

THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.
NON-PARTY.

VOL. XXIX. No. 957.

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ONE PENNY.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1928

OBJECT: To secure for Women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men; to use the powers already obtained to elect women in Parliament, and upon other public bodies, for the purpose of establishing equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes, and to promote the social and industrial well-being of the community.

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XXIV.—OUR WOMEN MAYORS.

MRS. STUART SHAW, MAYOR OF LICHFIELD.

Mrs. Stuart Shaw, who this year so ably fills the office of Mayor of Lichfield, has approached the problems of humanity through an early training in nursing and a later experience in organised charity. Mrs. Shaw does not find it easy to talk of herself or of her work, but the latter, a fine record, speaks for itself. A life of devoted and skilled service for others, in particular the unfortunate, is well crowned by the high honour paid by Lichfield City.

Trained in Edinburgh as a nurse, she quickly became Sister for the Professor of Surgery in that Mecca of medicine. Marriage to a doctor took her out of the professional sphere and she settled in Lichfield, where her husband practised. She soon found opportunity for her trained intelligence, and four years before the war organised a Voluntary Aid Detachment, of which she became Sister Superintendent, only relinquishing the post last August. During and since the war, Mrs. Shaw continuously lectured on Home Nursing and coached the Detachment. During the war she quickly and efficiently organised the Lichfield Voluntary Hospital, of which, when organised, she received the charge.



MRS. STUART SHAW.

It is evident that hospital work, with the care of the sick generally, is what calls out Mrs. Shaw's deepest sympathy. She is a Member of the Executive of the Lichfield Cottage Hospital, and, as a member of the Lichfield Town Council, serves also on the Committee

of the city's Isolation Hospital. She is also a member of the Health Committee, the Johnson Committee, and the Higher Education Committee. Mrs. Shaw was elected to the Town Council eight years ago, the first woman Councillor, and remained an active and keen

member until 1927, when she attained her adopted city's highest civic honour, and now occupies the Mayoral Chair. As Mayor, she is a member of all the Council Committees.

Other public services given by Mrs. Shaw include the Hon. Secretaryship of the Lichfield Charity Organisation, a post entailing much hard work which she has competently filled for a period of nearly twenty years. This has naturally given her considerable insight into the lives of the less fortunate citizens. Lichfield is not too large to retain the personal element in its social work, all its citizens knowing, at least, something of one another. Mrs. Shaw has found that, as Hon. Secretary of the Ladies' Visiting Committee to the Guardians' Institutions, she and the Committee have been able to do a great deal to help young girls who, for one reason or another, may enter the Institutions.

The knowledge that each has of the other's position and circumstances helps greatly in altering and alleviating their difficulties. Her eight years of service on Lichfield City Council have also prepared Mrs. Stuart Shaw for the more technical and official side of Mayoral work.

INTERNATIONAL WORK.

A fine piece of feminism has been achieved by the American National Women's Party. As already reported in THE VOTE of February 3rd, officials of the Party went to Havana to negotiate an Equal Rights treaty at the Pan-American Conference. We are now able to report on their work by quoting newspaper accounts and other comments. Mrs. Houston, Chairman of the Cuban Branch, says that the work being done for Equal Rights by the delegation is likely to result in granting the vote to Cuban women. *The Nation* (New York) says that the resolution of a previous conference patting the ladies on the back was completely forgotten until the resolute battalions of the Woman's Party . . . appeared in Havana . . . they stirred up the Cuban women . . . they had a talk with the President of the Conference . . . if the nations can draw up treaties for eight-hour working days and prohibit certain types of phosphorous matches, equal sex rights too, may be a fit subject for international action. The Club Feminino of Cuba held a meeting in honour of the Party, and passed by acclamation a resolution calling upon the Sixth Pan-American Conference to recommend a treaty to make impossible inequality between men and women in any country of the Americas. Great enthusiasm was aroused at this meeting. On January 28th, Havana celebrated with much ceremonial the anniversary of the birth of her super-patriot Marti. On this occasion 200 Cuban women marched in procession, for the first time in history, to demand suffrage or Equal Rights. They carried many beautiful banners, some with quotations from Marti, as "Women should have the same right to vote as men." "One who demands is worth more than one who begs." Dr. Julio Garcia, head of the Mexican delegation, told the Party "Mexico will do everything possible to secure Equal Rights before the law for the women of America. You may count, not only on our moral, but our active support."

The *Havana Evening Telegram* describes the number of resolutions being passed, and adds, "Officers of the organisations signing resolutions were among those responsible for the meeting held under the joint auspices of the North, South and Central American women in the auditorium of the Reporters' Club in Havana, and were passed unanimously by the enthusiastic audience that packed the auditorium. . . This means that the women have found friends among the delegations of Cuba, Uruguay, Peru, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Chile, Mexico, Salvador, Columbia, Venezuela, Bolivia and Paraguay."

HOW TO ESTABLISH YOUR FUTURE

ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

BY SETTING UP A RETIRING FUND.

Write or Telephone to—

MISS W. MARY NEW,

Women's Section)

SCOTTISH EQUITABLE LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY

13, CORNHILL, E.C.3.

Phones: AVENUE 1672 and 2253.

SPRING SALE.

Our Annual Spring Sale will be held this year, by kind invitation of Dr. Octavia Lewin, at 25, Wimpole Street, W.1., on Friday, March 16th, from 3 to 7.30 p.m. The Sale will be opened at 3 p.m. by Miss Ada Moore, and our President, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, will preside. Many kind friends have already promised to help with the stalls, including Mrs. Brading, Miss Burwood, Miss Charles, Miss Lyndon, Mrs. Lindus, Mrs. Seymour Pritchard, Mrs. Turriff, Miss Trotter, Miss Underwood, and Mrs. Trafford Williams. There will be stalls for Household and Spring Cleaning Goods—Overalls and Aprons—Lingerie—Country Produce—Cakes—Sweets—and Preserves.

A delightful programme of entertainments has been arranged, and every effort is being made by the Fair Committee to make the afternoon a most enjoyable one. Among those who have kindly promised to help with the entertainments are Miss Joan Dunsford, Mrs. Harvey James, Miss Lillian Foulis, and Mrs. Sparrow. Dr. Lewin has promised to give a short lecture, at 6 p.m., and there will be Character Reading and also Psychometry by Mrs. Thomson.

Dainty teas will be served from 3.30 to 6 p.m., tables can be reserved for any number of people; all members and friends are asked to come to tea, and bring their friends with them—the more friends they bring the better pleased we shall be.

The arrangements for tea have been kindly undertaken by Miss Reeves, who will be assisted by Mrs. Fisher, Mrs. Stedman, Mrs. Pierotti, Mrs. Bell, and many other friends, including the staff and members of the Minerva Club. Gifts for all the stalls and the teas will be most welcome. Please remember to send some contribution towards the Sale. Gifts—either in money or in kind—for the stalls should be sent to the Hon. Fair Secretary before March 15th, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.1., and gifts for the teas to Miss Reeves, c/o Dr. Lewin, 25, Wimpole Street, W.1., sent only on the day of the Sale. All communications should be sent to Miss E. Berry, Hon. Fair Secretary, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.1.

SPRING SALE.**DR. OCTAVIA LEWIN**

"AT HOME"

At 25, WIMPOLE STREET, W.1.

FRIDAY, MARCH 16th,

3 to 7.30 p.m.

Opened at 3 p.m. by

MISS ADA MOORE.Chairman: **MRS. PETHICK-LAWRENCE.**

Stalls—Household and Spring Cleaning Goods, Lingerie, Overalls and Aprons, Pottery, Fancy Articles, White Elephants, Beads, Country Produce, Cakes, Sweets, and Preserves.

LECTURE by **DR. LEWIN** at 6 p.m.

Music. Recitations. Character Reading.

Tea 3.30 to 6 p.m.

Special issues of "Our Women Mayors":—XXIII. Mrs. John W. Greene, Mayor of Bury St. Edmunds, January 13th, 1928; XXII. Margaret Beavan, Lord Mayor of Liverpool, November 25th, 1927; XXI. Councillor Miss Hudson, J.P., Mayor of Eastbourne, June 24th, 1927; XX. Councillor Mrs. Coxon, Mayor of King's Lynn, March 26th, 1926; XIX. Mrs. F. J. Simpson, Mayor of Higham Ferrers, Northampton, February 26th, 1926; XVIII. Councillor Miss Lucy Dales, Mayor of Dunstable, January 22nd, 1926; XVII. Councillor Miss Edith Neville, M.B.E., J.P., Mayor of Lincoln, December 11th, 1925; XVI. Alderman Miss Smea, J.P., Mayor of Acton, October 30th, 1925; XV. Dame Catherine Hunt, D.B.E., J.P., Mayor of Colchester, March 6th, 1925; XIV. Miss Margaret Wix, Mayor of St. Albans, February 13th, 1925; XIII. Mrs. Eva Hartree, Mayor of Cambridge, January 30th, 1925; XII. Mrs. Ethel Leach, J.P., Mayor of Great Yarmouth, January 16th, 1925; XI. Mrs. M. A. Mercer, Mayor of Birkenhead, December 19th, 1924; X. Miss C. Maude Eve, Mayor of Stoke Newington, November 28th, 1924; IX. Miss Ethel Mary Colman, Lord Mayor of Norwich, January 11th, 1924; VIII. Dame Janet Stancomb-Willis, D.B.E., Mayor of Ramsgate, January 4th, 1924; VII. Councillor Mrs. Alderton, J.P., Mayor of Colchester, November 9th, 1923; VI. Miss Beatrice Cartwright, J.P., Mayor of Brackley, Northants, December 15th, 1922; V. Mrs. Ada Salter, Mayor of Bermondsey, December 1st, 1922; IV. Councillor Miss Clara Winterbotham, M.B.E., Mayor of Cheltenham, September 15th, 1922; III. Councillor Miss Christina Hartley, Mayor of Southport, Lancs, August 11th, 1922; II. Mrs. J. M. Phillips, Mayor of Honiton, Devon, July 7th, 1922; I. Mrs. Ellen Chapman, Mayor of Worthing, June 2nd, 1922.

IN PARLIAMENT.

Franchise Bill.

MR. NAYLOR (Lab., S.E. Southwark) asked the Prime Minister whether the Government's proposals for amending the law relating to the Parliamentary and Local Government franchise will be confined to the granting of the franchise to women between the ages of 21 and 30 years; and, if not, whether he will arrange that the other proposals shall be incorporated in a separate Bill to enable a clear issue to be decided on the proposals contained in each measure? THE PRIME MINISTER: I must ask the hon. Member to await the introduction of the promised Franchise Bill.

Central Committee of Women's Employment (Grant).

MR. BATEY (Lab., Spennymoor) asked the Minister of Labour whether he is making a grant this next financial year to the Central Committee of Women's Employment, and, if so, the amount of that grant? SIR A. STEEL-MAITLAND: I am glad to say arrangements have been made to give the Central Committee next year a grant of £60,000. MR. T. WILLIAMS (Lab., Don Valley): Can the right hon. Member say how that compares with the grant to the same Committee in 1924? SIR A. STEEL-MAITLAND: No, I cannot say as to 1924. As regards last year, it is an increase of £10,000, this increase being made specially for the purpose of giving additional help in mining areas. MR. BATEY: As £10,000 more has been given on account of the distress in the South Wales area, I would like to ask the Minister whether he is aware of the distress in the North of England, and whether he is proposing to give anything to that area?

VISCOUNTESS ASTOR (U., Sutton, Plymouth). Considering what good this Committee has done, and seeing that it is the only Committee dealing with unemployed women, does not the Minister think that the Government might give an even larger sum, and will he in pressing for the grant remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer that there are going to be a good many women voters in the next Election? SIR A. STEEL-MAITLAND: I will make an inquiry with reference to the statement of the hon. Member for Spennymoor (MR. BATEY), and as to whether it is confined to any particular areas, and, if the hon. Member will put down a question, I will let him know. As regards what has been said by the noble Lady, in the first place this is a most excellent institution, but it is a question of how far money can be spared for many excellent objects which exist. In this, case women, in proportion to the amount of unemployment, and as compared with training institutions, do not get an unfair share, and I am sure the noble Lady would be the last to suggest unworthy motives for increasing the grant. VISCOUNTESS ASTOR: Is it not true that since women had the vote we have had many more—. HON. MEMBERS: Order!

Trade Boards Act.

VISCOUNTESS ASTOR asked the Minister of Labour what standard he adopts for determining the extent and degree of underpayment necessary in any trade to justify the establishment of a Trade Board? SIR A. STEEL-MAITLAND: I do not think it is possible to specify a standard for this purpose. Each case in which evidence of underpayment is advanced is examined upon its merits, and before a decision is reached regard is had to the degree of organisation in the trade, the extent to which the low wages prevail, and the relative level of such wages in respect of those paid in comparable trades, if any. VISCOUNTESS ASTOR: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that certain large-scale employers are in favour of setting up Trade Boards in the catering industry, and does he not know that some of the wages paid are absolutely shocking? SIR A. STEEL-MAITLAND: I can only say, speaking from memory, that when I looked into the case in question I did so in very great detail, and I examined a great number of individual cases in order to try to reach a conclusion. In view of the points I have mentioned, I think that, on the whole,

the conclusion I have drawn is one which was justified. MR. R. MORRISON (Co-op., N. Tottenham): Does the right hon. Gentleman agree that the policy of the Government is not to set up any more Trade Boards, no matter what evidence is brought before him? THE SPEAKER: That question should be asked on another occasion.

Juvenile Offenders and Sexual Offences.

MR. RHYS DAVIES (Lab., Westhoughton) asked the Home Secretary whether it is proposed to introduce a Bill during this Session to embody the recommendations of the Committees on Juvenile Offenders and Sexual Offences Against Young Persons? SIR W. JOYNSON-HICKS: I much regret that owing to the pressure of public business I am not at present able to introduce legislation on this subject. MR. DAVIES: Will the right hon. Gentleman bear in mind that these Committees recommended administrative action, and will he look into that subject to see what ought to be done? SIR W. JOYNSON-HICKS: Certainly.

Home Office Report (Children).

MR. RHYS DAVIES asked the Home Secretary when it is intended to publish the next Report of the Children's Branch of the Home Office; and whether it will cover the whole of the period which has elapsed since the publication of the last Report in 1925? SIR W. JOYNSON-HICKS: It is hoped that a Report of the Children's Branch of the Home Office will be issued this year, which will cover the period since the date of the last Report.

LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER.

The Secretary of the Women's Freedom League has received the following letter in reply to our resolution on Equal Franchise and the King's Speech:—

10, DOWNING STREET,
WHITEHALL.

15th February, 1928.

Dear Madam,

The Prime Minister desires me to refer to the Resolution which you sent to him in your letter of February 8th and to say that he is sorry to see that in it the Women's Freedom League speak of their disappointment at the omission from the King's Speech of any specific reference to the question of equalising the franchise as between men and women. He feels, however, that the League are under a misapprehension, as such an omission affords no grounds for their fears. It is customary for the King's Speech to give only in very broad outline the proposals which His Majesty's Ministers intend to submit to Parliament: only the most important of these measures are mentioned, and it would obviously be impossible for the Speech to contain a complete account of the scope of any individual Bill.

You will recall that definite pledges have been given on several occasions, both by the Prime Minister and by the Home Secretary, that at the next General Election women and men shall vote on the same basis and the Prime Minister would assure the League that the Government have no intention of departing from their undertaking. Indeed, in the debate on the Address the Prime Minister informed the House of Commons that whenever the Franchise Bill (which is one of the most important parts of the Government programme for this Session) is passed, there will, if necessary, be a clause in it to ensure that all who are enfranchised by it shall vote at the next Election. At this stage the Prime Minister regrets that he cannot make any further statement as to the contents of the proposed Bill, but he hopes that what he has said will suffice to allay the fears to which your Resolution has given expression, and that the League will now be able, without disquietude, to await the terms of the Bill.

Yours truly,

(Sgd.) C. P. DUFF.

THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24th, 1928.

Telegrams: "DESPARD, Museum 1429, London."
Telephone: MUSEUM 1429.
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 stamped addressed envelope be enclosed, but the Editor cannot be responsible in case of loss.

WOMEN IN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE.

It is good news that the French Government has decided to allow women to compete in the entrance examinations for the Diplomatic Service on the same terms as men. We are told that the posts open to women are confined, for the present, to the administrative services in France, as French law does not allow women to perform some of the functions which fall to the lot of consuls and other representatives abroad. For example, consuls are often called upon to act as judges, to conduct marriages, and to issue death certificates, and they examine candidates for the French Army or Colonial Forces. None of these duties can be performed by women. Another thing which debar Frenchwomen from occupying diplomatic posts abroad is an inflexible rule that all occupants of such posts must previously have completed their term of military service—a provision which, as women are not liable to military service, automatically rules them out. However, it is more than possible that these existing rules may be altered, and we hope it will not be long before an Act of Parliament will enable Frenchwomen to be appointed to Consulates, Legations and Embassies abroad. Meanwhile, several brilliant Frenchwomen lawyers have entered their names for the next competitive examination, and the successful candidates will be posted to the Foreign Office. Among the countries which have already admitted women into their Diplomatic Services are the United States, Holland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Russia. The Soviet is the only Government which has appointed a woman Ambassador—Madame Kollontai—who was recently transferred from Norway to Mexico. Great Britain excludes women from the Diplomatic Service. Yet women are quite as good, often better, linguists than men, and have undoubted gifts of diplomacy. We have the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919, on the Statute Book, Clause I of which declares "a person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage from the exercise of any public function, or from being appointed to or holding any civil or judicial office or post, or from entering, or assuming, or carrying on any civil profession or vocation," provided that "His Majesty may, by Order in Council, authorise regulations prescribing the mode of admission of women to the Civil Service." That is our difficulty. As is well known, there are no women Members of the Privy Council—and there ought to be! So we have the Civil Service Commissioners (these are three men—a First Commissioner and two Assistant Commissioners) giving notice that, "with the approval of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, they make the following regulations under the Order in Council, of July 22nd, 1920":

- (1) All posts in the Diplomatic Service and the Consular Service are reserved to men.
- (2) All posts in the Government Services of the Colonies and Protectorates are reserved to men.
- (3) All posts in the Civil Services of His Majesty in India are reserved to men.
- (4) All posts in the Commercial Diplomatic Service and the Trade Commissioner Service are reserved to men.

The Women's Freedom League wants to see this Order rescinded, and all these Services open to women on equal terms with men. Our Government has not the excuses that the French Government had—the

above posts are not reserved for men who have served in the Army, and there is no legal bar to women exercising the duties performed by those who hold these posts.

WOMEN L.C.C. CANDIDATES.

The date of the London County Council Election is March 8th. Below we give the names of the women candidates standing for election, the Parties to which they belong, their constituencies, and, so far as we have them, the addresses of their Committee rooms. Those marked * are sitting members. We urge our readers living in these different neighbourhoods to apply to the women candidates' Committee rooms and offer their services in any way that is needed.

Municipal Reform Party.

Lady Amherst of Hackney (South Hackney); Miss Bright-Ashford (East Woolwich); *Miss Thelma Cazalet (East Islington); *Mrs. Elliott (North St. Pancras); *Mrs. Emmet, M.A. (North Hackney); *Lady Trustram Eve (South Kensington); Miss Dowling (Central Southwark); *Mrs. Dunn Gardner, J.P. (Norwood); Miss M. Goff (West Islington); Dr. Sophia Jevons (West Bermondsey); *Dr. Barrie Lambert (Brixton); The Hon. Lady Lawrence (St. George's, Hanover Square); *Dame Beatrice Lyall, J.P. (East Fulham); Miss Macbeth (South Poplar); Mrs. Glenn-McCarthy (Deptford); Mrs. Mudge (Bow and Bromley); *Dr. Adeline Roberts, J.P. (Marylebone); Mrs. Slattery (Limehouse); *Miss Rosamund Smith (North Islington); Miss Sturgess (Whitechapel); The Hon. Lois Sturt (Shoreditch); *Mrs. Worsthorne (North Hammersmith).

Labour Party Candidates.

*Mrs. Ganley (Battersea, North), 214, Battersea Park Road, S.W.11; *Mrs. E. M. Lowe, and *Mrs. A. Salter (Bermondsey, West), 57, Upper Grange Road, S.E.1; Mrs. P. A. Skinner, and Mrs. A. L. Walton (Chelsea); Mrs. A. Anstey (Camberwell, Dulwich); *Miss Agnes Dawson (Camberwell, North), 356, Old Kent Road, S.E.15; *Mrs. H. Dalton (Peckham), 3, Queen's Road, Peckham, S.E.; Mrs. M. Godfrey (East Fulham); Miss A. Sayle (Central Hackney), 217, Queen's Road, E.8; Mrs. B. Drake (North Hammersmith), 257, Uxbridge Road, W.12; Mrs. Howson (Holborn); Mrs. F. Corbett, B.A. (North Islington); Mrs. Adamson (Lambeth, North), 88a, Lambeth Walk, S.E.11; Miss Ishbel MacDonald (South Poplar); 1, Newby Place, Poplar, E.; Miss L. Dawson, J.P. (St. Marylebone); Mrs. Harrison Bell (North St. Pancras), 293, Kentish Town Road, N.W.5; Mrs. M. M. Dollar (S.E. St. Pancras), 65, Chalton Street, N.W.1; Mrs. Harry Day (Central Southwark), 124, Walworth Road, S.E.17; Dr. Stella Churchill (S. E. Southwark), 1a, Browning Street, S.E.17; *Mrs. C. J. Mathew, J.P. (Stepney, Limehouse), 47, Farrance Street, E.C.17; Dr. Esther Rickards, (Mile End), 133, Stepney Green, E.1; Miss M. Carlin (Wandsworth, Balham and Tooting), 126, Upper Tooting Road, S.W.17; Mrs. A. M. V. Holock and Mrs. M. Beavan (Putney).

Liberal Party Candidates.

Mrs. Nathan (Bethnal Green, N.E.), 16, Victoria Park Square; Miss Ida Swinburne (Camberwell, N.W.), 296, Camberwell Road, S.E.5; Miss A. Huntington, J.P. (Chelsea), 514, King's Road, S.W.10; Mrs. M. E. Martin (Fulham, East); Miss H. Adler, J.P. (Central Hackney), 216, Mare Street, Hackney; Mrs. V. Laughton Mathews (South Hackney), 128, Well Street, E.9; Miss I. Homfray (Hampstead), 52, Belsize Park, N.W.3; Miss Morgan Gibbon (South Islington), 21, New Charles Street, E.C.1; Miss Grace Moxham (West Islington), 314, Caledonian Road, N.1.; Miss Ida Samuel (North Lambeth), 59, Kennington Road, S.E.1; Miss C. J. Robinson (East Lewisham), 223, High Street, Lewisham; Miss Annie Hill (Limehouse), 52, Clemence Street, Limehouse; Miss F. L. Josephy, M.A. (Marylebone); Miss Elisabeth Edwardes (St. Pancras, S.E.).

TEA AND POLITICS-UP-TO-DATE.

At the Tea and Politics-up-to-date meeting of the Women's Freedom League, held on Wednesday, February 15th, Miss Underwood presided and began by paying a tribute to the late Lord Oxford as an honoured British statesman. She then told of the position of the Equal Franchise Bill and Mr. Baldwin's answer to Mr. Dalton, which, so far as it went, was satisfactory. She also drew attention to a statement in *The Times* of the 15th to the effect that the introduction of the Bill was being delayed by dissension in the Cabinet on other electoral proposals.

Dr. Knight then explained the provisions of the Edinburgh Corporation Bill, pointing out that it introduced compulsion and detention, to which the Women's Freedom League objected.

The meeting then had the great pleasure of listening to Madame Kraemer Bach, a French lawyer, and editor of *L'information féminine*. Madame Kraemer Bach explained that Frenchwomen have no vote at all, from the Senate down to the Councillors of the smallest village. She instanced a large and very well-thought-of women's college for graduates which was represented by its only voter, its manservant. She told how immediately after the war the Chamber of Deputies voted for equal franchise by 340 to 97, but the Senate would have none of it. She offered two reasons: one, that the Senators know the men voters and how to deal with them, and do not know the women voters and do not wish to be bothered to have to deal with them. The other reason is a fear of clerical influence, particularly from the Radical group, who imagine women would vote for and possibly aid in the returning to power of Clericalism. She declared that the politicians say that women are ignorant, the fact being that politicians are ignorant of women. If women are politically ignorant, it is the fault of the politicians who conduct so much of their business in cabarets, public-houses, etc., with no women present, and hold meetings for men only. In 1925 the Chamber of Deputies passed a Bill giving women the Local Government franchise,

and the Senate again rejected it. Madame Kraemer Bach complained that the Senate was most difficult to fight. The Senators all expressed agreement with the principle of votes for women, but it was never the right moment for its introduction. In 1927, the Chamber of Deputies asked the Senate to discuss the Bill and M. Poincaré promised the support of the Government in the Senate. What remained to be learnt was whether M. Poincaré's promised support would be given with energy or would be a mere request. It was hoped that the Debate would take place during March. M. Labrousse had proposed a measure enfranchising women gradually over a period of ten years and Madame Kraemer Bach amused her audience by supposing first the enfranchisement of war widows, then of widows with fair hair, then of widows with brown eyes, and so on, until all women were included. But, she added, to enfranchise one woman admits the principle, and so would be accepted by Frenchwomen.

Madame Kraemer Bach then spoke of the economic freedom of Frenchwomen and how the professions were open to them, and enumerated several directions in which women were outstandingly successful. She spoke of the attempts earnestly being made to introduce women police, and then announced the opening, this week, of the Diplomatic Service to Frenchwomen. She explained how Municipal Councillors, County Councillors, and Deputies chose delegates, who in turn elect the Senators who remain in office for 9 years. She also told how primary and secondary education is similar in France for boys and girls, except in one particular, when girls are taught sewing, while boys are given civic education.

Miss Reeves moved a vote of thanks to Madame Kraemer Bach and complimented her upon her fluent speech made in a foreign tongue. Madame Kraemer Bach, in reply, said that between women of different nations there might be superficial differences, but that in mind and heart they were the same.

THE STREET OFFENCES COMMITTEE.

The Street Offences Committee again held a public sitting on Friday, February 17th. The first witness was the Rev. Mr. Roberts, Chairman of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, who, after explaining the constitution of his Association, declared that prostitutes, as such, should not be subject to any special regime, that the criminal law should deal only with overt acts. He spoke warmly of the strong sense of injustice common among young girls of this class, possibly due to their being punished, while their partners in guilt, those who buy what they sell, go free. The label of "common prostitute" once given was impossible to get clear of. The Chairman here said that the prostitute labels herself, and asked why the woman should go unpunished because it was difficult to punish the man. Mr. Roberts expressed the opinion that the police should only interfere in cases of gross behaviour, when people are more likely to complain. Asked whether he was in favour of solicitation, whether by men or by women, being made an offence, he said it was impossible to prove solicitation was for immoral purpose, it could only be deduced and therefore should not be an offence. The person annoyed should be required to attend the court. Public opinion was solid against inferential evidence. He held the view that the law should not deal with the purpose of solicitation, as proof of purpose could only be inferred. He said there was a widespread belief among girls that it was useless for them to complain of a man having spoken to them as he would report that they had first spoken to him, and he would be believed and they classed as prostitutes. Mr. Roberts said that much of the law dealing with these offences dated from the days when no decent woman went into the streets after

dark, and now that all sorts of women go into the streets at any hour the law was out of date and harmful. The assumption was that a woman soliciting was of an outcast class, whereas they are not specially abandoned, being very much like anyone else. The present student or young woman in business is quite able to look after herself and does not ask for protection. If the molestation is very gross she will appeal to a policeman. He wanted other than police evidence, because public opinion is suspicious of it as part of the legal machinery. In his opinion, it is the business of the person annoyed to come to court to prove his or her case. He urged the employment of women police to deal with women of the prostitute class, as men police have the same weaknesses as other men and the work subjected them to many temptations. He alluded to former evidence which had seemed to suggest that only prostitutes attempted to bribe the police, which was by no means true; the line between a bribe and a tip was a very thin line. He held that the more the police are withdrawn from interference with people's morals, the better; and expressed the view that the noted improvement in this respect in our streets was due to the improvement in the position of women. All through his evidence Mr. Roberts was subjected to very severe cross-examination, Sir Chartres Biron being especially noticeable with his raised voice and accusatory finger as if instead of a voluntary witness he had a miserable offender before him. One is struck by the touchiness of the magistrates on the Committee at any suggestion that the law, or those employed by it, can in any way err. Excuse so easily becomes accuse.

The next witness was, at last, a woman, the first to be

heard in public by this Committee, which, in the words of its Chairman, has as its special province the prostitute. Miss Alison Neilans is the Secretary of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, and represented the views, as well as of her own Association, of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, the Women's Freedom League, and St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance. The Chairman asked Miss Neilans if she could define a "common prostitute," and she replied that she would not attempt to do so. He then suggested "a woman who habitually and persistently offers her person to any member of the public who will buy," but Miss Neilans asked what of the woman who so acts intermittently or the woman who is not paid. The classification of "common prostitute" gives the trade a legal sanction as well as being so difficult to define. At present the effect is outlawry. She said her Association was anxious to keep the streets "clean and decent" in this respect, but did not believe that legislation could achieve that end. The Chairman agreed that there were obvious imperfections in the existing code, but at the same time conditions in the streets had greatly improved. He asked Miss Neilans whether she thought any actual injustice was done to women under present laws and she warmly replied yes—very severe injustice to prostitutes ever since 1824. Asked to instance injustice she added that to be charged and convicted under a form of words not proved was an injustice. The Chairman suggested this was rather a logical than an actual injustice, but Miss Neilans replied that a logical injustice remained an injustice. She did not believe that present improved conditions were due to legislation, but to more intangible causes. The parallel decrease in drunkenness was not due to legislation. She suggested a higher standard of public decorum, better street lighting, the fact that respectable men and women are in the streets at all hours, etc., etc., as all operating towards the marked improvement, although she maintained that none of the societies which she represented was content with present conditions. She suggested that the police could more effectively use their powers to move persons on, especially if in uniform, and so clear the streets of this particular nuisance. To legislate for a small and undefined class does not touch the real evil. "Common prostitutes" were outnumbered by other solicitors and proof of prostitution was difficult. She would certainly not guarantee to know at sight whether a woman was a "common prostitute." Miss Neilans said that it was irrational to make soliciting to an act an offence when the act itself was not an offence; also that the element of annoyance should be retained and the person annoyed should attend the court. Questioned on Clause 2 of her Association's proposed Bill to make all causes of annoyance equal under the law, she said that men and women would be much readier to come forward to give evidence if immoral purpose and prostitution were less stressed. She declared that "common prostitutes" are, at present, convicted of offences which in other people are not offences; that the actual quality of the act should not depend upon the character of the doer; that the court should not have presumption that a person before them is immoral; that, in law, the question whether the person is a "common prostitute" is irrelevant. Mr. Jowitt pleaded justification for sending such women to prison and for retaining the section of the law permitting it, but Miss Neilans replied that the present laws have existed for nearly 100 years, that as many as 12,000 women had been arrested in England and Wales in one year, that, if anything, the law had increased prostitution by stamping the women with an indelible stamp of which they can never rid themselves. She said that the problem was changing, and although the number of cases was less, the injustice to individuals was no less; it was not right to continue an injustice, no sound morality could be built upon injustice. She claimed that prostitutes were partners in an act and were a no greater moral danger than many others. Solicitation by men was just as unpleasant for the solicited and the law did not cover it. Classification of women as "common prostitutes" educated the public to a double moral standard, having the effect of making

that a crime in women which was not a crime in men.

The Chairman here suggested that while the ethical responsibility was the same, had one not to recognise that the conduct of the woman was different from that of the man? But Miss Neilans said the difference was in the woman's mode of life, that in the physical act the conduct was similar. The Chairman again said that with men the thing was episodic, with women it was a trade, and Miss Neilans said that public opinion demanded chastity in women, and this and the episodic acts of men made the "common" or habitual prostitute. Miss Fry here asked the Chairman if it was not the case that his personal feelings were more outraged by annoyance by a prostitute than by annoyance by a seller of flowers, and he assented. It was shown that solicitation became an offence only when unsuccessful. Pressed rather heatedly by Sir Leonard Dunning as to whether she did not think the classification of "common prostitute" was a protection for the innocent woman, Miss Neilans agreed that it certainly protected her from suffering the same injustice as is meted to the prostitute, but not in any other way. Sir Chartres Biron here declared that a prostitute was not introduced to the court as a prostitute; and when Miss Fry pointed out that she could not be charged with soliciting unless she was first described and labelled as a "common prostitute," Sir Chartres brushed this aside as "only a phrase" to which no attention was paid. He utterly denied that any woman was convicted under a form of words which were not proved, but Miss Neilans quietly persisted.

A strong defence of the existing law and its administration was put up at this point by Sir Chartres Biron and Mr. Wilberforce. Mr. Gillie questioned Miss Neilans on bribery of police, and Miss Neilans said that between bribery and the giving of presents was a very thin line. She agreed with Sir Henry Fairfax-Lacy that sympathetic moving on by uniformed police, and preferably women, and the insistence of the appearance in court of the person aggrieved, was a more hopeful line of improvement. In answer to Lady Joynson-Hicks, Miss Neilans said that the danger was not that the police were inimical to the prostitutes, but rather were too friendly; the police were subject to temptation and looseness as are other men, and the work of dealing with prostitutes was unfair to them. They should be dealt with by fully attested and uniformed women. She mentioned the seeming gust of fury described by prostitutes when touched by male police, a violent passion not aroused when touched by another woman.

This sitting of the Street Offences Committee has been the first in which the public has shown sufficient interest to fill the room. Many were standing, some unable to get in at all. As the Chairman said, during Miss Neilans' evidence, "Now we are getting at the heart of the matter," and it is to be hoped that many competent women will be asked to give their views on this problem which so vitally affects their sex, and in which women are at the same time offender and victim.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH SCHOOL, PECKHAM ROAD.

Sunday, 7 p.m.

MR. DIMSDALE STOCKER:

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WHERE TO GO.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Wednesday, February 29th, at 4 p.m.

Tea and Politics-up-to-date. Minerva Club, Brunswick Square.

Thursday, March 1st, at 7.30 p.m.

Equal Political Rights Campaign. Open-air Meeting at Highbury Corner, arranged by the Women's Freedom League. Chair: Mrs. Flowers.

Friday, March 16th, at 3 p.m.

Spring Sale at 25, Wimpole Street (by kind permission of Dr. Octavia Lewin).

Saturday, March 17th, at 10 a.m.

National Executive Committee Meeting.

Monday, March 19th, at 2.30 p.m.

Conference on Election of Women to Parliament Policy, at Caxton Hall. Tickets: 1/- each.

Saturday, April 28th at 10 a.m.

Twenty-first Annual Conference at Caxton Hall, Westminster.

PROVINCES.

Friday, February 24th.

Ashford. Branch Meeting. Nurse Scott on "Home Nursing."

Wednesday, February 29th, at 3.30 p.m.

Bexhill. Whist Drive at the Albany H. tel.

Monday, March 5th, at 3 p.m.

Bexhill. Members' Meeting at Albany Hotel.

Friday, March 9th, at 4 p.m.

Nwbury. Chief Inspector Champneys, of the Women's Auxiliary Service, at the Maggie Restaurant.

Saturday, March 10th, at 3 p.m.

Portsmouth. Tea and Politics-up-to-date, 2, Kent Road. Speaker: Mrs. Brading.

Friday, March 30th.

Ashford. Branch Meeting. Dr. Littledale on "Local Birds."

SCOTLAND.

Monday, February 27th, at 7.45 p.m.

Glasgow. Public Meeting at the McLellan Galleries. Speakers: Miss Isabel Hamilton, L.L.A., F.E.I.S., Mrs. Houston, O.B.E., J.P., Mrs. Russell, Miss Cunningham, M.A., Miss Knox, and Mrs. Scott, and other Education Authority Candidates. Chair: Bailie Mrs. Bell.

Thursday, March 15th, at 7.30 p.m.

Glasgow. Business Meeting and Social, "Cadora." Miss Eunice Murray will preside.

Friday, March 2nd, at 8 p.m.

Edinburgh. Public Protest Meeting, Usher Hall. Edinburgh Corporation Bill Protest Committee. Chair: Lord Balfour of Burleigh. Speakers: Lady As'or, M.P., Mrs. Bramwell Booth, Councillor Dorothy Jewson, Dr. E. Graham Little.

Friday, March 9th, at 8 p.m.

Edinburgh. Branch Meeting at Heriot Hill House, Canonmills.

WALES.

Thursday, March 22nd, 3.30—6.30 p.m.

Montgomery Boroughs. "At Home." Church House, Newtown. Josephine Butler Centenary. Speakers: Miss Alison Neilans, Clement Davies, Esq., K.C., and others. Chair: Miss Alix Clark. Music, tea and coffee. Silver collection.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Saturday, February 25th, at 3 p.m.

Speech Club, Minerva Club, Brunswick Square. Modern Woman Series, No. 4: "Woman as Hospital Almoner," by Miss Kathleen Budgen, of Westminster Ophthalmic Hospital.

Sunday, February 26th, at 3.30 p.m.

The Guildhouse, Eccleston Square. Some Achievements of Modern Times." Sir John Russell, D.Sc., F.R.S., on "Some Achievements in Agriculture."

Tuesday, February 28th, at 3 p.m.

Meeting on "Maternal Mortality," at the Central Hall, Westminster.

Tuesday, February 28th, at 5 p.m.

Six Point Group, 92, Victoria Street. Meeting on "Equal Occupational Rights and the Modern Girl." Miss Edith Bessley on "Women in Advertising." Chair: Mrs. Hoster.

Wednesday, February 29th, at 3 p.m.

East Surrey Divisional Labour Party. Women's Meeting at The Pendicle, Limpsfield, on "Votes for Women at 21." Speaker: Miss Marian Reeves.

March 7th to 10th.

Annual Council Meeting in King George's Hall, of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.

Thursday, March 8th, at 8 p.m.

National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship. Meeting in Queen's Hall.

BRANCH NOTES.

HAMPSTEAD.

A most enjoyable evening was spent by the Members and friends of the Hampstead Branch on Thursday, February 16th, when Councillor Mrs. Irene Fisher gave the Annual Social Gathering of the Branch at her house, 49, Haverstock Hill, N.W.3. In spite of the bad weather there was a large number present.

Mrs. Fisher presided, and Mr. Samuel James (Barrister-at-Law) gave a most interesting account of the Cecil Lodging Houses for

Women, clearly proving how great the need is for houses of this kind to accommodate the poorer class of women. Mr. James appealed for left-off clothes, boots, etc., for the inmates of the houses.

Miss D. C. Biggs, of the Westminster Housing Association, spoke ably on Local Housing Associations and their relation to Municipal Housing Schemes. She gave many interesting details of the work done by the Westminster Housing Association.

Miss Ida Homfray, Candidate for the L.C.C. Election, was enthusiastically received, she was strongly of the opinion that money should not be spared on either Housing or Education; it was cheaper in the long run that money should be spent in both these directions. Several of those present offered to help Miss Homfray in her election campaign.

A delightful programme of music was arranged by Mrs. Fisher, including songs and recitations by Mrs. McCabe, Miss Davis and Mrs. Fisher. A cordial vote of thanks to the speakers, hostess and entertainers was proposed by Dr. Knight and seconded by Mrs. Stedman. (Hon. Sec.) MISS E. BERRY, 16, Denning Road, N.W.3.

ASHFORD.

On Jan. 6th, a good gathering of members attended a lecture given by L. Toke, Esq., M.A., on "The Monks' Work in Kent." Mr. Toke was most interesting and informative in his description of what we owe to these old monks.

(1.) The original Canterbury Cathedral was built by St. Augustine and 40 monks. (2.) St. Benedict, the son of a Roman nobleman was the first monk to come to Kent, and together with other monks they built Priors and Monasteries. These establishments were the seats of learning and industry. (3.) The monks were the first workers in stained glass, and evidence of this and their carving is still to be seen.

A very interesting point to Ashford people was the name of the Ashford Vicarage. Mr. Toke pointed out its name, "The College," was originally given by the monks at the time of their occupation. (Hon. Sec.) MRS. PALMER.

EDINBURGH.

Members and friends of the W.F.L. spent a very enjoyable evening last Wednesday at Heriot Hill House, by the kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. McLeod Easson. Some business was discussed, undoubtedly the most important and most gratifying part of which was the offer of a room in Heriot Hill House for future Branch Meetings, so generously made by Mrs. Easson, and gratefully accepted by the members.

Mrs. Linton proposed a vote of thanks to the host and hostess for all they were doing, and would do, to help the Women's Freedom League locally, after which there was whist, prizes kindly bought by Miss Jessie Brown being awarded. This was followed by a substantial tea and an equally substantial collection (for which many thanks!). Then Mrs. Easson put on the gramophone, that those who wished might dance country dances. Reluctantly, a little before 11 p.m., the members left, that they might not miss the last train or bus.

The next event will be a Branch Meeting at the same address, on Friday, March 9th, at 8 p.m., when resolutions for the Annual Conference will be discussed and other business transacted. We hope that on this occasion there will be as good an attendance as there was last Wednesday. Organiser: LILIAN LENTON.

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Speakers:

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Sir OLIVER LODGE, Kt., F.R.S., D.Sc., LL.D.

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FELLOWSHIP SERVICES.—Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W.1. Sunday, February 26th, 1928. 3.30. Music. Lecture. Sir John Russell, D.Sc., F.R.S. 6.30. Mrs. Campbell Gordon.

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