establish the principle of co-operation at the start of the new régime."

There is, as is pointed out, no reason why the competent should be excluded. In fact, the grant of the right to such women would have a direct and stimulating effect upon women's education, about which the Indian Government now appear solicitous.

The address is signed by Lady Muir Mackenzie, the president of the association, and by Mrs. Constance Mary Villiers-Stuart, the hon. organising secretary; also by Mrs. Fawcett and Lady A. Ali Baig. In addition to the Women's Freedom League, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies and the British Dominions Women Citizens' Union, it has been endorsed by seven or eight other suffrage societies, by the Women's Co-operative Guild, by the Central Islamic Society, and other leagues and associations, and, among individuals, by Viscount Haldane, the Countess of Selborne, Lady Barrett, C.B.E., M.D., Sir Mancherjee Bhownagree, K.C.I.E.

### OUR OPEN COLUMN.

\*\*\* Letters intended for publication must be written on one side of the paper only, and authenticated by the name and address of the writer. It must be clearly understood that we do not necessarily identify ourselves with the opinions expressed.

#### DEMobilISATION: A SUGGESTION.

To the Editor of THE VOTE.

According to official demobilisation advertisement "pivotal" men will be released first, and "as soon as possible." "Before long the daily rate of demobilisation should reach 40,000 men." "Pivotal" men are defined in various ways according to their estimated usefulness to the country. They are only classified as such "after a most strict and searching investigation." "No fair-minded man," says the advertisement, "can dispute the obvious wisdom and fairness of letting these classes go first."

Thus the male official point of view. I do not quarrel with it, but I would suggest there is another consideration which should influence the selection of "pivotal" men, i.e., consideration of the health and welfare of the community into which they will return, and especially of their wives and families.

We know, and the authorities know, that some of these men are suffering from venereal diseases which in certain forms are contagious and dangerous to all. Their release will affect the welfare of the people at least as vitally as the release of coal

miners and others in the "pivotal" class, and since married men will have preference over single, will affect their wives and families most of all. Will the same "strict and searching investigation" which is made on behalf of the men be made on behalf of women? Will men with a clean bill of health be placed on the same footing as those who are a danger to the community? May they even be given preference over healthy men, or are they simply to be let loose indiscriminately on unsuspecting people to spread a scourge which will do more ultimate harm to the race than a foreign invasion?

I think the time has come when women at least should tackle these questions, and with regard to the last one answer emphatically No! What, then, shall we do? I offer a suggestion which has at least the merit of being practical, capable of immediate application without fresh legislation. If it is on lines which have not so far been tried, all the more need to discuss them, for everyone seems agreed that some new methods must be devised for checking the spread of venereal disease. I believe the appeal to the better side of human nature to be more effective in the long run than repressive measures, and that simple and direct action such as I propose would provide at once an incentive and an example to clean living. At the same time, it would help to break the "conspiracy of silence" which is largely the cause of the ignorance which enables venereal disease to flourish.

I do not believe in punishment in such cases, but rather in enlightenment; therefore the first step would be (1) to instruct the men in a sensible way before demobilisation and point out to them the exceeding cruelty and danger of bringing home infection to their wives and children. This could best be done, I suggest, through their chaplains in a man-to-man talk—the less "official" the better—in addition to official instruction, of course. (2) To add to the "pivotal" classes all men free from venereal diseases in any form. This would be an objectionless worth any amount of official instruction, and "no fair-minded man or woman can dispute the obvious wisdom and fairness of letting these men go first."

Of those suffering from venereal diseases it would be easy for the medical officers to differentiate between patients of greater and less danger to the community, and from this point of view they could be given the "preference" which commanding officers are instructed to give to specified cases—for instance, to married over single men. This in itself would be a great incentive to good health, to attention to treatment, and to refrain from risk of further contamination. The men would know that the sooner they were "cured" the sooner they would get off, while those suffering from venereal disease in a communicable form should be the last to be demobilised. The eight months which it is estimated complete demobilisation will take would give a better chance for treatment than is possible in the "28 days" which is now in force "for hospital and convalescent home cases."

(3) The wives must no longer be kept in ignorance of their danger; they must be told. Ignorance and silence are at the root of this particular menace, and to allow a contagious man to return to his wife while she is in complete ignorance of his state is unspeakably cruel, apart from being shortsighted hygienic policy. If it be unavoidable that some men must return home in a dangerous state, then at least the person most concerned must be given the necessary knowledge to protect herself and her children. I am aware that this will be violently opposed in certain quarters, but it will be found on examination, I think, to make for one of the most needed educational and moral reforms.

L. M. METGE.

### LETTER TO THE HOME SECRETARY.

The Women's Freedom League wrote as follows on January 23 to the Home Secretary with regard to the distressing case of Ellen Sullivan and her child born in prison, both of whom died, and urging the need for a deputation regarding the treatment of girls and women on remand:—

Rt. Hon. Edward Shortt, M.P.  
Home Office, Whitehall, S.W.1.

Sir,—The Women's Freedom League views with grave concern the report in to-day newspaper Press of the inquests at Holloway Prison on Ellen Sullivan, a girl of 17 years of age, and her child born in prison. The girl was on remand on a charge of using bad language. We think you will agree with us that a tragedy of this character necessitates the strictest investigation. We ourselves have urged over and over again that a prison is not a proper place for persons on remand, but that suitable remand homes should be provided, and Ellen Sullivan's case is only one of a long series proving that the effect of the treatment meted out to prisoners on remand in Holloway Prison is thoroughly pernicious.

We should be glad if you would kindly consent to receive a deputation from the Women's Freedom League on this question of the treatment of girls and women on remand. We are convinced that this is a subject of vital importance, and we should be glad to have the opportunity of discussing with you the immediate necessity of reforms in this branch of your department.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,  
F. A. UNDERWOOD.

### Mrs. Despard and Parliament.

Mrs. Despard entertained her workers in the recent Battersea election at Caxton Hall last Thursday evening. Monsieur and Madame Joubert delighted the audience with their musical selections. Speeches of not more than three minutes each were made by many of those who had taken part in the election campaign, among them being Dr. Knight, Mrs. Swanwick, Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, Mr. Macdonnell, Councillor Archer, and Councillor Simpson. All were agreed that Mrs. Despard had made a first-rate parliamentary candidate, that Battersea had again held the way in progress by putting forward a woman candidate, and the speakers were confident that at the next election their candidate would be a member of Parliament.

### Women and the Peace Conference.

We understand that the French Woman Suffrage Society is making arrangements to convoke a conference in Paris next month of three women representatives of each of the Allied countries. The purpose is to watch over women's interests and to represent them to the Peace Conference.

### German Women M.P.s

According to *The Times*, several German women have been elected to the new Constituent Assembly. The full list of names is not yet available, but *The Times* message mentions the following:—Dr. Baum, writer, Schleswig-Holstein; Dr. Gertrud Bäumer, Hamburg; and Frau Anna Blos, wife of the former Prime Minister of Württemberg. Congratulations to the women M.P.s—and to the electors!

### In Sympathy.

Every member of the Women's Freedom League and many other friends will join in truest sympathy with our hon. treasurer, Dr. Elizabeth Knight, in the loss of her mother, who passed away on January 24 at 7, Gainsborough-gardens, Hampstead. It was a pleasure to us last summer to see the veteran suffragist at a Hampstead meeting, and we rejoice to know that at the age of nearly 91 she was able to register her vote at the General Election.

We offer our heartfelt sympathy to our old friends Mr. and Mrs. Duval in the irreparable loss they have sustained by the death of their daughters Barbara and Elsie—both from influenza. They were well known to all Freedom Leaguers in the

early days of the militant movement, in which they took an active part. Both were married, the elder one leaving a little boy of three years of age. To him and to the husbands of both our thoughts go out in truest sympathy.

### Thanksgiving and Dedication Service.

The Women's Freedom League is co-operating in a service of thanksgiving and dedication at St. Martin-in-the-Fields on Thursday evening, February 6, at 6.30 p.m., the first anniversary of the day on which the Representation of the People Act, extending the franchise to women, received the Royal Assent. The service will be conducted by the Vicar, the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard, and the Bishop of Oxford will give the address.

We hope there will be a large gathering of our members and their friends at this memorable service, which is being organised by the Church League for Women's Suffrage. Last year impressive dedicatory services were held at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, in which the Women's Freedom League banner had its place among those of other suffrage societies and women's organisations. We welcome the repetition of such a service this year. Our banner again will be there. Come and support it and the noble ideal which the service commemorates.

### Women's New Power.

*The Guardian*, reviewing the Woman's Movement in 1918, warmly welcomes the enfranchisement of women and their new power, and in the following interesting paragraph shows how its effect is already apparent. We welcome *The Guardian's* support of our determined opposition to 40D.

"The withdrawal of the notorious Regulation 40D, D.O.R.A., is but another example of the sensitiveness of Governments to the opinion of those who may make or mar them. The indignation aroused among women against the Regulation was intense and widespread. Resolutions of protest poured in upon the Government. Just a fortnight before the election 40D was withdrawn! Remembering Josephine Butler's years of strenuous effort to secure the repeal of the C.D. Acts, we may well give thanks that we now have in our hands a weapon with which we can save ourselves, swiftly and effectively, from the menace of such legislation.

"With regard to the economic position of women, the cry of 'Equal pay for equal work' has become the slogan of industrial and professional workers alike. The salient feature in the strike of the women tram and omnibus conductors for "a man's pay for a man's job" was the whole-hearted sympathy which they received from the sorely inconvenienced public. These are but the most prominent of the outward and visible signs of the change that has come about in the attitude not only of men towards women, but of women towards themselves. The war brought them the opportunity of proving to a world hitherto contemptuous or hostile that they could play their part in ways other than those so long considered 'the dedicated ways of womanhood.'

"The grant of the franchise is the community's recognition of the new order, 'neither masculine rule nor feminine rule, but human rule,' which is to prevail in the new world rising upon the ruins of the old."

Parliamentary Franchise Extended to Women, Feb. 6, 1918.

THE ANNIVERSARY SERVICE OF

### THANKSGIVING & DEDICATION

WILL BE HELD AT ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS (by kind permission of the Vicar).  
On Thursday, February 6th, 1919, at 6.30 p.m.

Preacher: The Right Rev. THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.  
For handbills apply to the Secretary, The League of the Church Militant (formerly the Church League for Women's Suffrage), 6, York Buildings, Adelphi, London, W.C. 2.

FRIDAY,  
JAN. 31,  
1919.

# THE VOTE

ONE  
PENNY  
WEEKLY.

Organ of the Women's Freedom League.

## Women's Freedom League Settlement, 93, Nine Elms-lane, London, S.W. 8.

We have at last found a helper to live at the Settlement and look after the guest children; she begins work next Monday. This does not, however, fill our need of another resident worker or workers to share and eventually take over the duties of the present secretary, and we ask all readers of *THE VOTE* to make inquiries amongst their friends and try to interest any of them who might give it a trial. We are still without our Play Club, Boy Scouts, and Girl Guides for want of organisers, and Nine Elms children badly need something of the kind to fill in the time not spent in school. A nice gift of toys is acknowledged from the Baroness de Pollandt, provisions and garden produce from Mr. and Mrs. P. H. Miller, bazaar goods, sheets, and clothing from Misses E. M. and I. Harvey, boots and shoes from Mrs. Riggall, haberdashery and 3s. from Miss Riggall, clothing from Mrs. Bannister and Miss Daws; Miss Underwood, 2s.; Mrs. Hope, 10s.; Anon., for Zoo trip, 10s.; Mrs. Despard (collected), 13s.; while the £14 which arrived as a New Year's gift from Mrs. Walpole, of Tasmania, gives the Guest House a good send-off for 1919.

## BRANCH NOTES.

### Portsmouth.

There was a good attendance at the Debating Class on January 22. Mrs. Layton opened the discussion with a very interesting and instructive address on "The Use of Serums." Mrs. White presided, and most of those present took part in the discussion. The monthly political meeting will be held on February 5, at 2, Kent-road, at 3.15 p.m., when the Rev. G. W. Thompson will speak on "The Principles of Free Trade." Chair: Mrs. Layton.

### Tufnell Park.

Owing to the indisposition of Mrs. Mustard, Mrs. Ayres Purdie kindly consented to address the meeting which had been arranged to take place on the 25th. Taking for her

subject, "Women and Their Money," the speaker made an earnest appeal to those women who had shares in limited liability companies to feel their responsibility towards those workmen and women who earned their dividends for them, to be present at company meetings and to try to find out if these people were paid proper wages and if they worked under suitable conditions for health. She also illustrated humorously the indolence of mind which causes many women to put themselves blindly into the hands of a lawyer, and to accept their dividends as manna fallen from heaven, without having the slightest idea of whence they are derived. An old lady, having so comported herself for many years, was stirred up by the lecturer to make these inquiries, but returned in tears, the indignant lawyer having told her to *mind her own business!* Also she spoke seriously on the necessity of making a properly witnessed will, and to have an executor appointed, however small the sum might be. After all, no one dies sooner for having made one. The audience were greatly interested by her speech, and a vote of thanks was proposed and carried unanimously.

### Golder's Green.

A meeting was held at 13, Temple Fortune-court on Tuesday, January 21, at 8 p.m. Miss Hodge occupied the chair, and Mrs. How Martyn spoke upon her election experiences, and urged the need for women on local government bodies. The next election for the County Councils would be early in March, and for the Urban District Councils on 31st of that month. The work on these bodies is essentially "woman's work," even on the limited anti-suffragist connotation of the term. An interesting discussion followed, in the course of which Miss Newcomb, hon. secretary, B.D.W.C.U., referred to the great influence that the courage and enterprise of the women parliamentary candidates were exerting in the Dominions Overseas. In New Zealand a Bill was about to be brought in enabling women to sit in the Dominion Parliament. The audience, which was a large one in spite of the inclement weather, showed their keen interest by the questions that so many of them put, and their appreciation by their response to the vote of thanks.

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