

Men's League for Women's Suffrage.

MONTHLY PAPER.

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THE SITUATION.

It has been a very momentous month in the history of our cause—perhaps the most momentous of any yet. June opened with a feeling of hopefulness. Many believed that victory was near: many more thought there was at least a chance of victory, and a certainty of a great advance. The hope was founded on the reception given to the Conciliation Bill, originated and organized by Mr. Brailsford, a member of our Executive, and taken in charge by Lord Lytton, supported by a large and strong committee, representing all parties in the House of Commons. This Bill for admitting women to the Parliamentary Franchise on the same basis as the Municipal Franchise, which they now enjoy, was adopted by every women's franchise society of any importance in the kingdom. Constitutionalist and Militant agreed in giving it their heartiest support. Advocates of former limited Bills and advocates of Adult Suffrage were united in urging this measure of compromise and conciliation upon the Government.

Owing to the blind hostility with which the present Prime Minister invariably approaches this subject, the hope of complete and immediate victory has been destroyed. Every possible form of courteous and peaceful persuasion and representation was brought to bear upon Mr. Asquith. Memorials and petitions, urging him to grant facilities for the Bill were addressed to him by the leading representatives of the learned, scientific, and artistic professions. Our League took an especial share in organizing the memorial from scholars and divines. Two members of our Executive, acting with a distinguished worker in the Women's Social and Political Union, obtained forty-five signatures to another memorial from the very best-known and finest writers and dramatists of the day. Medicine, the law, the stage, and other professions called upon the Prime Minister to exercise his power on the side of justice, now that so excellent an opportunity had arisen. But they called in vain.

We refer at greater length in another column to the grand Procession of Saturday, June 18th. We believe there has never been a demonstration for political rights to compare to it in the history of the world. The numbers actually taking part in it are roughly estimated at 10,000, but, large as the numbers were, they do not represent its full significance. Organized by the Women's Social and Political Union with their accustomed skill and regularity, it was supported by nearly all the Suffrage Societies of any importance in the country. The Freedom League was magnificently represented; so was the Church League, to say nothing of all the many societies formed of doctors, nurses, actresses, writers, and every grade of political opinion from Constitutionalist to Fabians and Tax-resisters. Our own League sent a very strong contingent, and the Men's Political Union also came with its banner. But remarkable as the procession was for numbers and unity of purpose, combining Suffragists of every shade of opinion and policy, it was, perhaps,

even more remarkable for the respect and enthusiasm with which it was received by the innumerable crowds of spectators along the route, all the way from the Embankment to the Albert Hall. The day of insolence and mockery is past. Women Suffragists have won the serious attention and respect, if not the sympathy, of almost the whole populace. But on Mr. Asquith neither numbers, nor unity, nor popular opinion have any effect.

Equally vain was the great deputation of Suffragists that waited on him on Tuesday, June 21st. Mrs. Fawcett spoke, representing the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. She said, "If you cannot hold out any hope of anything being done for this great principle, I am afraid there will be a very undesirable outburst of feeling and indignation. None of us think that a mere barren second reading will give us what we want. We have had Bills read a second time ever since 1870. I feel that the end of this controversy is certain. You have it in your power to make these preliminary stages peaceful and evolutionary. I beg you to avail yourself of this opportunity." Lady M'Laren, representing the Women's Liberal Federation, also spoke. She said: "If you refuse our request, we shall have to go to the country and say you, who are against the veto of the House of Lords are placing a veto on the House of Commons by refusing to allow a second reading to this Bill." By a second reading she obviously meant "facilities." But Mr. Asquith has refused the opportunity. He has paid no attention either to the National Union or the Women Liberals. He has laid a veto on the House of Commons.

Immediately after the Suffragist deputation, he received an Anti-Suffragist deputation, and to them he revealed his true mind. They were preaching, he said, to the converted, and his own opposition to admitting women to citizenship only grew stronger with time. That was the basis of his ultimate decision. On Thursday, June 23rd, in answer to Mr. Shackleton, the Labour Leader, who has the Bill in charge and had introduced it at the first reading, the Prime Minister said that the Government refused any further facilities beyond a second reading. And even for the second reading he refused an early date.

No answer could have been more disastrous for the Bill and the cause. A second reading without further facilities is a mockery. It must degenerate into a mere academic debate, signifying nothing. It is an insult to the women in this movement, and to the large and devoted body of Members of Parliament who have laboured for the Bill. We cannot at present say what the action of these members may be, or what means may next be tried to reveal to Mr. Asquith and his Cabinet the extreme seriousness of the situation. But the matter will not rest as it stands. Mr. Asquith will not be allowed to have it all his own way. The pretence that a second reading is a generous concession has already been exposed. In fact, to do them credit, very few Liberal papers have even alleged that any concession was made. Whatever be the result, or whatever line the advocates of the cause in the Commons may decide to take, one

thing is quite certain: by his action the Prime Minister has seriously weakened the loyalty of most of those Suffragists in the kingdom who would otherwise be counted among his staunchest supporters. The whole of the Government is involved in his discredit. He admits that he is in a small minority in his Cabinet, yet the majority have allowed themselves to be overridden, and not one had the courage even to threaten resignation. This is not popular government—it is arbitrary, personal rule. All who value our constitution will raise their protest against it.

In view of the situation it is of the utmost importance that all members of the League should at once write to their Parliamentary representatives, urging upon them to demand an early date for the second reading of the Conciliation Bill, and to press Mr. Asquith to reconsider his decision and grant full facilities.

Writing at the last moment on going to press, we hear that Mr. Asquith has so far yielded to pressure inside and outside the House as to fix a comparatively early date (July 11th and 12th) for the second reading. All now depends upon the success of the debate and division, and it is of the greater importance to bring every possible influence to bear upon Ministers and Members of Parliament.

TO SUPPORT THE BILL.

On June 7th the Executive Committee of the Men's League passed the following resolution:—

"That the Executive of the Men's League expresses its cordial appreciation of the efforts of the Conciliation Committee to provide a solution to the present deadlock by its Representation of the People Bill (1910), and strongly urges the Government to provide facilities for its passage through Parliament this session."

When Mr. Asquith announced that the Government refused further facilities beyond the second reading, the Executive Committee, assembled on June 27th, agreed to send him a letter in the name of the League, protesting against his refusal, and requesting him to receive a deputation to urge on him the advisability of reconsidering his decision.

At the same meeting it was agreed to write to Mr. Balfour asking him, as Leader of the Opposition, to receive a deputation urging him to press for an early date for the second reading.

It was also resolved to write to Mr. Barnes, as Leader of the Labour Party, to the same effect.

It was further agreed to send a letter to Mr. McKenna, who was taking the chair at a meeting of the Eighty Club on the same evening, when the whole question of the franchise was to be debated, and to represent to him the seriousness of the present crisis.

At the same time it was agreed that the Men's League should take part in a Hyde Park demonstration if such were organized by the other Suffragist Societies, and that, if possible, a special meeting should be held within the next few days at the Caxton Hall, at which members of Parliament belonging to the Conciliation Committee should be invited to speak.

The following writers and dramatists have given their names to a letter inviting Mr. Asquith to receive a deputation to urge upon him the necessity of giving full facilities for the Conciliation Bill. Messrs. Granville Barker, Pett Ridge, Hall Caine, Joseph Conrad, J. B. Bury (Regius Professor of Modern History, Cambridge), Arthur Pinero, T. F. Tout (Professor of Mediæval and Modern History, Manchester), and Israel Zangwill. Further names are being added every hour. The latest include the Archdeacon of Coventry, Dr. F. A. Bather, F.R.S., J. Forbes-Robertson, Dr. Mansell Moullin, F.R.C.S.

BRINGING PRESSURE TO BEAR.

The following letter was dispatched on June 28th to all the Liberal members of Parliament, in view of the question to be asked by Mr. Ellis in the House on June 29th:—

DEAR SIR,—The announcement of the Prime Minister that a second reading of the Women's Suffrage Bill will be permitted in the House of Commons this session, but that no further facilities will be afforded for carrying the Bill into law, calls for immediate action by the supporters of Women's Suffrage. To delay the second reading to the end of the session will prevent the House from proceeding with the Bill.

The male electors of this country have sent to the House of Commons on the last two general elections a considerable majority of members who have declared themselves in favour of Women's Enfranchisement. The present Conciliation Bill, now before the House, has the support of men of all parties—what reason can be alleged for refusing facilities? That there is ample time for carrying the bill cannot be denied in the face of the fact that complaints have been made in the House of Commons of the want of work, and protests uttered against the early rising of the House. A few days—at the utmost a week of Parliamentary time—are necessary for this Bill to pass through all its stages. The objection to the Bill as controversial cannot be maintained, for a distinctly controversial Bill is promised to amend the royal declaration.

We cannot believe that the will of the large majority in the House of Commons in favour of Women's Suffrage and the will of the male electors in the country who returned that majority is to be held of no account because the Prime Minister, who admits that he is in a minority, has a personal objection to removing the sex disability in politics.

To grant a second reading to the Bill and then to refuse to allow the Bill to pass into law is to treat the matter with a contempt which will be heavily resented, not by women only, but by men of all political opinions.

We therefore appeal to you as a supporter of a government which has declared its anxiety that the Will of the People shall prevail to insist that the Women's Enfranchisement Bill shall be passed by the House of Commons this session.

Yours faithfully,

HERBERT JACOBS, *Chairman.*
J. MALCOLM MITCHELL, *Hon. Sec.*

Strongly worded letters were also addressed to Mr. Balfour and Mr. Barnes urging them to use their influence to prevent the Prime Minister from making a mockery of the Second Reading Debate by deferring it till too late in the Session.

THE MEN AT THE GREAT PROCESSION.

THE Men's League really came out strong at the Procession on June 18th. It is true we were but a few hundreds in that famous march of the Ten Thousand—a sober, grey-coated, and somewhat grey-haired company, in the middle of the army of triumphant women. Our full strength could not be noted, for some of us were with the Church League, and some with the Men's Political Union, and many were toiling manfully with banners. (Both the Church League and the Men's Political Union have sprung from the parent stock of the Men's League.)

It is true the newspapers paid little heed to our presence. But then the press all along has not understood that men—in ever-increasing numbers—have been supporting the claim of women for enfranchisement. And, let it be admitted, our support hitherto has been neither heroic nor picturesque. How could it be, when to show courage in politics means, for the male, to be snuffed out, and to have imagination is to be, at once, suspect? The crowds that lined the roads looked at us with friendly curiosity. Dull heavy men stared at us from West End club windows with cold fish-like eyes. An Archbishop from the lofty summit of the Athenæum surveyed us without enthusiasm. Only from the cheerful balcony of the Lyceum Club, from the

nurses at St. George's, from the soldiers' wives at Knightsbridge Barracks, and from Suffrage Women on omnibuses and by the wayside, was our marching hailed with cheers. On the other hand, nobody bade us go home to our golf clubs, or assured us that man's place was in the office or bar parlour. And we were stout-hearted enough to enjoy our part in the play without demanding recognition. It was enough that the Men's League was marching, advancing on, "taking up the task eternal and the burden and the lesson." If we were not altogether the poet's "swift and majestic men," at least we belonged to "the great companions," and were marching on the open road with "the greatest women" of our time.

What if our Chairman, as he strode out in front of the banner, holding fast to its guiding rope, was unapplauded? His fame at the chess board is assured. What if our Secretary, and Laurence Housman—artist, playwright, and poet—who bore the banner with the strange device, passed unheeded? What if the multitude recked nothing that in our ranks were such men as Mr. A. J. Webbe, captain of Oxford and Middlesex in many a brave fight on the cricket field; Mr. Cecil Chapman, just and tender on the bench to the poor and them that have no helper; Mr. Ernest Bell and Dr. Baillie-Weaver, life-long champions of the whole animal creation; Captain Carpenter, R.N., whose D.S.O. is but a fleeting honour compared with his devoted service to the forward movement of the race? What was it to the thronged streets that an old artilleryman, Captain Gonne, was striding resolutely with his banner? Or that the M.P. for Haggerston, Henry George Chancellor, our Treasurer, was in the ranks? Or that the marching song, played by the countless bands, was the work of Reginald Pott?

It is enough that these and many another man who has won distinction in letters and politics, in sport, and in war, in social service and disinterested effort, with a still larger number of young men who on the very threshold of life are entering with high courage, took part in the Great Procession on June 18th, and so did honour to themselves.

J. C.

THE EIGHTY CLUB AND WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE.

It is unfortunate that the Prime Minister was not present at the Women's Suffrage Debate on June 27th held in the Whitehall Rooms of the Hotel Metropole. Mr. McKenna and Sir Charles Dilke, the announced chairman and Suffrage protagonist respectively, were not present, but there was an audience of about 150 who listened in all seriousness to a protracted discussion. Mr. Hamar Greenwood took the chair, and Dr. Heber Hart opened against the Suffrage. A polished and fluent speech in his well-known forensic manner entirely failed to move the audience, which grew evidently more and more uncomfortable till it found relief in undisguised hilarity at casuistical arguments which would have sounded prehistoric to an eighteenth-century Tory.

To attempt any résumé of arguments which derived their force solely from their graceful expression and their length would be an injustice to the speaker. He sought to alarm his Liberal hearers by describing the Conciliation Bill as giving "Votes to Ladies," and a few sentences later bewailed the fact that it must lead to adult suffrage. He denied all the principles under which modern government is carried on, and was profoundly shocked at the prospect of the British Empire crumbling under the baneful influence of enfranchised woman. He denied that the vote had any effect upon the economic status of labour—without, however, adducing arguments.

In the absence of Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Herbert Jacobs (very appropriately, as those who are not only Suffragists but also experts in banking law will recognize) undertook the not very difficult task of refuting Dr. Hart. The audience much appreciated his subtle shafts of ridicule, and must have been reminded of a gorgeous Spanish galleon riddled by a swift Elizabethan captain.

Only one member, Mr. Newbolt, supported Dr. Hart. He said that in his constituency (he was rejected by the aristocratic

electors of Chertsey by 4,613 votes) people did not want Women's Suffrage, and added that women formed a lower stratum of society.

Subsequently, as one speaker said, Dr. Hart played St. Sebastian to some dozen Suffrage speakers, including Mr. Crawshaw Williams, M.P., Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., the Chairman, and Mr. J. Malcolm Mitchell. Five or six other members of the Men's League were present, including Messrs. Cholmeley, Baker, and Overy.

As we said, we wish the Premier had been there. Not ten per cent of the audience agreed with Dr. Hart.

NEW SECRETARY APPOINTED.

THE Committee has much pleasure in announcing that Mr. John Manson, whose services to the cause are well known, has been appointed organizing secretary to the League. He will enter upon his office on July 4th, at 40, Museum Street, W.C. Mr. J. Malcolm Mitchell has kindly consented to continue his services as hon. secretary.

OUR LEAGUE'S NEW PAMPHLET.

WE have great pleasure in drawing attention to the 'Open Letter to the Prime Minister,' now published by the League at 1d. a copy, or 10d. a dozen, or 7s. a hundred. The letter was drawn up in answer to a request from Mr. Asquith, when he refused to receive a deputation from our members, but suggested we should send him a summary of the facts upon which we rely in maintaining that the time is now ripe for the admission of women to the franchise. We can only wish the Prime Minister had studied our reply with more advantage to himself.

The letter is signed by our Chairman, Mr. Jacobs, the Hon. Treasurers, Mr. Goldfinch Bate, and Mr. Chancellor, M.P., and our Hon. Secretary, Mr. Mitchell. They have drawn up a most valuable document, tracing in clear and definite lines the history of the movement, the growth of the societies for this object, and the results of the attempts to bring the question before Parliament with a view to securing for women the legal status of citizenship.

ALTERATION OF RULE.

SUBSCRIPTION FOR THE PAPER.

IN accordance with the resolution passed at the annual general meeting, Rule 3 will now read:—

"Any man may join the League upon duly filling in a form of membership, and upon payment of an annual subscription of not less than one shilling, subject to the right of the Committee to refuse to accept or renew membership. An additional subscription of 1s. 6d. or more per annum shall entitle a member to receive the official organ of the League."

OPEN-AIR WORK.

OUR meetings have gone on regularly in Hyde Park, although lack of speakers still prevents us from extending our operations to other parks: we hope to do so shortly. The Sub-Committee has under consideration the date of our next Trafalgar Square meeting, which we hope we will be able to arrange before the second reading debate of the Conciliation Bill. Fuller details will be made known as soon as possible.

We would again appeal earnestly for speakers. After the procession last week, when all London was roused, it is the duty of every member to help to keep the flame alive, and nothing is more unsettling to the convinced scoffer than to hear *men* speaking upon the question.

June 5.—John Manson, J. Kennedy, Dr. Drysdale, and others.

June 12.—Th. Gugenheim, J. Manson, E. Duval.

June 19.—Th. Gugenheim, J. M. Mitchell, John Manson.

June 26.—Th. Gugenheim, J. Manson, Laurence Housman.

TH. G.

BRANCH NEWS.

WEST OF SCOTLAND LEAGUE, GLASGOW.

At a meeting of the Executive of the above League, held on June 13th, the following resolution was passed and forwarded to the members of the Cabinet, and our local Members:—

"The West of Scotland Men's League for Women's Suffrage begs to express its cordial approval of the Representation of the People Bill, 1910, and hopes the Government will grant facilities for its immediate insertion on the Statute Book.

"At the same time it desires to put on record its conviction that no settlement of the question of Women's Suffrage can be adequate which does not give to women the Parliamentary Franchise on the same terms as it is or may be given to men."

MANCHESTER.

THE Manchester Branch of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage, held a meeting in the Portland Café, on Wednesday the 15th. Resolutions were passed unanimously in favour of the proposed Conciliation Suffrage Bill. On the motion of Mr. Humphreys, seconded by Mr. Hugh V. Herford, it was resolved to ask the Prime Minister to grant the necessary facilities to the Bill, and thus make possible the passage of the measure as a step in the direction of a long-delayed and much-needed reform. The Committee discussed the situation at considerable length, and the general feeling was that the new Bill presented to Mr. Asquith and the Government the most favourable opportunity possibly to be hoped for of conceding in a small measure the demands of the Suffragists reformers, and of putting an end to a situation which was fast becoming impossible, and an inactivity or antagonism towards the Women's Suffrage agitation which was becoming quite intolerable and a fruitful cause of difficulty and trouble to the Government and the Liberal Party generally. On the motion of Mr. Uttley, seconded by Mr. Sam Brooks, the meeting further resolved to ask the Manchester Executive of the Liberal, Conservative, and Labour parties of Manchester to pass resolutions in support of the Bill, and to urge their Members of Parliament to be in their place to vote for it.

It was also decided to hold a few open-air meetings during the summer season, and it was arranged to hold the first one in Heaton Park on June 11th or June 18th. It was decided to ask the various Women's Societies to provide a speaker or two for these meetings in addition to our own men speakers.

S. BROOKS.

5, Hill Street, Radcliffe, near Manchester.

BOURNEMOUTH.

WE have been holding open-air meetings on Wednesday evenings for several weeks. The first one was disturbed by an ardent party politician, but the others have been very successful. They are organized by Mr. Patrick, a very energetic member, helped by several others. One was undertaken by the W.S.P.U. supporters, at which a local young lady, Miss Pridden, delighted her audience by her charming manner and eloquent speech.

Our President was the only one of our members able to take part in the Procession on the 18th. He carried one of our banners and wore his academic robes. Our large banner, presented to us by the local branch of the N.U.W.S.S. took the place of honour by leading the Men's League contingent, and we are pleased that this part of us was so useful in helping the procession.

W. L. HULL.

234, Old Christchurch Road.

HORNSEY.

A SECOND meeting was held by local members of the Men's League outside the fire station and Central Library, Hornsey.

The chair was taken by myself, at 8 o'clock, other speakers being Messrs. Ratcliffe and Hawkins. Although the W.F.D. had a meeting at the Clock Tower, close by, we had a fairly large and interested crowd, which submitted several questions, answered by myself.

On future Monday evenings we shall commence at 8.15 p.m., having a new platform at our disposal, or for use in the district

after the 10th inst. If any one is able to assist me I shall be glad to hear first at my address.

The fire station is in Tottenham Lane, corner of Church Lane, within two minutes' walk of Hornsey Station or the church.

WILFRED HAMMOND.

417, Wrightman Road.

BADGES.

THE League Badges, designed by Mr. Laurence Housman, are now on sale at 40, Museum Street, price 1½d. with shanks or 1d. with pins.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WE have not yet permission to give names, but we commend the following letter to the careful consideration of our readers, and the Government; it is addressed to the Editor:—

June 28th.

SIR,—I am resigning my work at the Liberal Party's Offices here on account of our obtaining no facilities for the Conciliation Bill, and should like to follow up my resignation by organizing some society to oppose the Government, which will include male members, and will not be militant. I have good reason to hope than an Anti-Government non-militant society for men and women will be entirely successful.

Yours faithfully,

A. B.

CONCILIATION BILL.

Men's League Meeting,

CAXTON HALL,

THURSDAY, JULY 7th, 8 o'clock.

IT IS HOPED THAT

Every Member will Attend.

FORTHCOMING MEETING.

A MASS meeting of the Suffrage Societies will be held in Trafalgar Square on Saturday, July 9th. The Men's League will have a separate platform, and it is expected that one member of the Conciliation Committee will speak from each platform. Every effort must be made to fill the square. For particulars see *Votes for Women, The Common Cause, The Vote*, July 7th.

RECENT PAMPHLETS AND BOOKS.

OPEN LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

Offices of Men's League. Price One Penny.

This is the statement drawn up by our Chairman, the Hon. Treasurers, and the Hon. Secretary at the request of Mr. Asquith when he lately refused to receive our deputation.

REBEL WOMEN. By EVELYN SHARP. *Published by A. C. Fifield. Price One Shilling.*

Humorous, but intensely serious sketches and stories of the experiences of this distinguished writer during her work for the movement.

WOMEN'S FIGHT FOR THE VOTE. By F. W. PETHICK LAWRENCE. *Published by the Women's Press. Price Sixpence and One Shilling.*

A useful and lucid history of the movement, especially on its militant side; containing also an admirable examination of the Anti-Suffragist arguments.

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