

THE VOTE,  
MARCH 2, 1923  
ONE PENNY.

MITCHAM WOMEN WANT HOUSES!

# THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 1923

**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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## THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE CABINET.

An interesting series of discussions, "If I were Prime Minister, Minister of Education, Chancellor of the Exchequer," and so on, is being held at the International Women's Franchise Club, Grafton Street, Piccadilly. The Chairman of the first evening's discussion, Mrs. Dexter, explained that these discussions were held in order to accustom people to the future possibility of women in the Cabinet.

Miss Florence Underwood said there was nothing in our Constitution to prevent a woman from becoming a Cabinet Minister, and in another ten years there might not only be a woman Prime Minister in this country, but a woman President of the United States. If she were Prime Minister, she would carefully choose the members of her Cabinet, not necessarily members of the same party, but possessing the same outlook. She would certainly not have all women, but would choose the best person for the post, whether man or woman. She would like, however, to have a woman as Minister of Education, as Minister of Health, and as Home Secretary. Peace abroad, prosperity at home, would be her slogan, and her Chancellor of the Exchequer would have to be very niggardly in allowing money to be spent on foreign adventures. After the rough and tumble of the suffrage movement for so many years, she would not expect tranquillity.

In her King's Speech, Miss Underwood put first in importance the proper representation of the people, and the announcement of a Bill for the full enfranchisement of men and women at the age of 21. Proportional representation came next, then admission of peeresses to the House of Lords, then a provision that the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act should really remove Sex Disqualification, and not continue to be infringed as at present. "The present state of Europe causes me great anxiety," continued Miss Underwood in her King's Speech, "but our friendship with America gives me great satisfaction. My ministers will use every means in their power to increase trade abroad and trade in this country."

Unemployment, housing, better education, and penal reform were urgent measures, as was also the

reduction of expenditure abroad. Miss Underwood added that women should be on the Privy Council, and ought to be equally eligible for honours as were men.

As Prime Minister she would pay special attention to transport, by road, canal, and air, for the rapid and cheap carriage of manufactured goods and raw material, to give impetus to trade within the country. For the unemployed, she would develop road-making and beet-growing, and sugar refineries, and encourage more home-grown tobacco, poultry farms, and toy industries. In these, women also could be employed, and the industry of embroidery could be revived in this country, instead of sending to Paris, as at present.

"It should actually be possible in future," declared Miss Underwood, "if not now, for every boy and girl to have free education from the elementary school to the university, provided that boy and girl would benefit from it. The great need of this country to-day is more, and not less, education. If we are to hold our own in the world, it is essential that our men and women shall be well educated.

"Penal reform would be my own special subject, although I believe the present system wants scrapping, and not reforming. All the women's prisons are entirely administered by men, with men governors, men chaplains, and nearly all men doctors. The condition of men's prisons will also have to be changed, and it should be impossible for a lad of 17 to be sentenced to five years' penal servitude, as occurred in Scotland last week."

She was in favour of better Asylum administration, and would certainly appoint a Royal Commission on Lunacy Reform, but she would also see that it consisted of an equal number of women members. Many questions followed.

"If I were Minister of Education," said Miss E. E. Crosby, an L.C.C. teacher, "my aim would be more abundant life for the youth of the country. I would start by getting a public desire for education, and a public understanding that economy consists in wise spending, and that education develops the mind, and

makes it independent of its surroundings. I would inspire all classes of the people with these ideas—the upper classes, the new rich, the skilled worker, the drudges. Separate conferences of each should be called. I would consult with teachers, clergy, professors, trade unions, and parents; I would get them all to organise local meetings, too, and I would get the parents into the schools, to see what they really were. Then, having prepared the ground, I would frame a national scheme, on the lines of the 1918 Act, but going further."

Miss Crosby continued that there should be Primary education for all up to 10 or 11 years, secondary education for all, up to 16, with schools of various types, and advanced secondary up to 18 for all who showed marked ability; continued education for those who left at 16, and the University for all who could benefit by it. Adult education also should be advanced by subsidies, for such efforts as the "Old Vic," summer schools organised by municipalities and others, etc.

Until 1922, the best education ever given to little children was in our public elementary schools. In secondary schools maintenance grants must be given when needed—say £6 a year, subject to regular attendance and proper conditions. The teaching staff must be all fully trained, and specialists at their particular kind of teaching, with salaries that would attract the best men and women; equal opportunities, responsibilities, qualifications, and pay for both; interchange opportunities, and periods for rest and refresher courses, and no teacher should be entirely responsible for a class of more than 30. Inspectors should be of two kinds—(a) to see that the Board of Education regulations were carried out, (b) "Educational Advisers," select and enthusiastic specialist men and women. The social service side of education should also be extended, and the medical service, play centres, camps, etc.

S.W.M.

### WHERE IS EQUAL FRANCHISE?

There were two Equal Franchise Amendments to the King's Speech, but neither was reached. The first, standing in the names of Mrs. Wintringham and Dr. Chapple, was as follows:—"But regret that there is no intimation that a Bill will be introduced to extend the franchise to women as it is at present exercisable by men." The second one to the same effect stood in the name of Mr. Snowden and Mr. Wignall.

Mr. Burgess (Rochdale) has won the eleventh place in the Ballot for an Equal Franchise Bill, and, as it is understood that private Members are to have their Fridays, there is a chance of this Bill being dealt with.

Mr. Linfield (Bedford) has given notice that, on going into Committee of Supply on the Civil Service Estimates, he will call attention to the working of the present electoral system, and move a Resolution. We learn from Mr. Linfield that this Resolution will be in favour of proportional representation for Parliamentary Boroughs, and the alternative vote for county divisions, and that he will consider the possibility of being able to insert in the same Resolution a clause for Equal Franchise rights.

### THE FEMINIST LEAGUE.

OBJECT: To restore to Women all they should HAVE, all they should KNOW, and all they should BE.

#### MISS ABADAM

will Lecture on the following  
TUESDAYS AT 6.30 P.M.

MORTIMER HALL, MORTIMER STREET,  
UPPER REGENT STREET.

March 6th.—What Animals pay for our Food, Fur, Feathers and Drugs.  
The Psychology of Indifference.  
" 13th.—Historic Lights on the Charge of "Sex Antagonism." The Dispossessed Heiress.  
" 20th.—Quest of Truth. Past and Present Obscurantism. The Idol with the Feet of Clay.  
" 27th.—Up-to-date Biology and Theological Reflexes. Some ignored Scriptures.

All Women welcome. Free Admission. Silver Collection for Expenses.

### WOMEN AT HOME & ABROAD.

#### Equality amongst Scientists.

Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, Professor of Botany, is the first woman to be elected President of the Scientific Workers' Union. This Union was established in 1919, and its members belong to all grades of scientific workers. From the beginning it has stood uncompromisingly for equal opportunities and equal pay for men and women, and has on several occasions had to fight Government Departments on these grounds. Miss Dorothy Wrinch was on the Executive of this Union last year.

#### South African Militants.

The recent rejection of the Women's Suffrage Bill by the majority of a single vote has been followed by a movement among South African Suffragists to refuse to pay taxes. Summoned before the Magistrate's Court recently, Miss Woods, a lady reporter, who had treated her income-tax assessment as scrap paper, pleaded that taxation without representation was mere tyranny. Judgment was given for the income-tax authorities, but Miss Woods intends to persist in her refusal. A large fleet of motor-cars filled with sympathisers accompanied her to and from the court.

#### Honours for French Women.

Four French women have been made Chevaliers of the Légion d'Honneur. Three women have been awarded the Silver Médaille d'Honneur des Epidémies, and 32 have received the Bronze Medal. Mme. Wagner has received the Silver Medal for exceptional service rendered in public relief work, and Mme. Lechevallier, administrator in the work of clothing poor children in the 6th district of Paris, has been awarded the Bronze Medal of Public Service. For services rendered in Algeria, five women have been awarded the Silver Médaille de la Mutualité, one the Bronze Medal, and six an Honourable Mention.

#### Woman Inventor's List.

Miss Beulah Louise Henry, of Memphis, Tennessee, has 33 inventions to her credit, including the "snap-on" umbrella, which enables a woman to have an umbrella cover to match each dress if she so desires. Miss Henry's inventions include an eraser pencil, a handbag with changeable covers, a machine for making snaps, a vacuum ice cream freezer that will keep ice cream for 72 hours, and a runner shield for umbrellas.

#### Luxemburg Women's Petition.

The Catholic Alliance of the Women of Luxemburg has presented a petition to the Premier and to the President of the Chamber to demand the repeal of the law forbidding the inquiry into paternity.

#### Woman Registrar's Appointment.

Miss Mary Thorman, of Houghton-le-Spring, has been elected Registrar of Births and Deaths for the Houghton Sub-District, rendered vacant by the death of her mother, Mrs. J. T. Thorman. There were 28 other candidates.

#### Dutch Bar Women Judges.

The Dutch Second Chamber has defeated, by 30 votes to 35, a proposal regarding the admission of women to occupy judicial positions.

### WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

#### FORTNIGHTLY LECTURES

#### FOREIGN POLITICS

in the

MINERVA CAFÉ, 144 HIGH HOLBORN, W.C. 1.

MONDAY, MARCH 12th—6 p.m.—"THE RELATIONS OF THIS COUNTRY WITH THE CENTRAL POWERS."  
Speaker: Miss Christina Roberts.

MONDAY, MARCH 26th—6 p.m.—"THE RELATIONS OF THIS COUNTRY WITH RUSSIA."  
(Speaker to be announced later.)

ADMISSION FREE. Reserved Seats 1/- from 144, High Holborn, W. C. 1.

## IN PARLIAMENT.

#### Unemployed Women.

SIR MONTAGU BARLOW (Minister of Labour), replying to MAJOR ATTLEE (Limehouse), said that the nature of the work on relief schemes was unavoidably such that it had been found impracticable to find employment for women on such work. Indirectly, however, those schemes had undoubtedly been of considerable assistance to women, and the work set in hand through the medium of the Trade Facilities Act had also provided employment for women workers as well as for men. In addition, he mentioned the training schemes for women to which Government assistance was given. *The Government is still evidently of the opinion that workless women should be content with the crumbs that fall from the employed men's table!*

#### Women in the Civil Service.

MR. WILLIAM GRAHAM (Central Edinburgh) asked when it was proposed to institute common seniority lists for men and women; and what opportunities would be given to the various grades of men and women concerned to discuss the most equitable means of compiling such a list? MR. BALDWIN (Chancellor of the Exchequer) replied that a Committee had been appointed to examine and report on the application of the general principle of common seniority lists for men and women to the classes included in the Report of the Re-organisation Committee of the National Whitley Council for the Civil Service. That Committee included representatives of the various grades of men and women concerned.

MR. AMMON (N. Camberwell) asked what steps were being taken to regularise the position of the ex-first-class women clerks who were provisionally assimilated to, and who had remained on, the lower clerical grade, but who were still performing supervisory duties in contravention of the terms of the Re-organisation Report? MR. BALDWIN replied that the re-organisation schemes for the Departments concerned included the provision of higher-grade posts sufficient in number to cover the amount of supervisory work formerly performed by first-class clerks, and appropriately assignable under the terms of the Re-organisation Report to higher-grade officers. Those schemes had been under discussion with the staff representatives, and some of them had not yet been carried out. It was hoped, however, that it would be possible to bring the outstanding schemes into operation very shortly. The claims of individuals to the higher posts created under the schemes were considered on their merits.

#### Training Ex-Service Men v. Ex-Service Women.

Replying to a question by CAPT. BOWYER (Buckingham), SIR MONTAGU BARLOW said that the number of men in training in Government instructional factories was now about 9,000. The total number of men who had been trained to date was about 67,200. In addition, about 11,000 had training before the Ministry of Labour took over responsibility for the training scheme. LADY ASTOR inquired how many ex-Service women had been trained? SIR MONTAGU BARLOW said he must ask for notice of that question.

#### Unemployed Juveniles.

SIR MONTAGU BARLOW, replying to a question by MR. WEBB (Seaham), said that the information with regard to the number of juveniles unemployed was very incomplete, but, so far as he could judge, the number was probably something over 200,000. Replying to a question by MR. WHITE (Birkenhead), SIR MONTAGU BARLOW said that the number of local Education authorities which had submitted schemes for the establishment of Juvenile Unemployment Centres was now 67. Of those, 42 had been finally or provisionally approved, and would, it was estimated, make provision for 9,400 boys and 5,700 girls.

#### Cookery Centres.

MR. GRUNDY (Rother Valley) asked the President of the Board of Education how many cookery centres were closed in connection with the Education authorities, and reasons for the same? MR. E. WOOD said he regretted to find that in two county areas action had been taken to reduce extensively the provision for that form of instruction. Their action in that respect was, no doubt, due to motives of economy. Until he received from local Education authorities the returns in respect of the current financial year, he could not supply full information up to date.

#### Prison System.

MR. BUCHANAN (Gorbals) asked the Prime Minister whether, seeing that the present prison system failed in the main to reform or improve persons who were imprisoned, particularly the more youthful persons, he would bring in fresh legislation for the purpose of making our prison system more humane and reformatory in character? MR. BRIDGEMAN (Home Secretary), who had been asked to reply, said he was not aware what alterations of the law the hon. Gentleman had in mind for reforming or improving persons undergoing imprisonment. He received various suggestions on that subject, but he did not at present contemplate proposing any legislation on the subject.

#### Convictions for Murder (Sentence).

SIR J. HEWETT (Luton) asked the Home Secretary if he would consider the question of altering the law so as to give a judge discretion to pass a sentence of penal servitude for life instead of one of death on a conviction for murder? MR. BRIDGEMAN said he could not suggest such an alteration of the law. There were many reasons against it.

MR. T. THOMSON (West Middlesbrough) asked the Home Secretary whether, seeing that the time had arrived when the whole question of capital punishment should be reviewed, he would recommend the appointment of a Royal Commission or other body to inquire into the matter? MR. BRIDGEMAN replied that he was not aware of the existence at the present time of any special reasons for altering the law on that subject.

#### Borstal Institutions.

MR. BRIANT (N. Lambeth) asked the Home Secretary if he was prepared to appoint a Committee, to consist in part of Members of the House of Commons, to inquire into and report on the working and reformatory influence of the Borstal treatment for juvenile offenders? MR. BRIDGEMAN said he would consider that suggestion if the hon. Member would inform him of his reasons for thinking that such an inquiry was desirable at the present time.

#### Divorce Cases (Newspaper Report).

MR. LORIMER (S. Derbyshire), asked the Home Secretary if he would introduce legislation so as to prohibit the publication of unsavoury details given in newspaper reports of the proceedings of the Divorce Courts, by allowing the presiding Judge to issue a résumé of the case for the Press, publication of the names of the contending parties to be published, and admission of the public to remain as at present? MR. BRIDGEMAN said that, while he shared the view that there should be more restraint in newspaper reports of such cases, any legislation imposing restrictions on such reports involved great difficulty, and he regretted he could not give any promise to introduce such legislation.

#### Mothers' Pensions.

MR. RHYS DAVIES (Westhoughton) gave notice that he would call attention to Mothers' Pensions, and move a Resolution next Tuesday.

F. A. U.

## THE VOTE.

Proprietors: THE MINERVA PUBLISHING CO., LTD.  
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FRIDAY, MARCH 2nd, 1923.

NOTICE.—Letters should be addressed as follows:—  
To the Advertising Manager—on advertising.  
To the Secretary—on all other business, including VOTE orders, printing, and merchandise, etc.

### EDITORIAL.

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

### PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

Last Friday the House of Commons rejected, by 12 votes, a Bill for the introduction of Proportional Representation in Municipal Elections, the figures being 157 for the Bill, and 169 against it. The measure was of a permissive character, the Councils adopting the system having to have three-fifths of the members present voting for it. It gave the opportunity to boroughs to adopt triennial elections instead of annual ones as at present when a third of the representatives retire each year. The Division List and the speeches in the House showed clearly that all political parties are very much divided on this question, and the Government left the decision to the judgment of the Members, no Whips being put on. It was stated in the Debate that a measure of proportional representation had three times passed the House of Lords, and had been asked for by no fewer than 80 local authorities, including the London County Council and the Municipal Councils of very large towns. The recent London local Elections pointed to the difficulties of our present system. In the boroughs of Chelsea, Fulham, Lewisham, Holborn, Paddington, Wandsworth, and Westminster, the minority was totally excluded from representation, and in Hackney and Southwark the Labour Party, though polling 30 per cent. of the votes, could obtain no representation on the Borough Councils. Mr. Foot reminded those present that Mr. Leonard Courtney, so far back as 1886, when the Local Government Bill was before the country, urged upon the House the adoption of this particular reform. Mr. William Graham maintained that it was an accepted principle in political science that minorities should be adequately represented, and it was very important in the public interest that some electoral machinery or system should be instituted in this country which would contribute to that end. In the difficult times through which we were passing, a point of view which might be extreme or revolutionary on the one side, or perfectly fair, though perhaps reactionary, on the other, should be exposed to the test of contact with other points of view, through representation on the elected body, because it was there, first of all, that it could be brought into contact with something which would establish it or disprove it in the community. Mr. Morris argued that, when the kind of work municipal authorities have to do, and the kind of committees upon which their members have to serve, is taken into consideration, together with the multifarious things with which they deal, it was necessary to have the experience of all sorts and conditions of people. The arguments advanced last Friday against this Bill were, briefly, that under a system of proportional representation the areas represented by members would have to be larger, which would make it difficult for them to maintain a close personal relationship with the electors, and would increase the expenses of candidates, and, further, that there would be compacts between parties of log-rolling, of wire-pulling, and manipulation. Frankly, these "arguments" appear to us to be no arguments of any weight. In our opinion, the one thing that really matters is the fair and proper representation of the electorate, both in local Councils, and in Parliament, and we confess that we are extremely disappointed that the present House of Commons has declined to make a stand for the better representation of the people of this country.

### HOUSING.

When we needed munitions in war time, no money was spared, and no sacrifice of time, energy, and thought on the part of the Government or the people was considered too great to produce them. Now that this country is at peace, and the greatest need of the present and coming generation is the supply of houses, the whole resources of our Government and the means of production seem to be paralysed. Every other day we hear a different pronouncement on the part of some Member of the Government about the control or decontrol of houses. The latest statement by the Prime Minister is that June, 1925, is to be the date of full decontrol, and higher-grade houses are to be decontrolled in June, 1924, unless a resolution is passed by either House of Parliament to the contrary effect! A Bill to contain these proposals is to be in the hands of Members towards the end of next week—after the result of the unfortunate Health Minister's latest attempt to get back to the House of Commons is known! To women who know the appalling housing conditions of so many thousands of our countrymen and countrywomen, it seems a little futile to talk of decontrol until we see more houses being built. The whole reason for control was the shortage of houses, and, comparatively speaking, very little has been done to reduce that shortage. Before the war there was a great shortage, and 500,000 new houses every year were said to be necessary to accommodate our people. No houses were built during the war, and since then only about 176,000 have been built. Women at Mitcham have reminded the Health Minister, who is seeking their votes, that an enormous number of families live in one or two rooms, a small house very frequently containing three families. The Women's Co-operative Guild (which has 52,000 members) has asked him to receive a deputation on this pressing subject. They will ask for a Government scheme that will deal with housing on a national scale, providing local authorities with the necessary finance. They also demand one house per family, and suggest that more attention must be paid to the standard of housing. Being practical women, they will also point out that there are over 100,000 builders now out of work, and if once genuine housing schemes were set going, many of these men would be immediately employed, and allied trades would at once revive and provide more work. We are more convinced than ever of the urgent necessity for a capable woman Minister of Health!

### OLD AGE PENSIONS.

Last week Mr. Maxton (Bridgeton) moved a resolution in the House of Commons to make everyone who had attained the age of 70 eligible for the full Old Age Pension of ten shillings a week, if he or she desired it, without investigation into what the applicant's means were. In 1919 the Departmental Committee which investigated the matter made the same recommendation, and this was the third occasion on which the findings of that Report had been discussed in the House. At the present time, nearly one million people in this country are in receipt of 10s. per week old-age pension; 70,000 people are in receipt of sums varying from 10s. down to 1s.; and there are, approximately, 500,000 persons who have attained the age of 70 and who receive no old-age pension. It was claimed by the supporters of the Resolution that the present system of refusing Old Age Pensions, or making deductions from them to people over 70 years of age who had means, discouraged thrift, and that the minute inquiries made by officials in the means of the applicants were irritating and much resented. If all people now over 70 could have 10s. a week, irrespective of any means they had, the extra cost to the country would be about £15,000,000 per annum. Mr. Dennis Herbert (Watford) moved an Amendment to the effect that the country could not at present afford to make this addition to the burdens already borne by the taxpayers, and members of the Government strongly supported that view. On a division, Mr. Maxton's Resolution was lost by 230 votes to 208—a majority of 22 for the Government.

## THE RELATIONS OF THIS COUNTRY WITH FRANCE.

The third of the series of fortnightly Lectures on Foreign Politics, arranged by the Women's Freedom League, was held on Monday night, when a crowded audience gathered in the Minerva Café to hear the Lady Amherst of Hackney speak upon "The Relations of this Country with France."

Miss Janet Gibson, who presided, referred to the particularly thorny subject of the Lecture that evening, and commended, not only the Women's Freedom League for its courage in arranging such a Lecture, but also Lady Amherst for being willing to speak on the subject.

Lady Amherst said the best way to obtain a real understanding of France and the French people was to review her past history by the light of artistic interpretation, rather than analyse it with the mind of the critic. France, like ourselves, was one great State, with numerous racial elements bound up with it, just as in our own country, Scotch, Irish, and Welsh strains mingled with the English. This mixture of elements was most clearly discernible in Provence, the land of the Troubadours, where the old musical traditions were still carried on by wandering minstrels at the Provençal fêtes. There was also a strong Moorish element in that district, due to the constant warfare waged in the old days between France and Spain. Provence was also famous for its Druidic remains, and for the earliest form of a Parliament with representatives, which Simon de Montfort was said to have taken as his model when forming our own first Parliament here.

Certain accusations had been hurled at the French people, as a nation, which were totally unmerited. One was their alleged frivolity and love of pleasure. But superficial observers usually measured the whole nation by the gaiety of Paris, whereas the majority of French dwellers in the Provinces were quiet and home-loving, as she, the speaker, could personally testify. Another accusation was their extreme economy, not to say meanness. But outsiders forgot that the French nation had suffered from some of the most serious

upheavals in history, including two Revolutions, and the Napoleonic wars, all within a brief period, and she was even now only just beginning to recover from the effects of the recent world war. The thrift of the nation, on the other hand, was proverbial, and could be copied with advantage by other countries. The French peasant shone particularly in this respect, probably because the nationalisation of the land in France was such a great asset to the development of its agriculture. This land nationalisation had caused an entire re-arrangement of the rates, which were now levied by means of the *octroi* system. This meant that in France there were no taxes on production, as in this country, but only on consumption, whereas the English system of rating had practically killed agriculture in this country.

The occupation of the Ruhr was now, of course, the subject uppermost both in France and in England. This topic naturally bristled with difficulties, and she, the speaker, would prefer merely to throw out a few suggestions on the subject, which could be later amplified in discussion by the audience, rather than to attempt any detailed criticism from a purely political point of view. She would, however, like to point out one or two aspects of the situation from the French people's point of view. Hundreds of individuals amongst the middle classes in France had been absolutely ruined by the war, their small incomes being reduced to one quarter by the subsequent depreciation of the franc, and at that moment, according to a recent article by Mr. Blatchford in the *Sunday Herald*, 20,000 factories, 4,000 villages, and half a million homes had been devastated by the Germans, whilst France herself was totally without the material means necessary for repairing this damage.

A large number in the audience took advantage of Lady Amherst's invitation to add their point of view to her remarks, and a most animated discussion ensued. Opinions were very varied and emphatic both for and against the action of France in the Ruhr, and its consequences to this country.

## THE WOMAN'S MOVEMENT IN INDIA.

The last few weeks have seen remarkable strides taken in movements connected with the admission of women into the public life of India. Particularly unique has been the absolute unanimity that was shown, when a resolution on Woman Suffrage was brought before the Legislative Council of the United Provinces in its sitting at Lucknow on the 1st of February, and no Councillor raised an objection to its passing. Over a dozen men spoke in its favour, and the whole tone of the debate was of a very high and appreciative order. The Resolution was passed unanimously, a result which the Press ascribes largely to the presence of a large number of ladies in the Visitors' Gallery, who had come there through the invitation of Mrs. J. N. Chak, a Kashmiri Brahmin lady, resident in Lucknow, and Mrs. Cousins, Joint Secretary of the Women's Indian Association. The latter had also sent letters from the Association to each of the Councillors, whilst meetings in support of the Resolution, which was moved by Iqbal Narayan Gurtu, of Benares, had been held in Benares, at Allahabad, and Cawnpore. The United Provinces has a population of forty-seven million people, and it now stands first in having given its qualified women equal political rights in the Legislative Council, District Municipalities, and Local Boards. This result is probably due to the large amount of religious life that is connected with that Province (especially in Benares), where women have entire freedom, though in their ordinary social life the Purdah rules supreme. The Councillors are anxious that every woman shall be able to obtain more education for herself, and break through the disabilities of this limiting purdah system. It must be pointed out that Mysore State Legislative Council has already been the

first to give a unanimous vote in favour of Woman Suffrage, but it could only recommend the step to the State authorities, and these have not acted on it, whereas by the terms of the Reform Act the recommendation of the British Indian Legislative Councils is binding on the Government of India to carry into effect.

Equally significant and remarkable has been the result of the first appearance of women in India in contested elections. It is only a few months since the right was given to women in Bombay city to stand for election, or be nominated for the Bombay Corporation. An election for that body has just taken place, and four ladies were brave enough to contest various wards, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Mrs. Avanti Bai Gokhale (Non-co-operators), Miss Lotawalla (Co-operator), and Mrs. Hodgkinson (Independent). It is most gratifying to record that all four women were returned, keen interest being shown in the elections and in vote canvassing. In this matter, India has set the pace for the Western Countries. Last year Mrs. Devados was nominated in the Madras Municipality, and the Districts of Malabar, Salem, and Bellary, which are in the South, have also nominated one woman at each place in the Taluk and District Boards, which are like Borough Councils in England.

A further step has been taken by the nomination of the first woman Magistrate in India. This honour has been conferred on Mrs. Margaret E. Cousins, B.M.S., who has been appointed to the Bench for Saidapet, an important suburb in Madras. This precedent will probably be followed in all parts of India, and will make it easier for Indian women to practise as lawyers. The Indian Press has given much publicity and praise to the success of Miss Mithan Tata, the first Indian woman Barrister who has been called to the English Bar.

## THE POSITION OF WOMEN WORKERS

According to the *Daily Chronicle*, an Aldershot command order published last week has caused concern amongst the women clerks employed in military offices. It states that it has been decided to reduce the pay of temporary women clerks, shorthand typists, and typists by sums ranging from 2s. per week to 1s. a week.

To provide chiefly positions for ex-Service men, trained as teachers, Northumberland Education Committee has decided to terminate the appointments of married women teachers, not dependent upon employment for a livelihood. The number of married women teachers in the county is 149, of whom 12 are head teachers, mostly in schools in remote districts; 28 certificated assistants, 93 uncertificated assistants, and 16 supplementary teachers.

The Standing Joint Committee of Industrial Women's Organisations has sent a strong protest to members of the London County Council against the proposal to require women teachers to resign their position in the schools upon their marriage. In the opinion of this Committee, the proposal would have a bad effect both socially and educationally. Women teachers with experience as wives and mothers would bring to their work a riper understanding of the children in their care. It had been urged that married women should be giving the whole of their time and attention to their own children at home, but the Standing Joint Committee points out that this argument loses its force because the regulation is to apply to childless teachers, and is further stultified by the exception made in the case of married teachers whose husbands are incapacitated or have left them. Thus the regulation would bring about the ridiculous result that some married teachers would be expected to do single-handed the work of teaching, home-care, and nursing, so that poverty, not efficiency in teaching, was being made the qualification for the married women who are to be retained in the schools.

## SPRING SALE OF WORK.

We remind our readers that there is now only one week left in which to prepare for the Spring Sale of Work to be held this year (by kind invitation of Dr. Octavia Lewin) at 25, Wimpole Street, W.1, on FRIDAY, MARCH 9th, from 3 to 8.30 p.m.

The Sale will be opened at 3.30 p.m. by Dr. Mary Scharlieb, C.B.E.

There will be many useful articles for sale, including Household Goods, Underclothing, Fancy Goods, and Toys; also a Pound Stall, and a Stall for Welsh Produce, Cakes, and Sweets. Gifts are much needed for all these stalls, and will be gladly received by the Hon. Fair Secretary at the Office. Those who have already promised help with the Stalls are Mrs. Holmes, Mrs. Mustard, Mrs. Pierotti, Mrs. Tanner, Mrs. Whetton, and Mrs. Trafford Williams, and it is hoped that Miss Alix Clark will be able to be present to take charge of the Montgomery Boroughs Stall, for Welsh Produce, Cakes, and Sweets.

An attractive programme of music has been arranged. Among those who have already promised to assist are Mrs. Cunningham, Mrs. Hawkins, Mrs. Legge, and Mrs. Sparrow. Dr. Octavia Lewin will give a Lecture on "Shut Your Mouth and Save Your Life," at 4.30 and 6.30 p.m. The competitions are being arranged by Mrs. Pierotti; Mrs. Grace Goodall has consented to do character readings; and there will be a Dutch auction at 7.30 p.m.

Mrs. Knight has kindly undertaken the arrangements for tea, which will be served from 3.30 to 6 p.m. Promises of gifts, either in money or in kind, will be most welcome to help this important part of the work. The goods most wanted are tea, butter, bread, scones, sugar, milk, cream, biscuits, all sorts of cakes, etc.

All members and friends are cordially invited to visit the Sale some time during the afternoon or evening.

The notices are now ready. Will all members and friends who have not already received their notice apply to the Office as early as possible?

(Hon. Fair Sec.) ELIZABETH BERRY.

## WOMEN AND THE LAW.

### Dismissal of Woman Juror.

For the first time on record, a woman took her seat as a juror at a London City inquest, last Monday. Dr. Waldo, the Coroner, said that he did not want any women in the jury box, so the woman retired, leaving eleven men on the jury. We think it is time that all discretionary powers which Judges, Recorders, and Coroners now possess in the matter of dismissing women from jury service should be taken away from them, and that men and women should be on an equal footing in regard to jury service. Our own view is that enfranchisement should be the only basis for jury service for men and women.

### Inadequate Sentence for Assault.

The women of Aldershot are extremely angry at the result of a case tried at the recent Winchester Assizes. A man charged with an assault on a girl of fourteen, who was stated to be now expecting motherhood, was sentenced to seven days' imprisonment by Mr. Justice Rowlatt, but, in view of the time he had been in custody awaiting trial, he was liberated on the rising of the Court. Mr. Justice Rowlatt said that, had the parties been of a higher standard of intellect, he would have punished the man severely. The man was a lodger in the girl's home. Mrs. Robinson, wife of the Chairman of the Aldershot Bench of Magistrates, and President of the Women's Citizens' Association, said, at a meeting held in Aldershot last week, that the decision of the Judge was a monstrous one.

### "Reasonable Cause to Believe."

The Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1922, abolished the "reasonable cause to believe" defence, which could be put forward by men accused of having carnal knowledge of a girl between the ages of thirteen and sixteen, but provided that such a belief should still be a valid defence in the case of a man under twenty-three years of age, if he had not previously been charged with such an offence. A man accused of a serious offence against a girl of fifteen came before Mr. Justice Avory recently at the Oxford Assizes. The Judge remarked that "this is the most ill-considered and most impracticable section of any statute I know. . . . In order to ascertain whether this man has a defence, I am bound to let the jury know whether he has been convicted. He must give evidence of character, and if it should be bad, the jury cannot give an impartial verdict." The jury did not accept the girl's uncorroborated evidence, and the man was acquitted. Mr. Wardlaw Milne (Kidderminster) asked the Attorney-General in the House of Commons, last week, if his attention had been drawn to this criticism, and whether it was proposed to bring forward any Bill to amend the Act? The Home Secretary replied that the points raised by the learned Judge had been noted, and would be borne in mind should any opportunity occur of amending the Act.

### Coercion of Wives.

A Criminal Justice Bill has been introduced into the House of Lords by the Lord Chancellor, Viscount Cave, clause 24 of which reads: "(1) Any presumption of law that an offence by a wife in the presence of her husband is committed under the coercion of the husband is hereby abolished. (2) This section shall come into operation on the passing of this Act."

### Age of Consent in India.

According to *The Times*, the Legislative Assembly last week carried against the Government an important amendment to the Bill giving effect to the League of Nations' convention with regard to the traffic in women and children. The Government Bill fixed the age of consent at 16. An amendment was moved to increase the age to 18, and was carried by a majority of three, most of the European non-official members voting for it. In view of the situation thus created, Sir Malcolm Hailey did not move formally for the passing of the Bill.

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FRANCHISE CLUB,** 9, Grafton Street, Piccadilly, W.1.—Subscription: London Members, £2 2s., Country Members £1 5s (Irish, Scottish, and Foreign Members, 10s. 6d.) per annum. Entrance Fee, one guinea. Excellent Catering; Luncheons and Dinners à la Carte—All particulars, Secretary. Tel.: Mayfair 3932.

## Women's Freedom League.

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS W.F.L.

### LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Friday, March 9th, at 12 a.m., Minerva Publishing Co., Ltd., Annual Shareholders' Meeting, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.

Friday, March 9th, from 3 to 8.30 p.m. Women's Freedom League Spring Sale at 25, Wimpole Street, W. (by kind permission of Dr. Lewin). Opener: Dr. Mary Scharlieb, C.B.E., at 3.30 p.m. Lecture by Dr. Lewin, at 4.30 p.m., and at 6.30 p.m., "Shut your Mouth and Save your Life."

Saturday, March 10th, at 10 a.m. National Executive Committee Meeting, at 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.

Monday, March 12th, at 6 p.m. Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1. Subject: "The Relations of this Country with the Central Powers." Speaker: Miss Christina Roberts.

Friday, March 23rd, at 3.30 p.m. Reception at Minerva Club, Brunswick Square (corner of Coram and Hunter Streets), in support of the Rome Congress. Speakers: Mrs. Fawcett, J.P., LL.A., Mrs. G. F. Abbott, Mrs. Herabai Tata and others. Tickets 1/-, including Tea, to be obtained at this office.

Monday, March 26th, at 6 p.m. Public Meeting, Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1. Subject: "The Relations of this Country with Russia." (Speaker to be announced later).

Tuesday, March 27th, at 3.15 p.m. Hampstead Branch Meeting, at 7, Gainsborough Gardens, N.W.3. (by kind permission of Dr. Knight).

Saturday, April 28th. Women's Freedom League Annual Conference, Caxton Hall.

### PROVINCES.

Tuesday, March 6th, at 7.30 p.m. Middlesbrough. A Public Meeting will be held at the Suffrage Room, 231A, The Arcade. Speaker: Mrs. Olive M. Aldridge. Subject: "National Housing Policy and Administration." Chair: Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P.

Friday, March 23rd, at 3.30 p.m. Bexhill. Public Meeting at Glynne Hall, Sea Road. Speaker: Dr. Octavia Lewin. Subject: "How to Prevent Diseases in the Home."

Tuesday, March 27th, at 8 p.m. Southend-on-Sea and District. Public Meeting at St. John's Ambulance Hall, 76, Queen's Road. Speaker: Mrs. Stanley. Subject: "Hostels for Women Workers."

### WALES.

Wednesday, March 7th. Newtown. A Women's Freedom League Concert, to purchase a gramophone for the inmates of Caerws Poor Law Institution, will be held in the Victoria Theatre, at Newtown (kindly lent free of cost by Sidney Attwood, Esq.) Prices 1/- and 6d.

### OTHER SOCIETIES.

Wednesday, March 7th, at 8 p.m. National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, Demonstration on Equal Franchise for Men and Women, Central Hall, Westminster. Speakers: Lady Astor, M.P., Miss Margaret Bondfield, J.P., Lady Bonham Carter, Mrs. Henry Fawcett, J.P., Miss Daisy Richardson, Mrs. Wintringham, M.P. Chairman: Miss Eleanor Rathbone, J.P., M.A., C.C. Single Tickets (numbered and reserved) 5/-, 2/6, 1/-. A special block of 5/- seats for our members at the reduced price of 1/-, each; apply to 144, High Holborn.

## In Memoriam.

**Dr. Constance E. Long.**—Our members will join with all British medical women in regret at the recent death in New York from pneumonia of Dr. Long, of Gordon Square, one of the original members of the Women's Freedom League. Dr. Long qualified in 1896, and was a busy consultant and a specialist in children's ailments. A short time ago she was President of the Association of Registered Medical Women, and of late years had devoted herself chiefly to Psycho-Analysis, of which she was one of the most brilliant practitioners.

**Mrs. Sabina Branch.**—All the many friends of our old and generous member and friend, Mrs. Branch, of Northampton, will grieve to hear of her death on February 1st, about a year after that of her invalid husband. All her life very active both in mind and body, and of great courage and independence, her charm and kindness of heart and ready, helpful sympathy endeared her to all her friends, and her frequent, cheery little visits to us were always warmly welcomed. She was keenly interested in education, in Toynbee Hall, in Internationalism and Peace, and in women's freedom. In the Election contest, last November, she worked and spoke much for her woman Parliamentary candidate.

### MINERVA PUBLISHING CO., LTD.

The Annual Shareholders' Meeting of the above Company will be held on Friday, March 9th, at 12 noon, at the Company's Office, 144, High Holborn.

## BRANCH NOTES.

### PORTSMOUTH.

The Grand Jury Room was packed to its utmost capacity on Monday, February 19th, when the Portsmouth Branch of the Women's Freedom League carried out a model election on Proportional Representation lines. Mrs. Whetton introduced the candidates (five in number), each of whom made a speech of seven minutes, with three minutes for questions. The audience then voted, and while Miss Morton, M.B.E., counted the votes, Mrs. Whetton spoke on the aims and objects of the Women's Freedom League. Miss Morton, before declaring the result of the election, spoke briefly on Proportional Representation. The three candidates elected were Miss Laphorn (Liberal), 65 votes, Miss Maynard (Independent), 45, and Mrs. Colpus (Labour), 28. Mr. Abbott and Mr. Heath were the defeated candidates.

A resolution protesting against the action of the Portsmouth Guardians in refusing to appoint a woman relieving officer was carried with great enthusiasm.

A good collection was taken, and all the VOTES were sold. (Hon. Sec.) MRS. WHETTON, 89, Festing Grove, Southsea.

### WALLASEY.

The first meeting of the Wallasey branch of the Women's Freedom League was held on Wednesday of last week at "Holly Bank," Mount Road, by kind permission of Mrs. Pearson, and took the form of a Mexican tea, everyone bringing something and buying something. The object of the sale was to raise funds, so that public meetings may be held in future. Proceedings commenced with a short concert. Mrs. A. W. Walker gave several songs, humorous and otherwise, and played the accompaniments. Mrs. George Raws contributed soprano songs, while contralto songs were given by Madame Rougeult. After partaking of a dainty tea, the buying and selling commenced, and soon all the articles were sold. An interesting lecture on the subject of health was also given by Dr. W. Stansfield, T.C. A good deal of literature was sold at the meeting, and an appeal made for more members. (Hon. Sec.) MRS. ANDAIN, 22, Cromer Drive.

### BEXHILL.

Will members take note that all the Women's Freedom League meetings will be held in future at Glynne Hall, Sea Road? The next fixtures are:—Friday, March 23rd, 3.30 p.m., Dr. Octavia Lewin's lecture on "How to Prevent Diseases in the Home." Monday, April 16th, 8 p.m., Speakers: Miss Elsie Morton, M.B.E., W. Meads, Esq. Subject: "Women's Duties and Responsibilities." Chair: Councillor Christina Meads. (Organizer) Miss WHITE, 8, Holmdale Gardens, Hastings.

## OUR OPEN COLUMN.

To the Editor of THE VOTE.

MADAM,—A constant reader and admirer of THE VOTE, may I point out two inaccuracies which have crept into the issue of February 16, both on page 52?

No. 1 (under "The King's Speech").—"Since 1918, when the women of this country who were over thirty years of age were enfranchised and became responsible citizens," etc. This is incorrect. No woman becomes enfranchised by reaching the age of thirty. She must in addition either be married to a voter, or occupy a dwelling taken in her own name, unfurnished (University and Service votes apart).

No. 2 (under "The Doctrine of Coercion").—"We quite agree that the present law in regard to the presumption of the coercion of married women is out of date" (i.e., in crimes committed jointly). By law, a man can coerce his wife in various departments of family life. Three of these are mentioned as unjust a few lines below, viz., "guardianship of their children, divorce, and nationality." And there are others that might have been cited, such as absolute dependence for domicile, ditto for food and clothes. In any of these five departments a husband can, without breaking the law, threaten his wife, and thus force her to condone or connive at crime. The Law, which has established the subjection of the wife, is acting logically in assuming that the subjection exists. The Church, also, demands (as if it were necessary!) a vow to obey, and a certain Bishop gave his pronouncement that this promise includes even crimes. Hence we are only playing into the hands of the adversary if we try to abolish the very thin protection the law affords the woman chattel against the worst misuse of power.

Similarly, if we forget the millions of women over thirty who are voteless because they have no furniture, we are again following the lead of the adversary, who has constantly for five years pushed the fiction that women over 30 have the vote, and has attained the desired result—i.e., the cessation of woman's effort. Some accurate instruction to meet this mining of the citadel is the need of the hour.—Yours, etc., K. A. RALEIGH.

## GREEN, WHITE & GOLD FAIR.

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY,  
NOVEMBER 23rd and 24th.

## STRING BAND.

Amateur String Players are invited to give their services to provide a Band for the days of the Fair. The Band will be under the Hon. Conductorship of Mrs. Van Raalte. Application to be made to the Hon. Fair Sec., Women's Freedom League Office, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.

FRIDAY,  
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**T**HE PIONEER CLUB has re-opened at 12, Cavendish Place. Entrance fee in abeyance *pro tem*. Town Members £5 5s.; Country and Professional £4 4s.

**F**ELLOWSHIP SERVICES.—Guild-house, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, March 4th. 12 noon. Little Rally for Children of all Ages. 3 15. Music, Poetry, Lecture. Dr. Dearmer. 6.30. Dr. Dearmer.

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