

Men's League for Women's Suffrage

No. 53.

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Monthly Paper.

ONE PENNY.

President: THE RIGHT HON. THE
EARL OF LYTTON.

Chairman: HERBERT JACOBS. April, 1914.

NOTES OF THE MONTH.

Members are reminded of the Annual ANNUAL MEETING. Meeting at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, on April 24, at 8 p.m. The Committee's report and the accounts will be presented. In view of the great probability that the Government will go to the country within a few months, it is imperative that the new committee should be put in possession of the views of the League as a whole, in order that they may carry with them the fullest measure of support in the work which they will undertake. Notice of business must reach the hon. secretary not later than seven clear days before the meeting.

THE SITUATION. Everything points to an early General Election. It requires no prophet to see that the Government, providing they can pass the Home Rule and Welsh Church Bills under the Parliament Act, and induce the Unionists to accept the Plural Voting Bill as well, will be only too glad to go to the electorate while the Army issue is fresh in people's minds. Nothing would tend more definitely in the direction of cementing the Coalition and that section of Liberals which is averse from Irish Home Rule than the issue which has been raised in connection with the question of the Army and politics. Those who know the Northern electorate report that the Liberal voters will be more solid upon this than upon any other issue.

The question for Suffragists is how to induce one or both of the two great parties to put our cause upon its programme. Nothing could be more unsatisfactory for us than that Mr. Asquith should go to the country with the Irish question still unsettled in one way or the other. Such an election would unquestionably compel our friends in the Ministry to stand together on an issue to which they are so deeply committed. It is disloyal to our cause to blink facts. We do *not* want the Irish question to be a perpetual block to Women's Suffrage. We can hardly prophesy what may be the positive programme of a Unionist Ministry; we *do* know that if the present Liberal programme is completed a new Liberal Ministry will need a new policy and fresh ideals. Either side will be free to adopt Women's Suffrage, and if after his labours Mr. Asquith decides to retire, our position will be enormously improved—if not absolutely secure. We are convinced that Sir Edward Grey would

insist upon making Women's Suffrage a Government measure, and apart from Mr. Asquith our opponents in the Cabinet are not formidable.

ELECTORAL PRESSURE. As we write, Mr. Asquith goes to East Fife. He is not to have a contest, from which it may fairly be assumed that a General Election is practically fixed for the present summer. We must, therefore, strain every nerve to press our cause upon the Caucuses. Towards this end we print elsewhere a draft of questions which we recommend our friends everywhere to submit to prospective candidates. If we fail to get satisfactory answers it is our own fault—or the fault of some of us. Every member of the League is asked to induce his friends to join in sending these, or similar questions to local candidates, and to do his utmost in other ways to prevent the adoption and election of anti-suffragist candidates.

MRS. WARD'S COMMITTEE.

We are always glad to welcome movements which aim at securing better attention in Parliament for the needs of women and children. When, however, Mrs. Humphry Ward, having failed to induce the National Union of Women Workers to stultify its work by being silent on the fundamental demand for enfranchisement, seeks to set up an Advisory Committee which shall exclude the franchise question, we can only marvel at her optimism. Parliament *may* be, and often *is*, influenced by bodies of unenfranchised persons; but Parliament *must* be, and *always* is, influenced by an enfranchised body. This all sensible women know, and it is quite certain that Mrs. Ward's new organisation will either dissolve or become Suffragist. No one doubts Mrs. Ward's social enthusiasm. In electioneering she is an expert, but her belief that women's work can be effectively done without the vote is, with all respect, unintelligible.

FROM OTHER COUNTRIES.

The movement marches from victory to victory in America. We print elsewhere a note from Dr. Ingram on recent progress in Massachusetts and in other States. There is a Bill before the Legislature in Porto Rica. The only bad news this month comes from Virginia and Kentucky. It is pretty certain that when the next Presidential election takes place the women of nineteen States will vote.

WOMEN AND
THE LAW.

The London correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* tells us that Lord Haldane, the Law Officers of the Crown, and even the Prime Minister favour the admission of women as solicitors. Mr. Hill's Bill to accomplish this change may well be expected to succeed. The Bar must follow suit, and if Parliament admits women to these learned professions—? But if Mr. Asquith hopes that his support in this side-issue will be a sop which Cerberus will accept, he has not the insight which a War Minister needs.

LIBERAL ADVANCE.

Both in London and in Manchester there is now a Liberal Men's Suffrage Society pushing the cause within the party. Sir John Simon, more daring than his Cabinet colleagues, has accepted a vice-presidency in the Manchester society, while Mr. F. D. Acland, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, is on the executive of the London society. We disagree with some Suffragists who condemn or make light of this movement: if you want a Government measure, it follows that one party must back it. If there is no party organisation how can Ministers introduce a Bill? It is not much use to go on proclaiming to the world that you have no sincere supporters anywhere.

The Editorial Chair is not a comfortable or a leisurely place. Its occupant is the recipient of much criticism, and those few readers whom he may have been fortunate enough to please very properly spare him the embarrassment of answering congratulatory letters. For all the errors of judgment and other defects committed during seven long years of almost continual duty the retiring Editor desires to offer sincere and humble apologies. Two points we would make in conclusion. Let readers take more trouble to acquaint the new Editor, whoever he be, with matters of interest for publication, and let them remember that an honorary Editor must be given credit, at all events, for a sincere desire to be of use to the League. He will be an Editor without a staff, and probably a man already as busy as he can be: the man who has leisure rarely has time to spare.

NORTH ISLINGTON.

The electors of North Islington, nearly 14,000 in number, have by this time received a notice from the Men's League to the effect that a local association is about to be formed composed of those who feel that Women's Suffrage should be placed in the forefront among the political and social questions of the day.

The response to this communication has been very gratifying, and it is expected that a strong and representative association will very shortly make its influence felt in local political councils, and this must be regarded as eminently satisfactory in a constituency where a comparatively small number may turn the electoral tide.

Some replies have been received which cannot be taken as evidence of the supposed intellectual superiority of man compared with woman; indeed, it would appear as if prejudice and passion had completely dominated the reasoning faculties. This is all the more remarkable when one considers the assertion of opponents that women are swayed unduly by their emotions.

It is interesting to note that Mr. Costello—the prospective Liberal candidate—still declines to state his reasons for opposing the political enfranchisement of women, and is content to affirm that the question is not yet part of the official Liberal

programme; he has been challenged to a public debate, but very wisely, perhaps, from his point of view, declines to be drawn into the open.

No doubt attempts will be made in this, as in other constituencies, to ignore the question, on the ground that other issues are thought to be more important, and it must be the sacred duty of all Suffragists to make this policy of silence impossible. It is proposed to hold a number of open-air meetings as soon as the weather permits, and other opportunities will be sought to keep the question well before the public mind.

FREDK. W. FLEAR, Hon. Secretary *pro tem.*

102, Shaftesbury Road, Crouch Hill, N.

THE ADVANCE OF SUFFRAGE IN THE
UNITED STATES.

The cause of Woman Suffrage, thanks to the enthusiastic work put in by our American sisters during the past few years, bids fair to win splendid victories within the near future. For years the State of Wyoming stood out with splendid aloofness as the one State of the whole 48 which had given the full franchise to women on equal terms with men, the right dating from 1869. Colorado followed in 1893, and the example of these two States has been followed, particularly within the last two years, by others, and at the time of writing there are ten States with full equal suffrage, and one (Illinois) with partial Woman's Suffrage. These successes have stimulated the women of other States to renewed efforts, and, without doubt, 1914 will see many additions to the roll of "freedom" States. The latest triumph for the cause has been won in Massachusetts, where the House of Representatives has adopted an amendment to the constitution by 164 votes to 39, the Senate having already passed the amendment by 34 votes to 2. It now remains only to await the result of a referendum, which, in the opinion of those qualified to judge, is not likely to fail of success. Besides Massachusetts, six other States have either passed through their Legislatures or presented initiative petitions for an amendment of their constitutions in the direction of Woman's Suffrage, and the results of these referenda during 1914 will be watched over here with the greatest interest. In 1915 the list of campaign States will have a notable addition, when the voters of New York will record their opinion. It is worthy of note that in the municipal elections in Illinois, on April 7, when the women exercised their privilege for the first time, the polls were exceptionally heavy. In Chicago 80 per cent. of the female electors cast their votes, as compared with 70 per cent. of the male voters. T. A. I.

QUESTIONS TO PARLIAMENTARY
CANDIDATES.

1. Are you in favour of the political enfranchisement of women by the abolition of the sex disqualification?
2. If so, will you—if elected—urge upon the Government of the day the duty of introducing a Bill at an early date for this purpose?
3. Will you oppose any measure of electoral or registration reform which does not make provision for the enfranchisement of women?
4. Will you receive a deputation of electors of the _____ Parliamentary electoral division of _____?
5. If so, will you kindly name the time and place convenient to yourself at as early a date as possible?

MEN'S INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR WOMAN
SUFFRAGE.

President: THE HON. SIR JOHN COCKBURN, K.C.M.G.

Hon. Secretary: LIEUT.-COLONEL W. A. E. MANSFELDT, Dillenburgstraat 19, Utrecht, Holland.

Hon. Treasurer: MYNHEER F. W. KEHRER, Frankenslag 10, The Hague.

Correspondent: MME. MARTINA G. KRAMERS, Kruiskadi 92, Rotterdam.

France.—For the first time since the institution of a *Women's Day* by the International Socialist Congress at Copenhagen in 1910, the French Social Democratic Party has taken official part in the demonstration by arranging a big public meeting at Paris, which ended by the passing of a resolution claiming the political enfranchisement of women as a weapon in the class-struggle.

In January, in each of the twenty precincts (arrondissements) of Paris, at the suggestion of Madame Vérone's League for Women's Rights, some women came to express their desire to be registered as voters, since the law of 1884 admits all *French subjects* as electors. In three precincts they were duly inscribed, in one of which the body entitled to test the claims for the franchise refused them. In two other precincts the same refusal was given, but it was followed by an appeal of the claimants to the Justice of the Peace, who declared against them. We may depend upon Madame Maria Vérone, who is LL.D. and member of a Juvenile Court, not to abide by it, but to follow up all the stages of legal appeal.

Although the chances are that the demand will finally be rejected, yet it offers an occasion for Press and public to show their sympathies, and men Suffragists may exert themselves to demonstrate the right of women to be enfranchised.

The Paris paper *Le Journal* intends to hold a sort of inquiry of its own into the alleged female indifference for the vote. On the next occasion of an election to be held in Paris the office of this paper will provide ballot-boxes for women to cast their

ballot with the name of their preferred candidate. In this way, says M. Téry, the editor of *Le Journal*, it will be shown, firstly, how many women in France take an interest in politics, and, secondly, how their participation would affect the result of the election.

The reader, remembering the advantage taken by Anti-Suffragists of a similar sort of sham referendum in Boston, will probably feel a little doubtful as to the effect of M. Téry's experiment, if not as to his intentions.

Germany.—On March 8 the Social Democratic Women's Day was celebrated by numerous meetings throughout the country. In Berlin only there were as many as 46. On former occasions this demonstration used to be devoted to making women join the S. D. Party and organising them into propaganda-clubs, but this time the franchise for women was made a prominent demand. The resolution passed at each of the meetings in Germany and Austria put the enfranchisement of women to the fore and it was enthusiastically moved, advocated and carried in every case.

Sweden.—It is a great disappointment for the women of Sweden that the dissolution of the Riksdag occasioned by a discussion on military expenditure should have deprived them of the occasion to present their great national petition for woman suffrage, for which they have been collecting signatures a whole year. Although women only have been asked to sign, it is said that the number amounts to nearly a quarter of a-million. The troubles of the present moment are not a very propitious background for the political equalisation of the sexes that is soon to be the subject of discussion in Sweden.

BRANCHES.

MANCHESTER MEN'S LEAGUE.

During the month our speakers have fulfilled several engagements. Under the auspices of the Women's Freedom League the Rev. A. E. Cornibee addressed a meeting in the Memorial Hall, and Mr. Beanland broke new ground at Helsby, where a splendidly organised meeting proved highly successful. Prof. Merrick officiated as chairman for a big meeting organised by the South Manchester W.S.P.U., and Mr. F. Stanton Barnes spoke at Stockport for the N.U.W.S.S., the League thus giving practical evidence of its earnest desire that all suffrage societies should present a united and harmonious front to the common opponent.

The annual meeting was held on March 24, and the goodwill and courtesy of the Manchester branch of the N.U.W.S.S. in placing their large meeting room at the disposal of the League for the purpose was highly appreciated.

In pursuance of the policy of promoting co-operation by all suffrage societies, one with another, the meeting was open to all Suffragists; the idea being to welcome proposals from all

experienced quarters which would tend to enhance the effectiveness of the League's work, and at the same time avoid overlapping the propaganda of other societies. The room was well filled, and an optimistic tone prevailed throughout. The helpfulness of the suggestions received firmly established the wisdom of the course adopted.

The treasurer's statement, kindly audited by Mr. J. Williamson, showed just a small balance in hand, there being always immediate employment for all funds.

The secretaries' report was vouched, by those whose experience in the League qualified them to judge, to be the best in the League's history. This very satisfactory result is directly attributable to Mr. Beanland's contagious enthusiasm and ceaseless activity, and to whom the thanks of the League, voiced by the chairman, Mr. D. M. Humphreys, were endorsed by the meeting with acclamation.

On the suggestion of a member of the Manchester W.S.P.U., it was decided to have the report printed, the conviction being expressed that it would prove invaluable for propaganda purposes. The S. Manchester W.S.P.U., in supporting the proposal, intimated their intention to purchase a supply when ready.

Mr. Richard Robinson, who was present at the February demonstrations in London, kindly attended and gave our members a personal report on the proceedings. This was greatly appreciated. Mr. Robinson supplemented his report with a concise proposal for concentrated action in one particular direction. This was favourably received, and shall have the careful consideration of the executive at its next meeting.

The League has been fortunate in again securing the consent of Mr. A. M. Langdon, K.C., to be president. The announcement that pressure of business compelled Mr. J. Bently Capper, jun., to relinquish his joint-secretaryship, after four years' service, was received with great regret. He is, however, retaining his place on the executive, and the League will thus continue to benefit by his valuable services.

The final item was a short, pithy address by the Rev. Jabez Bell. The League foresees a great demand arising for Mr. Bell's services, and he, Professor Merrick, and Mr. F. J. Bailey, all hard workers, were appointed to a place on the executive.

OUR PRESIDENT'S APPEAL.

Lord Lytton has addressed the following letter to members and friends of the League:—

DEAR SIR,—Recent events in Parliament, notably the rejection of the Conciliation Bill and the withdrawal of the Government Reform Bill, have led to a change in the policy of all the Woman Suffrage Societies. Hitherto these societies have sought to achieve their object by the passage into law of a Private Member's Bill on non-party lines. To accomplish this object the opinions of individual Members of Parliament in all parties were of vital importance, and the policy of the Suffrage Societies at election times has been directed to obtaining from candidates a pledge that they would vote for a Woman Suffrage Bill. Candidates who gave such a pledge were supported; those who refused it were opposed. After the failure of a non-party procedure in the last Session the Suffrage Societies are now convinced that women will never be enfranchised except on the authority of the Government of the day. They are consequently all united in demanding a Government Bill.

This change of object has necessitated a corresponding change in the election policy of Woman Suffrage Societies. They are now concerned rather with the programmes of parties than with the opinions of individual Members of Parliament. At the present moment neither of the two political parties from which a Government could be formed has included Woman Suffrage in the party programme, and the efforts of woman suffragists must be directed towards inducing either the Liberal or the Conservative party, or both, to adopt as an integral part of their policy the enfranchisement of women.

Suffrage societies will seek to accomplish this object in different ways, according as they are party or non-party societies. Liberal or Conservative Suffrage Societies will seek to induce their respective parties to take up the question on lines which would be most acceptable to the majority of their members, and most in accordance with their party interests. The non-party societies, on the other hand, must endeavour to organise the suffrage opinion of the country in such a way as to ensure that no Government shall henceforth be formed without accepting responsibility for the settlement of this question.

The committee of the Men's League, which is a non-party society, have had under consideration how they can best utilise their forces to meet the changed circumstances, and they have decided to raise a special fund to enable them to organise groups of men in every important town or district throughout England who will pledge themselves to place the question of the political enfranchisement of women in the forefront of all measures dealing with social reform. The members of such groups will consist of men who are prepared to support and work for any Government which undertakes to introduce a Woman Suffrage Bill, and to oppose and work against any Government which refuses to introduce such a Bill.

Invitations have already been received from a great many centres to send an organiser and put the work in train without delay. Work has actually been begun by local representatives of the League in some half-a-dozen places, and it only requires a little help from the centre to extend and fructify

what has there been begun. This work cannot be accomplished with the present staff or the existing resources of the society. Additional funds must be obtained in order to enable the secretary to go into the country and assist in the formation of such groups wherever there appears to be material ready for the purpose.

It is estimated that the initial cost of such a missionary enterprise will be £500, but it is confidently expected that such expenditure will ultimately be rewarded by a lasting annual return to the central body from the groups or branches which may be formed. If, for example, 100 branches were established in those places only where it is known that there is a Suffrage majority upon the Local Governing body, it ought not to be difficult to secure at least £5 a year from each branch for the central body. The League might thus be converted from an organisation which for practical purposes is only a London society, whose work is scarcely known in the country, into a National League of living force in all parts of the kingdom.

Subscriptions to be sent to the hon. treasurer, Mr. H. B. Fox-Bourne, 136, St. Stephen's House, Westminster, S.W.

Faithfully yours,

LYTTON,

President.

STRAY NOTES.

THE LIBERAL NATIONAL COMMITTEE.

The National Committee of the Liberal Federation had before it the other day a number of Women's Suffrage resolutions. It was decided to select the most general one, which was duly moved and seconded. One of the delegates rose to move "the previous question," but the chairman, though, it is said, not himself a suffragist, asked the meeting not to burke discussion, and allowed a number of speeches. Mrs. Eleanor Acland, wife of the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and one of the prime movers in the new Liberal Women's Suffrage Union, spoke very strongly on the subject, and ultimately the original resolution was put and carried by a large majority.

The importance of this victory is two-fold. Firstly, it means that the subject may very likely be placed on the agenda of the Annual Conference in the autumn. The National Committee—not, perhaps, a very important body in itself—prepares the business for the large Conference. Secondly, it shows that politicians are finding that they cannot shelve the issue. The delegate who moved the previous question did so on the explicit ground that they were there to support the party, thus seeking to put his fellow delegates on their (party) honour. That his appeal failed at the present juncture is significant enough to those who are acquainted with the shibboleths of party government and the eccentric criteria which are the normal guides of caucus delegates. Five years ago it would have meant little, to-day it means a good deal.

Women's Suffrage means petticoat government! Does it? Yet the Chicago women did not vote for women candidates, nine of whom failed at the recent elections. The *Daily Mail*, so far from rejoicing that anti-suffragist forebodings are here refuted, seems to sneer at women for their lack of sex-prejudice. In the same article (April 10) it seeks to alarm those whose profession is "the bar" by talking with very half-hearted approval of the blow which these same women have dealt to the liquor interest in establishing prohibition in many areas. We find the sting in the tail—"feminine ideas of how to reform the universe."

MEN'S LEAGUE ANNUAL MEETING

Anderton's Hotel, April 24, 8 p.m.