

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
EQUAL CITIZENSHIP

Annual Report

1935-1936

PAMPHLET

PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING
MILLCENT FAWCETT HALL, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1,
MARCH 18TH, 19TH, AND 20TH.

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NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP

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NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP

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Secretary

MISS M. E. GREEN

Office

ROOM 116, THAMES HOUSE, MILLBANK, S.W.1.

I.—Women on Public Bodies

To work for the return of more women to the House of Commons, the right of women to sit in the House of Lords, the return of more women—whether as elected or co-opted members—on local governing bodies, the appointment of more women on Government Commissions and Committees, and as magistrates and jurors.

II.—Economic Status of Women

To work for equal opportunity between men and women, as regards recruitment, training, opportunities for promotion, and pay, in the public services, and in the professions and industry, to ensure that protective legislation for industrial or office workers shall be based on the nature of the work and not on the sex of the worker, and to promote the abolition of restrictions on the paid work of married women.

III.—Status of Wives and Mothers

To work for improvements in the status of wives and mothers, including:—

- a. a national maternity service, including the provision of gynaecological clinics and contraceptive information;
- b. the provision of family allowances and children's rent rebates;
- c. the provision of dependants' allowances for insured sick persons;
- d. legislation to give equal status to husbands and wives in all matters, including nationality, domicile, property, responsibility for criminal actions and torts;
- e. a just provision for spouses and children with regard to maintenance during the lifetime of the other spouse and after his or her death.

IV.—Equal Moral Standard

To work for an equal moral standard between men and women and to oppose any legislation or regulations directed solely against women.

V.—Peace and the League of Nations

To work for the League of Nations, for Disarmament, and for the cause of peace. To secure the appointment of an adequate number of women on the League of Nations, international conferences, committees and commissions.

VI.—Status of Women throughout the British Empire

To assist women throughout the British Empire to achieve rights of equal citizenship and equality of status and opportunity with men.

Annual Report

1935-36

The Annual Council Meeting of the National Council for Equal Citizenship was held in March, 1935, at the Women's Service Hall. There was a good attendance at the meetings and a record one at the Luncheon, where the Guests of Honour were the Viscount Cecil, who spoke on the Peace Ballot, and the Marquess of Lothian and Dr. Maude Royden, who spoke on the India Bill.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

Mrs. Hubback was re-elected President and Miss Corns Treasurer. The Committee appointed the Hon. Mrs. Franklin Chairman, and Miss Cameron Assistant Treasurer. The Committee very much regretted that Mrs. Wignall, who was elected at the 1935 Council, was unable to serve owing to illness. Mrs. Clement Davies and Miss Stoneman were co-opted to the Committee during the year.

NUMBER OF SOCIETIES

The number of Societies affiliated to the N.C.E.C. is 50. The Standing Committee at Church Stretton has dissolved during the year but we are glad to have two new affiliations:—The Union of Jewish Women and the Guildhouse W.C.A.

Work for the Programme

It is difficult this year to find any marked trend as regards the position of women; the year has been occupied with steady work along several different fronts.

THE GENERAL ELECTION

The N.C.E.C. sent round two questionnaires, one on the more important points in our Programme and one on peace questions alone. Immediately after the election we issued a statement with

regard to the small number of women returned to Parliament—9 out of 67. It was pointed out that 37 out of 56 unsuccessful candidates stood for seats which since 1918 had never been held by a member of their own political party; that during the last six General Elections in only 27 cases out of a possible 336 were the seats held by the Parties represented by women candidates at this Election. When these returns were compared with a random selection of twice as many men candidates, it was found that men were contesting constituencies in which their parties had previously won, in the proportion of 61 to 318. It appears, therefore—what was already obvious from the type of constituencies allotted to women—that they had to pick their road to Parliament over rougher ground than had their male companions.

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ACT

During the summer this Act reached the Statute Book. Several real improvements in the status of women had been effected during its passage through Parliament—due very largely to the work of Miss Rathbone and the British Committee for Indian Women's Franchise, which had been initiated by her the previous year and which carried on its work through our Headquarters. Six seats are now to be reserved in the Federal Council of State, though no such provision was made either in the White Paper or in the Bill; a new clause was inserted that a person is not to be disqualified by sex from being appointed to any Civil Service or Civil post under the Crown in India (with certain modifications); another new clause provides that the need for application for otherwise qualified voters is to be removed at the second election in practically all the provinces.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF

Unemployment Statutory Committee

In February, 1935, the N.C.E.C. took a deputation to the Unemployment Statutory Committee to ask for an approximation in the rates of contributions and benefits between men and women. The Committee reported in favour of the addition of a shilling to the children's allowance—a demand which had been put first by the Children's Minimum Campaign Committee and through it by the N.C.E.C. Unfortunately, no change was recommended in the amount of women's benefits, although the case which had been put by the N.C.E.C. for their virtual equality with men had appeared to be accepted by the Committee.

The Unemployment Assistance Board

When the scales proposed by the Unemployment Assistance Board were published, it was found, that although these constituted

an improvement on those under many of the Public Assistance Committees, the scales were not adequate in the case of the larger families to give the physiological minimum which had been asked for by the Children's Minimum Campaign Committee.

SCHOOL MEALS AND MILK

School Meals

The Children's Minimum Campaign Committee took action during the year in order to try to obtain an extension of school meals for the larger families under the Unemployment Assistance Board, and other necessitous under-nourished children.

When, later, a circular was issued by the Board of Education stating that free food should only be supplied if, as a result of a medical inspection, a child is found both to be malnourished and its parents cannot pay for its food, the Children's Minimum Campaign Committee approached the Government, to point out that the early stages of under-nourishment cannot be detected at an inspection, and that the income scales adopted by local authorities was often too low. Our Societies were asked to co-operate by making an enquiry into school feeding arrangements. The circular has since been modified.

Milk for Mothers and Children under five

A memorandum on the provision of both free and cheap milk for nursing and expectant mothers and for children under five was sent by the Children's Minimum Campaign Committee to the Milk Reorganisation Committee. In December a deputation was received by Lord Eustace Percy on behalf of the Prime Minister, during which the Government admitted for the first time that malnutrition does exist in certain areas.

WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE

In accordance with instructions given at the last Council meeting, a questionnaire was prepared and sent round to our Societies on the position of women in the local government services. Miss Stoneman drew up a report based on the answers and the matter is under consideration by a special Committee set up by the Executive Committee.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Questionnaires were prepared and sent round to our Societies on the occasion of the Local Government Elections, together with suggestions as to the best way of obtaining answers from candidates.

MARRIED WOMEN'S WORK

In July, the L.C.C. raised the marriage bar for teachers and doctors in their service, a demand which had been put forward by our own and other women's organisations in London for many years.

MATERNAL MORTALITY

The N.C.E.C. has co-operated with the Maternal Mortality Committee of Women's Organisations by sending round to affiliated Societies a statement of policy drawn up as a result of a conference held by the Maternal Mortality Committee in May. Affiliated Societies were asked to bring pressure to bear on their own local authorities to see that an adequate maternity service on the lines of the policy was established or developed in their locality.

MONEY PAYMENT ACT

Miss Rathbone had given evidence the previous year before the Departmental Committee on Imprisonment for Debt in support of the attachment of wages in cases where a man persistently refuses to pay a maintenance or affiliation order. The Committee had reported in favour of this, but it was not incorporated in the Bill in spite of Miss Rathbone's efforts—on the grounds mainly that it was unacceptable to the Trade Unions.

INHERITANCE (FAMILY PROVISIONS) BILL

Unfortunately, no place in the ballot was won for this Bill last year. In the autumn, after discussion with those interested, it was decided to try once more this year, and failing success again, to initiate the Bill in the House of Lords. Unfortunately, only a place too low to be of any use, has been gained this year.

MARRIAGE LAW REFORM

In order to carry out the resolution of the Council meeting that an examination should be made of the grounds for divorce in foreign countries, a pamphlet was prepared by Mrs. Gray, with information on the subject.

THE LAW REFORM ACT

In July, the Law Reform Bill introduced by the Government was passed, embodying the recommendations of the Chancellor's Committee of Legal Reform to the effect that a married woman

should have the same rights and privileges with regard to her property, liability for tort and her right of contract as a single person. An amendment initiated by the N.C.E.C. to enable a husband and wife to sue each other in tort was not accepted.

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

The N.C.E.C. co-operated with the N.U.W.T. in a public meeting which they organised on this question.

NATIONALITY OF MARRIED WOMEN

The N.C.E.C. joined in a letter to women's organisations in the Dominions, asking them to bring influence on their own Government to agree to the principle that a married woman should have the right to retain her nationality on marriage: the British Government having stated that it could accept no change unless it was agreed to by all the self-governing Dominions.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The N.C.E.C. was represented by the President on the deputation to Mr. Baldwin organised by the National Declaration Committee in July to inform him of the result of the Peace Ballot, for which most of our affiliated Societies had work so hard. During the year, whenever opportunities have arisen, resolutions have been sent to the Government in favour of Disarmament, Sanctions, etc. The Council has co-opted with the National Declaration Committee, the Women's Peace Crusade and several other bodies.

BERMUDA WOMEN'S FRANCHISE

Miss Rathbone led a deputation to the Secretary of State to the Colonies to ask him to use his influence in order that Bermuda women may be given the franchise. The deputation was sympathetically received and the Secretary of State promised to bring whatever influence he could.

I.A.W.S.E.C. CONFERENCE AT ISTANBUL

At the triennial conference of the International Alliance, Miss Picton-Turbervill led the British delegation, as proxy for the President, who was unable to attend. The other delegates of the N.C.E.C. were Lady Astor, Miss Corns, Mrs. Clement Davies, Miss Teacher, Miss MacGregor, Mrs. Montgomery, Mrs. Spiller and Miss Styer. The Women's Freedom League and St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance formed part of the British delegation. There

were representatives of women from 30 different countries. The conference was held in the Summer Palace of the Sultans. Great interest was aroused and the delegates were invited to meet the Atta Turk at Angora. Resolutions were passed on the status of women, equal moral standard, equal economic principles, child marriage, etc.. From information that has been received through the International Office we know that this Conference proved to be a great impetus and inspiration to women in countries which have been recently enfranchised, such as India and Turkey. It was also an encouragement to further effort to the women of those countries that are not yet enfranchised.

OBITUARY

Great sorrow was felt by all of those interested in the two causes of disarmament and of women's emancipation at the death of MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON. Mr. Henderson had all his life been an ardent supporter of women's suffrage and of the fight for equal opportunities for men and women. The last years of his life were devoted to the even greater cause of disarmament. Another much regretted loss was that of LADY BIELBY, who for many years had taken an active interest in the work and had been a most generous donor to our funds.

Work of Societies

There seems strangely little relation between the numerical strength of the various affiliated Societies and what they are able to achieve in work for the Council's programme.

For instance, Rotherham, with very few members, was able to back up our efforts at headquarters through letters to its Member of Parliament and to the Government on subjects suggested in the monthly letter. It arranged a deputation to candidates at the General Election and sent questionnaires at the Borough Council elections. It approached the Medical Officer with regard to the development of child welfare and maternity work. Petersfield, another small society, organised a Town Hall meeting during the election, at which the two candidates spoke on the questions on the Council's programme before an audience of over 500.

On the other hand, a few of the Societies, although they may provide attractive programmes for their own members and do useful work for local charities, seems to take little action to further the objects of the Council, which they have accepted as their own.

The records of such Societies as Birmingham, Bolton, Edinburgh and Preston, show what can be achieved when numerical strength is combined with real enthusiasm and hard work. Bolton,

for example, has done splendid work for peace, and in addition to letters to the Government, Members of Parliament and public meetings, organised in co-operation with the L.N.U., a great Peace Procession, followed by a United Peace Service in the Parish Church; School meals centres were visited and a report submitted to the Director of Education; the appropriate authorities were approached with regard to the methods used to recover maternity fees from poor patients, complaints of girls being annoyed by men in cars, appointment of women police (two more appointed). Evidence presented on behalf of the Society was influential in defeating a proposed extension of hours of opening of public houses. The Society was instrumental in securing improvements in the arrangements for mental patients under the Poor Law. It also staffs a soup kitchen for the unemployed.

As reported last year, most of the Societies have taken an active part in the Peace Ballot and many of them have now offered to co-operate in the proposed campaign of the Women's Peace Crusade.

About half the Societies brought our questionnaire before the candidates at the General Election. A smaller number took action at the Local Elections. Most of them have held meetings on Marriage Law Reform and have enquired into the position of women in their local government services. Many of them take an active part in local government work, send regular observers to local Council meetings and police courts, and continue to press for more women police and magistrates. Sutton was successful in obtaining an additional woman magistrate. Among the more exciting activities undertaken may be mentioned the establishment of a voluntary birth control clinic by Hereford, together with the raising of the necessary funds. The Edinburgh branch co-operated in joining a Special Areas Auxiliary Service and in launching a programme of popular addresses in a new housing area. Birmingham has been instrumental in getting a Municipal birth control clinic set up. It also organises an annual competition for women's societies in the district, with the aim of arousing interest in public questions.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Annual Statement of Accounts deals with the period from January 1st to December 31st, 1935.

The receipts for the year from subscriptions and affiliation fees amounted to £209 0s. 9d.; donations to £119 3s. 6d.; which, with sundry other receipts, not including the International Alliance Quota, made a total of £335 11s. 1d. Against this, office expenditure, including rent (£61 17s. 1d.), salaries (£201 10s. 1d.), and general expenses (£110 19s. 8d.), amounted to £373 6s. 10d.

Comparing these figures with last year, affiliation fees and donations have remained about the same, but the subscriptions have fallen by £46 7s. 3d. (after a fall of £23 12s. 6d. the previous year) and salaries have increased by £23 14s. 7d., so that we find ourselves with a debit balance on the year's working of £38 15s. 9d.

With the balance of £31 carried forward from 1934 and an item of £2 4s. 3d. sundry debtors, our debit balance was reduced to a few pounds, but accounts amounting to approximately £25 had to be held over for payment until the New Year.

No special appeal or money-raising effort was made during 1935, and death has robbed us of many loyal friends.

The precarious nature of our position is all too evident, and if the work of the Society is to be carried on on a satisfactory basis, an additional income of between £50 and £100 is needed. Since it is subscriptions which have shown such a marked decrease, it is very much hoped that a great effort will be made by all those who value the work that the Society is doing, to either obtain new members, or to so increase their own subscriptions that this relatively small sum may be secured.

Our thanks are especially due to the following Societies for their generous donations:—Abertillery W.C.A., £2 2s.; Aigburth W.C.A., 9s.; Aston-u-Lyne W.C.A., £1 19s.; Bebington W.C.A., £3 19s.; Citizenship Sub-Section of the Birmingham N.C.W., £2 2s.; Gillingham Society, £1 1s.; Kensington W.C.A., £5 5s.; Liverpool W.C.A. Council, £10; Malvern S.E.C., £2 10s.; North Western Federation, £5 12s.; Petersfield S.E.C., £10; Preston W.C.S., £1 1s.; Sefton Park W.C.A., £3 3s.; Sutton Coldfield W.C.A., £1 1s.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
To Rent of Office, Lighting and Heating		61 17 1
„ Office Salaries		201 10 1
„ Office and General Expenses—		
Telephone and Telegrams	12 18 11	
Postage	27 12 3	
Miscellaneous	12 11 4	
		<u>53 2 6</u>
„ Printing and Stationery		36 4 7
„ Contributions to other Societies		7 5 0
„ Annual Report		7 7 0
„ Audit and Accountancy Charges		4 4 0
„ Bank Charges		0 19 1
„ Depreciation: Furniture and Fittings		1 17 6
„ International Alliance Quota		30 9 0
		<u>£404 15 10</u>

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

BALANCE SHEET

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
N.C.E.C. CAPITAL FUND—		
As on 31st December, 1934	66 10 2	
Less Balance transferred from Income and Expenditure Account	38 15 9	
		<u>27 14 5</u>
RESERVE FUND		75 2 5
BY-ELECTION FUND		18 4 8
SUNDRY CREDITORS		3 3 9
		<u>£124 5 3</u>

We have examined the above Statement with the books, accounts therewith.

Spencer House, South Place, E.C.2.

March 2nd, 1936.

FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP

THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1935

	£ s. d.
By Affiliation Fees	42 13 0
„ Subscriptions	166 7 9
„ Donations	119 3 6
„ Literature Sales	4 9 1
„ Interest on Investment	2 16 0
„ Annual Council Meeting (less Expenses)	0 1 9
„ Donations in connection with International Alliance paid over as <i>per contra</i>	30 9 0
„ Balance, being excess of Expenditure over Income, carried to Capital Account	38 15 9
	<u>£404 15 10</u>

FOR EQUAL CITIZENSHIP

31ST DECEMBER, 1935

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
FURNITURE AND FITTINGS—		
As on 31st December, 1934	37 9 6	
Less Depreciation	1 17 6	
		<u>35 12 0</u>
RESERVE FUND INVESTMENT—		
£80 3½% War Loan Registered Stock		75 2 5
PAYMENT IN CONNECTION WITH MEETING IN 1936		3 0 0
DEPOSIT WESTMINSTER ELECTRIC SUPPLY CORPORATION LIMITED		1 0 0
SUNDRY DEBTORS		2 4 3
CASH AT BANK AND IN HAND		7 6 7
		<u>£124 5 3</u>

and vouchers relating thereto and certify the same to be in accordance

(Signed) KNOX CROPPER & CO.,

Chartered Accountants.

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