

THE VOTE,
FEB. 17, 1928.

BLOCK THE BILL.

THE VOTE

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

VOL. XXIX. No. 956.

(Registered at
the G.P.O.)

ONE PENNY.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1928

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

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XXXV.—WHEN I AM M.P.

MARY AGNES HAMILTON, Prospective Labour Candidate for Blackburn.

I do not imagine that, when I am M.P., I am going to be able to make much difference, by myself. It is not on my own merits, but on those of my Party, that I want to be returned to the House of Commons. It is because that Party stands for me for all the things I believe in, and, above all, for a reasoned plan of constructive change that can, I am convinced, transform the life of the average working man and woman of all classes to something far better, happier, and more genuinely alive than it is at present, that I want the chance to take my share in its effort to do this. Co-operation is the essence of the Socialist idea; to take part in politics, Socialist politics, seems to me a duty; the most active way of taking part is to endeavour to get into the House of Commons, since it is there, in our time at any rate, that practical steps have got to be taken to improve the conditions of ordinary life.



MARY AGNES HAMILTON.

The knowledge of what those conditions really are for the vast majority, must make a revolutionary, in spirit, of any woman. And Blackburn, which is the place in

which I now know them best, is a perpetual goad to the imagination. More than anything in the world, I want to be able to do something, however small, to lessen the burden that rests on the women workers there—hundreds of thousands of them—in the Mills. The immediate things that Blackburn needs are the ratification by our Government of the Washington Convention—in order that the working week may not be increased beyond 48 hours; the improvement of housing; the opportunity of extended, real education for the children. Beyond these immediate issues, which are within the scope of immediate Parliamentary action, it needs those general social and economic changes which make up the economic side of Socialism. Of the spirit of Socialism—co-operation, comradeship, kindness, and mutual toleration—there is a great deal already among these hard-driven workers; and in so far as one can, as an M.P., make the point of view of the workers effective in national life, one is doing truly patriotic work. It is to help to do that, that I want to be in the House of Commons.

EQUAL POLITICAL RIGHTS CAMPAIGN.

The Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee held a successful meeting on Wednesday last week and enthusiastically carried the following resolution:—

"This Meeting of the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee notes the statement in the King's Speech that proposals will be brought forward in Parliament for amending the law relating to the Parliamentary and Local Government Franchise.

"Relying upon the pledge made by the Prime Minister on behalf of his Government that women shall have the Parliamentary vote at 21 and on the same terms as men and shall exercise that vote at the next election—this meeting calls for the immediate introduction and passage into law of a simple measure, not complicated with other electoral matters."

For twenty minutes before the meeting began, Miss Froud of the National Union of Women Teachers conducted Community singing, which included the "Women's Marseillaise" and Ethel Smyth's "March of the Women." The Viscountess Rhondda, Chairman of the Six Point Group and Chairman of the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee then took the Chair and read cordial messages from Mrs. Despard, Dame Millicent Fawcett and Mrs. Pankhurst. She said that although hope might be allowed on reading the speeches in Parliament on the previous day, women were really no further on, they knew no more than they did before when they had Mr. Baldwin's pledge, they still did not know what the Bill to be introduced was to contain, neither did they know when it was to be introduced. Under the circumstances the women must wait—wait and watch for the introduction of Sir William Joynson-Hicks' Bill. She urged the application of the words of Ethel Smyth's "March of the Women."

"On, On, that ye have done
But for the work of to-day preparing."

Mrs. Abbott, Chairman of the Open Door Council then moved the resolution, expressing the view that Mr. Baldwin might well have graced justice with graciousness and told them how and when they were to be enfranchised. She quoted advice, written in 1839, to a young wife and to a sister, and rejoiced that to-day the grovelling wife and grovelling sister were regarded as a danger. She claimed for the feminist movement the credit of much of the improvement in the position of women and urged young women to come into it, to work for equal opportunity, equal pay for equal work, and added that the best protection was self-protection. Alluding to the production of "Macbeth" in modern dress, she made the audience laugh by altering the text also as:—

"Is this a ballot paper which I see before me,
The writing toward my hand? Come, let me
clutch thee:—
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still."

Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, President of the Women's Freedom League, seconded, and spoke of the first disappointment when the King's Speech was read, followed by a better feeling of hope. She said the wind was right, the tide was right, to bring their ship to harbour, but no slackening of care and concentration must be allowed to endanger its passage. Members of Parliament must not only be persuaded into being in favour, they must be in their places during the passage of the

Bill. She spoke of the little bit of militancy indulged in on Tuesday morning by the Young Suffragists, and praised them particularly for their political intelligence and success in getting on the front pages of the whole Press, just at the right moment, the fact that the young women wanted the vote.

Miss Nancy Stewart Parnell, of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance, then made a fine speech which was cheered again and again. With a dignity and a skill beyond her years (she is a disfranchised Under Thirty), she spoke of the onerous and responsible work being done, and well done, by young women who yet are disfranchised. She explained why the young women were determined to have the vote at 21, on the same terms as men, and immediately. She showed how Britain remained the only great nation to disfranchise its young women, and asked was there something inferior to other nations in British youth, and urged, for the honour of Britain, the immediate removal of this discrimination.

Miss Froud analysed the allusions to franchise made in Parliament upon the previous day and trounced the vulgarities indulged in by both the Mover and Seconder of the Address. She amused the audience by remarking that Mr. Lloyd George had asked exactly the questions which women asked. When he asked them, he was allowed quietly to resume his seat and his questions were answered. When the women had asked the same questions they had been cast out, at his instigation, with the utmost ruthlessness. She urged the Equal Political Rights Campaign Committee to gather together all suffragists, to work and concentrate until Equal Franchise was won, and then still to hold together to use their enfranchisement to attain the complete emancipation of women. The race could only go forward on justice for women.

KING'S SPEECH DINNER.

The whole of last week was filled with meetings reminiscent of pre-suffrage days and the real struggle which women had to secure even partial political enfranchisement, and last Friday the Women's Freedom League, after a delightful dinner served at the Minerva Club, recalled those days in a few bright speeches. Dr. Knight presided and told us of the Women's Mud March in which she joined just 21 years ago. Miss M. I. Neal said she was present at the meeting in Manchester when two women were thrown out of a Liberal political meeting for asking a question, and afterwards arrested. Miss Schofield Coates, J.P., Miss Munro and Mrs. M. W. Nevinson, J.P., related incidents connected with rowdy caravan and by-election meetings and other campaigns in times when Votes for Women was not a popular slogan, and when women insisted on their right to share in the political life of the country. Mrs. Stedman and Miss Lilian Pierotti told us what they could remember of the part their mothers took in this struggle. Others recalled their activities in chalking pavements, falling off lorries in their excitement to collect a crowd, etc., etc. The gem of the evening was Dr. Lewin's two-minute speech in which she told three stories, one of them describing Dr. Knight scrubbing her prison cell and insisting on leaving a clean, white design of "Votes for Women" upon the grey background.

Other issues of the series, "When I am M.P.":—Miss F. B. WIDDOWSON, January 6, 1928; Mrs. TOWNSEND, September 16, 1927; Mrs. MASSINGHAM, August 19, 1927; Miss RUBY PART, June 3, 1927; Miss ELEANOR STEWART, May 13, 1927; Mrs. BEATRICE A. BAYFIELD, April 29, 1927; Mrs. PANKHURST, February 25, 1927; Miss MONICA WHATELEY, January 21, 1927; Miss ELISABETH EDWARDS, January 7, 1927; Miss MARY RICHARDSON, September 24, 1926; The Lady RATHCREEDAN, August 27, 1926; Mrs. CECILIA STREETEN, April 2, 1926; Dr. STELLA CHURCHILL, March 12, 1926; Mrs. MURIEL MATTERS PORTER, September 12, 1924; Mrs. ANNE CORNER, August 29, 1924; Mrs. LOUIE SIMPSON, J.P., August 15, 1924; Councillor ELLEN C. WILKINSON, M.A., July 4, 1924; Miss MINNIE PALLISTER, July 6, 1923; Miss C. PICTON-TURBERVILL, September 8, 1922; Mrs. HAMILTON MORE-NESBITT, August 18, 1922; Mrs. BURNETT SMITH, June 30, 1922; Lady CURRIE, April 7, 1922; Mrs. STEWART BROWN, March 31, 1922; Miss HELEN FRASER, March 24, 1922; Lady COOPER, March 17, 1922; Commandant MARY S. ALLEN, O.B.E., February 17, 1922; Miss MARY P. GRANT, January 6, 1922; Mrs. MARJORIE PEASE, J.P., October 28, 1921; Mrs. AYRTON GOULD, October 21, 1921; Dr. ETHEL BENTHAM, October 7, 1921; Mrs. WINTRINGHAM, M.P., September 23, 1921; Mrs. ELEANOR BARTON, August 26, 1921; Mrs. SCOTT GATTY, August 12, 1921; Mrs. CORBETT ASHBY, July 15, 1921.

IN PARLIAMENT.

Franchise Bill.

On Tuesday, February 7th, notice was given that the following Government Bill would be introduced on an early day: A Bill to amend the law relating to the Parliamentary and Local Government Franchise (Sir William Joynson-Hicks).

On February 9th, MR. DALTON (Lab., Peckham) asked the Prime Minister whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce legislation this Session to disfranchise ex-Service men who are in receipt of Poor Relief? THE PRIME MINISTER: Perhaps the hon. Member will be good enough to await the introduction of the promised Franchise Bill. MR. DALTON: Do I understand the Prime Minister to say that it has not yet been decided whether or not those who have fought for their country should be allowed to vote at the next election? THE PRIME MINISTER: The only thing the hon. Member can understand is that it is not in accordance with precedents to divulge beforehand the contents of a Bill which is coming before Parliament.

Size of Classes.

MR. CHARLETON (Lab., S. Leeds) asked the President of the Board of Education the number of classes in England and Wales, at March 31st, 1926, or a more recent date, of 40-49, 50-59, and 60 pupils and over, and the percentage of all children in public elementary schools being taught in classes of 40 and over? LORD EUSTACE PERCY: The number of classes in public elementary schools in England and Wales containing over 40 pupils, on March 31st, 1927, was:—

Over 40, but under 50	43,094
Over 50, but not over 60	19,934
Over 60	278

63,306

I am afraid that it would require the expenditure of an entirely disproportionate amount of time and labour to ascertain what percentage of the total number of children in public elementary schools is being taught in these classes.

ST. JOAN'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ALLIANCE.

St. Joan's Alliance Birthday celebrations of the partial enfranchisement of women took the form of a New Year's party in aid of the funds of the "Catholic Citizen," which was held at the Caxton Hall on February 6th.

There was a delightful programme of music, one of the artistes being Miss Felia Dorio, whose mother is an active worker for suffrage in Switzerland. She sang some delightful Swiss Folk-songs, accompanied by her guitar.

Mrs. Laughton Mathews introduced His Lordship the Bishop of Pella, an associate member of the Alliance. He warned us that Equal Franchise was not yet on the Statute Book, that in public matters those who sit quiet achieve nothing, and that it was necessary to agitate in order to obtain reforms. He hoped that Catholic women would make good use of the hardly-won franchise, and spoke of the necessity of societies like our own to spur on those who were apathetic in using their votes.

INDIAN WOMEN'S DAY.

Stri-Dharma the organ of the Women's Indian Association rejoices in the January number on the great success of Women's Day, held in Madras on the day after the close of the Indian National Congress. A much larger—at least 3,000 women attended—and a much wider conference appeared this year than ever before, and an increased unity of different races was attained. The Presidents of the three Sessions were Mrs. Janakihai Bhat, speaking in Marathi; Mrs. Kibe, speaking in Hindi; and Dr. Muthulakshmi Ammal, speaking in Tamil and in English. Dr. Ammal is

Deputy-President of the Madras Legislative Council. Among the speakers were Mrs. P. K. Sen, a Bengali, and others who spoke in Telugu, Tamil, Canarese and Urdu.

Stri-Dharma summarises the results of this Conference as follows:—

"On the positive side they were: Indian Women can organise self-reliantly and efficiently; women are eager for knowledge, power, change; educated women have the faculty of practical idealism. The Resolutions constitute a Charter of Womanhood's Vision of a reformed India. On the negative side they were: the poignant pathos of the appalling illiteracy of the masses of Indian women; the problems of the language difficulty in any large All-Indian meeting; the disappointment of having no women as helpers who are in or connected with Government service, owing to the refusal of Government to let its women employees take any share except by attendance; the need for efficient loud-speaker arrangements to amplify women's voices, for only quite exceptional women have loud enough voices to carry to such immense audiences; the impossibility of depending on such leaders as Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Mrs. Besant, who may be called away at any moment on crises of political or international gravity; the public Press will not give the women's movement the proportionate amount of publicity its importance and success demand."

The Secretary of Women's Day, Mrs. Malati Patwardhan, has just been appointed an Honorary Magistrate.

The Resolutions passed at this Conference covered the following range of subjects:—Infant Mortality; Compulsory Primary Education for Girls and Boys; Defective Children; Children's Courts; Women's Associations; Social Service; Marriage Age; Marriage Purchase; Purdah; Inheritance and Succession Rights of Women; Indigenous Industries; Equal Pay for Equal Work; Child Labour; Drink; Equal Moral Standard; Age of Consent; Equal Divorce; Prostitution; Women in Local Government; Outlawry of War; Peace.

WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Good Advice to Girl Scouts.

Mrs. Hoover, Vice-Chairman of the American Girl Scout organisation is reported as saying that "Girl Scouting is something in which young people get together and in a co-operative manner take care of themselves, developing self-expression, initiative and judgment. To me, this is the most important and vital thing about it. The interests of Girl Scouting are fivefold: including recreation, education, home-making, citizenship, and an international outlook."

Woman Aviator to Fly Alone.

Mrs. Elliott Lynn is planning to fly northwards through Africa to Cairo and thence to England, using the organisation arranged for Lieutenant Bentley's flight last year. Lieutenant Bentley has offered to accompany Mrs. Lynn, but she has decided to make the journey alone.

HOW TO ESTABLISH YOUR FUTURE

ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE

BY SETTING UP A RETIRING FUND.

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MISS W. MARY NEW,
(Women's Section)

SCOTTISH EQUITABLE LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY

13, CORNHILL, E.C.3.

Phones: AVENUE 1672 and 2253.

THE VOTE.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 17th, 1928.

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.

Telegrams: "DESPARD, Museum 1429, London."
Telephone: MUSEUM 1429.

EDITORIAL.

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

BLOCK THE BILL.

The Edinburgh Corporation Bill came up for the first time before the House of Commons for Second Reading on Wednesday, February 15th, and was postponed till to-day. Several Members are blocking the Bill.

Chief Details of the Bill:—

Object.—To extend the powers of the Edinburgh Corporation in relation to Venereal Disease.

Short Title.—The Edinburgh Corporation Act 1928 and the Edinburgh Municipal and Police Acts 1879 to 1927 and the Edinburgh Municipal and Police Acts 1879 to 1928.

New Powers. (1)—The Medical Officer of Health may give written notice to any person whom he has reason to believe is suffering from infectious, untreated Venereal Disease to consult a doctor or attend a treatment centre within a reasonable specified time and produce a certificate of freedom from Venereal Disease within a stated time, or undergo treatment until certified to be cured or unlikely to cause infection.

(2) For young people under 16, the notice shall be given to one of the parents, or the guardian, and they become responsible.

(3) When the M.O.H. certifies that a person is suffering from infectious Venereal Disease and that it would be expedient for the purpose of preventing the spread of infection that such person should be removed to and detained in a hospital or other place provided by the Corporation for the treatment of Venereal Disease any Magistrate or Judge of Police on the application of the Prosecutor in the Police Court and on production of such certificate or on being satisfied by medical evidence of the necessity and desirability in the public interest of the removal and detention may grant warrant to remove such person to a hospital there to be detained until certified by the Medical Officer of Health or a doctor as cured or unlikely to infect others.

This removal and detention to be effected free of charge and the Police Court proceedings to be private.

(4) The Medical Officer of Health may require medical examination of one or both parents of any child under 16 suffering from congenital Venereal Disease of syphilitic or gonorrhœal origin and if found diseased he may proceed against them as in (1).

(5) Failure to carry out any requisition of any of these notices is an offence punishable by a penalty up to ten pounds.

The Women's Freedom League and nearly all women's societies are offering the most uncompromising opposition to this measure.

We oppose it because it introduces the new principle of compulsion and penalisation into our system of voluntary, free, confidential treatment of venereal diseases, the system that is working well and has resulted in a diminution of these diseases during the last 11 years; to interfere with it would be disastrous, but the Women's Freedom League opposes the Bill still more strongly because it would involve the City of Edinburgh, the House of Commons, the Lords, and the Government in Regulation of Vice and the recognition of its necessity, and it is for this reason chiefly that the women of the nation will condemn it.

WOMEN AND THE BOARD OF CONTROL

Sir Frederick Willis has just retired from the Chairmanship of the Board of Control, and his place has been taken by Mr. Lawrence George Brock, a Principal Assistant-Secretary of the Ministry of Health, who has also been made a Commissioner of the Board of Control. We take this opportunity of again urging that women should be appointed to the Board of Control, of equal status with the men on the Board. This Board now consists of three unpaid Commissioners, Sir Leolin Forestier Walker, K.B.E., M.P., Sir Marriott Cooke, K.B.E., M.B., and Miss R. Darwin, and the following paid Commissioners, Sir J. Fraser Macleod, K.G., Lieut.-Col. B. T. Hodgson, C.M.G., C. H. Bond, C.B.E., D.Sc., M.D., F.R.C.P., each of whom receives £1,500 a year; A. Rotterham, M.B., Hon. H. C. Bailey, Mrs. F. Pinsent, C.B.E., each receiving £1,200 to £1,500; and R. Cunyngham Brown, C.B.E., M.D. (temporary), with £1,200. In view of the fact that there are more women mental patients than men, it seems extraordinary to us that there is no medical woman on this Board, and we think that the Ministry of Health should have taken advantage of the retirement of Sir Frederick Willis to appoint a medical woman as a Commissioner of the Board. Until the last two years there was no woman Inspector under the Board of Control. Now, however, there are three—Miss C. Landon, Miss M. M. McFarlane, B.A., Ph.D., and Miss Redfern, who receive from £400 to £500. Again we note that not one of these Inspectors is a medical woman. This is not the case with the men Inspectors, who are A. E. Evans, M.B., B.Sc., S. E. Gill, M.D., E. O. Lewis, D.Sc., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., who have £500 to £800; J. W. W. Adamson, M.D. (temporary), and Surgeon Rear-Admiral J. F. Hall, R.N. (retired), C.M.G., K.H.S. (temporary), receiving £700. While we acknowledge that the Board of Control is ahead of the Prison Commission because it has two women among its Commissioners and three women Inspectors, and the Prison Commission has no woman Commissioner and no woman Inspector, we yet strongly urge that the Board of Control should add to its Commissioners medical women, and women lawyers, and include among its Inspectorate medical women.

MARRIED WOMEN EMPLOYEES.

Bethnal Green Borough Council propose to make a rule that all married women employed by this Council shall, on appointment, undertake to tender their resignation on marriage. The Council will then consider any application by them to continue in the service of the Council. Not only do we consider that in making this proposal the Bethnal Green Council, like so many other local governing bodies, are guilty of gross impertinence in their effort to interfere with the lives and conduct of married women, but we also consider that this proposal is a direct infringement of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, 1919, Clause I of which declares that "a person shall not be disqualified by sex or marriage from entering, or assuming, or carrying on any civil profession or vocation." Women want to know why the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act was passed and continues to remain on the Statute Book if local governing bodies are to be allowed to infringe it with such brazen effrontery. Does it, or does it not, mean what it says? If it does mean what it says, why does not the Government insist on its provisions being enforced, especially by public bodies supported by public money? If any measure concerning men had been passed into law, we submit that the Government would not permit it to be openly defied as the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act is defied by so many public authorities at the present time. Members of Borough Councils and other local governing bodies are elected by men and women ratepayers, and they are responsible for spending the money of the men and women electors to the best possible advantage. It is not part of their business to penalise their women employees because they marry. A man or woman employee should only be asked to resign his or her post if it is not filled satisfactorily.

TEA AND POLITICS-UP-TO-DATE.

The opening of the 1928 Parliamentary Session saw also the resumption of the Tea and Politics-up-to-date meetings of the Women's Freedom League on Wednesday afternoon. Our President, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, read to the audience all the references made to the franchise in Parliament on the opening day. She said that the whole woman's movement had felt disappointment at reading the King's Speech and its meagre and indefinite reference to Equal Franchise. Later, however, when the Mover and Seconder both mentioned it, and finally when Mr. Baldwin, in reply to the leaders of both Liberal and Labour Parties, was more definite, hope and more certainty reappeared. An added relief was the notice given of a Bill to amend the Local Government and Parliamentary Franchise to be introduced by Sir William Joynson-Hicks. Sir William, as the Minister who has always echoed the pledges of the Prime Minister in the matter of Equal Franchise, was of good augury for the intentions of the Government to see it through. Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, while describing the situation as decidedly hopeful, and rejoicing that probably never again would suffragists have to meet to discuss the inclusion or the omission of Equal Franchise from the King's Speech, nevertheless warned the Women's Freedom League against any over-confidence, any slackening of effort in support of their great cause; she said concentration must be kept up until a satisfactory measure was upon the Statute Book. It must be remembered that there was no information in any of the speeches at the Opening as to what,

if any, controversial matter—such, for instance, as the pauper vote—was to be included in the Franchise Bill; that the Conservatives were not introducing a Franchise Bill now out of love for the women, but were developing political tactics. All other franchise alterations which had been the basis of rumours were outside the concern of the Women's Freedom League as a society, although individual members doubtless had their individual views.

Miss Anna Munro agreed that the King's Speech had been a great disappointment; it read like the old story, but that subsequent allusions had encouraged hope. She urged members not to relax their efforts, to interview their Members of Parliament: and to work—work—work.

Two under-thirties expressed their deep sense of gratitude to the suffragettes who had, through militancy, brought the franchise to its present position. They said they had no intention of stopping after Equal Franchise was won, but intended to work for complete equality. They regretted having missed the fun of the old militant days, but realised that they had also missed very real hardships.

Miss Underwood announced the following:—Women's Freedom League Spring Sale at 5, Wimpole Street (by kind permission of Dr. Octavia Lewin), on Friday, March 16th; National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, meeting in Queen's Hall on March 8th, at 8 p.m.

Miss Reeves appealed for stewards for the N.U.S.E.C. meeting, asking those under thirty to join the singing, those over thirty to be stewards. Thirty stewards were required.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the National Executive Committee was held at the Women's Freedom League Office last Saturday, those present being Miss Anna Munro (in the Chair), Dr. Knight (Hon. Treasurer), Mrs. Brading (Portsmouth), Miss Alix Clark (Montgomery Boroughs), Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P., (Middlesbrough), Miss Manclark (Edinburgh), Miss C. Neal (Swansea), Miss M. I. Neal (Manchester), Mrs. Pierotti, Miss Reeves, Mrs. Stedman, and the Secretary.

Apologies for absence owing to ill-health were received from Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence (President) and Mrs. Dexter.

The Committee members silently stood in memory of their late colleague Mrs. Juson Kerr, J.P., and of their old and valued member Mr. W. R. Snow, and sent messages of deep sympathy to the members of their families.

Reports were discussed and adopted from the Honorary Treasurer, the Hon. Organising Secretary (Mrs. Whetton), the Secretary, and from the political, literature and VOTE Sales Departments. New members were reported to the Committee, and reports of work done and work planned were read from Secretaries of our Branches in London, the Provinces, Scotland and Wales.

Spring Sale.—By the kindness of Dr. Lewin, our Spring Sale will be held at 25, Wimpole Street W., Friday, March 16th, and it will be opened by Miss Ada Moore, Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence presiding. We especially appeal to readers of "THE VOTE" to send us contributions, in money or in kind, for any of the Stalls or for the Tea, and we invite our supporters to bring parties to this Spring Sale to have tea with them and to make purchases.

Annual Conference.—Our twenty-first Annual Conference will be held at Caxton Hall, Saturday, April 28th. This should be the most important Conference ever held by the Women's Freedom League. It is open only to members of our League, but every member will be most cordially welcomed. The Committee decided to send in Emergency resolutions for the Agenda, on April 28th, on the subjects of Equal Franchise and the Edinburgh Corporation Bill, and framed the following to appear on the Agenda.

Chief Objects of the League.—This Conference reiterates that the main object of the Women's Freedom League is to obtain the vote for women at the same age and on the same terms as men, and to use the powers already obtained to elect women to Parliament and upon other public bodies. It further reaffirms the position of the Women's Freedom League in regard to: (1) the eligibility of women for the House of Lords; (2) equal opportunities and equal pay for women and men throughout all branches of our national life; (3) the separate assessment and separate taxation of the incomes of married persons for the purpose of income tax; (4) the necessity for women prison commissioners, women governors, and women medical officers in all women's prisons and women's sections of prisons, women inspectors of prisons, and women police; also for (5) an equal number of women of equal status with men on the Board of Control; and (6) insists upon the recognition of an equal moral standard for men and women, and the raising of the age of consent to 18 with a similar provision for boys.

Age of Marriage.—This Conference calls upon the Government immediately to introduce and carry into law a simple one-clause measure raising the age of marriage to 16 for both boys and girls.

Protective Legislation.—This Conference insists that in all industrial legislation regulations shall be based on the nature of the work and not on the sex of the worker, and that necessary restrictions, including hours of labour, shall be applied equally to men and women workers.

Women Police.—This Conference calls for legislation making the appointment of women police obligatory on all authorities controlling the Police.

Maternal Mortality.—In view of the present unnecessary suffering and death-rate in childbirth, this Conference regards it as essential that the mothers should have skilled medical and midwifery services readily available, both for pre-natal advice and treatment and for the time of childbirth. To secure this end, it urges an improved midwifery training of medical

students and midwives; also such readjustments and extension of the provisions for maternity under the National Health Insurance Act as may be necessary, together with an extension of the work of the Public Health Authorities and other bodies in the provision of Clinics and Welfare Centres and Health Visitors.

Joint Appointments of Married Couples.—This Conference considers that, in all Joint Appointments of married couples, remuneration should be given separately to husband and wife.

Education.—This Conference demands that the 1918 Education Act be put into force at once.

This Conference emphatically protests against the suggestion made at the Headmasters' Conference at Rugby, that "it is neither necessary nor desirable that the conditions of examination should be identical for girls and boys." It asserts that, while a wider range of subjects is desirable for boys as well as girls, it is essential that a free choice among the subjects should be afforded to both sexes, and the same certificate awarded.

Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act.—This Conference calls upon the Government to take steps to enforce the carrying-out of the provisions of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act, so that neither sex nor marriage shall be a bar to any appointment, or to the continuation of any appointment under any body supported by public money.

Women Candidates for Parliament.—This Conference presses for the nomination of more women candidates by all political parties and pledges its support to all suitable women.

State Regulation of Vice.—This year sees the centenary of the birth of Josephine Butler, and this Conference calls upon all who look back with gratitude to her long and victorious fight against the State Regulation of Vice, to prevent by the most strenuous opposition the introduction of compulsory notification, compulsory medical examination, compulsory treatment and detention of persons suffering from venereal disease.

Many other resolutions have been received from our Branches, and all Branch secretaries will receive a Preliminary Agenda this week. Amendments must reach this office not later than March 16th, together with nominations for the President, the Honorary Treasurer, and twelve members of our National Executive Committee. The final Agenda will be sent to Branch secretaries during the week beginning March 19th.

The next meeting of the Committee will be held at this office, Saturday, March 19th.

LIBERAL WOMEN.

The *Liberal Woman's News* for February contains the Agenda for the Women's National Liberal Federation Annual Council Meeting to be held in the Scala Theatre, London, on May 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The Agenda is divided into subjects on which Branches are asked to send in resolutions not later than March 3rd. The complete absence of any feminist subject is noticeable, but perhaps to be expected after the lead given by the present President of the Federation, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, in her New Year's address to the Federation. The subjects chosen for this year are:—

- (1) The Burden of the Rates and Rating Reform.
- (2) Education.
 - (a) Health of the School Child.
 - (b) The Nursery Schools.
 - (c) School-leaving age.
 - (d) The waste and inefficiency of dual control of elementary education.
- (3) Housing, The Problem of the Slum Dwelling.
- (4) The Campaign against War.
- (5) Industrial Policy.
 - (a) Report of the Liberal Industrial Inquiry.
 - (b) Unemployment.

It is proposed to give a clear session to the Burden of the Rates and matters connected with Local Government.

AN INTOLERABLE INSULT.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STREET OFFENCES COMMITTEE.

Mrs. Vatcher has kindly sent us the following copy of a letter sent by her to the Chairman of the Street Offences Committee:—

Sir,—As one of the public deeply interested in the subject you are considering, and having been present at nearly every public sitting of your Committee, I am venturing to address a few remarks to you. May I say that, as Chairman, you appear to me to be very fair, and I think that in view of the subject before you your Committee should have been composed of an equal number of women and men, and should have included women barristers.

What I think must strike anyone with an impartial mind is the cruelty and injustice which is being practised on a peculiarly helpless class. Your Committee has been repeatedly told that the law does not concern itself with people's morals, its sole aim being the preservation of order and decency in the streets, and I have always thought that uniformed constables were there for that purpose, since no man or woman in their sober senses would behave indecently in their presence. Would it not therefore meet the case if more uniformed men were drafted into those areas from which complaints had been received.

It would seem, however, that the real object is the harrying of these unhappy women. The plain-clothes officers who are there to watch them may be men of excellent character, but their work must be most demoralising. In England, the evidence upon which they arrest is pure conjecture. They must guess by a shake of the head or the movement of an arm whether a man is annoyed. When they bring the woman before the magistrate, they know that what they say will be believed. The word of a respectable man will be taken rather than that of a disreputable woman. All this talk about the careful sifting of evidence by magistrates is, if I may be allowed to say so, sheer bunkum. The women do not question the correctness of the label because they have long ceased to care. They have become brazen, and is it to be wondered at?

Surely it is high time that more just and more humane methods were adopted! Cease labelling these women. Treat them like other members of the public. Restore them some shred of self-respect by letting them realise that decent behaviour is expected of them. A man may lead a most dissolute life and yet be credited with good qualities. Why not a woman? How dare anyone assume that because she is sexually immoral the Divine spark within her is quenched! This country claims to be Christian, but by these laws it repudiates the teaching of the Founder of Christianity, Who sternly rebuked, not the erring woman, but her male accusers, and Who chose Mary Magdalene the sinner to be the first witness to His resurrection.

Whatever the finding of your Committee, the present system is doomed. With the sense of freedom there is growing up in women a new solidarity, a new consciousness of their common sisterhood. They are seeing, at length, that the existence of an outlawed class denied the rights enjoyed by the rest of the community is an intolerable insult to the whole of womanhood. They will have an equal share in framing the laws of the future, and they are determined that in all matters relating to sex there shall be equality of blame and equality of punishment.

Yours faithfully,

(Mrs.) A. M. VATCHER.

21, St. Leonard's Road,
Ealing.

STREET OFFENCES COMMITTEE.

The Street Offences Committee will sit in public at Old Palace Yard, Westminster, on Friday, February 17th, at 10.30 a.m., when Miss Alison Neilans will give evidence on behalf of the Women's Societies, including the Women's Freedom League.

WHERE TO GO.

WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

LONDON AND SUBURBS.

Wednesday, February 22nd, at 4 p.m.
Tea and Politics-up-to-date. Minerva Club, Brunswick Square.

Thursday, February 23rd, at 7.30 p.m.
Equal Political Rights Campaign. Open-air Meeting at Highbury Corner, arranged by the Women's Freedom League.

Friday, March 16th, at 3 p.m.
Spring Sale at 25, Wimpole Street (by kind permission of Dr. Octavia Lewin).

Saturday, March 17th, at 10 a.m.
National Executive Committee Meeting.

DARE TO BE FREE.

Saturday, April 28th at 10 a.m.
Twenty-first Annual Conference at Caxton Hall, Westminster.

PROVINCES.

Tuesday, February 21st, at 3.30 p.m.
Rye. Members' Meeting at the Old Hope Hotel. Tea and Discussion.

Friday, February 24th.
Ashford. Branch Meeting. Nurse Scott on "Home Nursing."

Wednesday, February 29th, at 3.30 p.m.
Bexhill. Whist Drive at the Albany Hotel.

Friday, March 2nd, at 4 p.m.
Newbury. Chief Inspector Champneys, of the Women's Auxiliary Service, at the Magpie Restaurant.

Friday, March 30th.
Ashford. Branch Meeting. Dr. Littledale on "Local Birds."

SCOTLAND.

Friday, February 17th, at 7.30 p.m.
Dunoon. Annual Meeting in the Rosebery Restaurant.

Monday, February 27th, at 7.45 p.m.
Glasgow. Public Meeting at the McLellan Galleries. Speakers: Miss Isabel Hamilton, L.L.A., F.E.I.S., Mrs. Houston, J.P., O.B.E., Mrs. Russell, and other Educational Authority Candidates. Chair: Baillie Mrs. Bell.

Thursday, March 15th, at 7.30 p.m.
Glasgow. Business Meeting and Social, "Cadora." Miss Eunice Murray will preside.

Friday, March 2nd, at 8 p.m.
Edinburgh. Public Protest Meeting, Usher Hall. Edinburgh Corporation Bill Protest Committee. Chair: Lord Balfour of Burleigh. Speakers: Lady Asor, M.P., Mrs. Bramwell Booth, Councillor Dorothy Jewson, Dr. E. Graham Little.

WALES.

Thursday, March 22nd, 3.30—6.30 pm.
Montgomery Boroughs. "At Home." Church House, Newtown. Josephine Butler Centenary. Speakers: Miss Alison Neilans, Clement Davies, Esq., K.C., and others. Chair: Miss Alix Clark. Music, tea and coffee. Silver collection.

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Friday, February 17th, 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.
Woman Sanitary Inspectors' and Health Visitors' Association Conference on "Work of Health Visitors," at Caxton Hall.

Saturday, February 18th, at 3 p.m.
Speech Club, Minerva Club, Brunswick Square. Debate: "That personal ambition is essential for real usefulness." Proposer: Mrs. Cook. Opposer: Miss G. Madden.

Sunday, February 19th, at 11 a.m.
Hampshire House Club, Ravenscourt Park. Speaker: Miss F. A. Underwood on "The Life and Work of Josephine Butler."

Sunday, February 19th, at 3.30 p.m.
The Guildhouse, Eccleston Square. Lady Maud Hoare on "My recent flight to India."

Monday, February 20th, at 3 p.m.
International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship. Lecture on the Women of Russia by Jakoff Prelooker followed by Recital of Russian Songs by Miss Miriam Prelooker, at 25, Wimpole Street (by kind permission of Dr. Lewin). Chairman: Mrs. Corbett Ashby. Tickets 6s. and 2s. 6d.

Tuesday, February 21st, at 1 p.m.
British Commonwealth League. Luncheon at 17, Buckingham Street, Adelphi, W.C.2. Guest of honour and speaker—Miss Harriet Newcomb on "Education." Tickets 2/- each.

Tuesday, February 21st, at 5 p.m.
Six Point Group. Meeting at 92, Victoria Street. Mrs. A. M. Mortimer on "Women in Advertising." Chair: Mrs. Harvey-Clark.

Tuesday, February 21st, at 8 p.m.
Women's International League. Kensington Branch. Meeting at King's College, Campden Hill. Miss Alison Neilans on "Josephine Butler." Dr. Ethel Williams on "Traffic in Women and Children." Chair: Lord Balfour of Burleigh.

Wednesday, February 22nd, at 8.30 p.m.
Queen's Hall Demonstration Community Singing Practice at the Minerva Club, 56, Hurst Street, W.C.1.

Tuesday, February 28th, at 3 p.m.
Meeting on "Maternal Mortality," at the Central Hall, Westminster.

Wednesday, March 7th, at 3 p.m.
East Surrey Divisional Labour Party. Women's Meeting at The Pendicle, Limsfield, on "Votes for Women at 21." Speaker: Miss Marian Reeves.

March 7th to 10th.
Annual Council Meeting in King George's Hall, of the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship.

BRANCH NOTES.

GOLDERS GREEN.

We had a most delightful and informal evening at Mrs. E. Burnett's house (Oak Cottage, 94, Brookside Road, Golders Green) on the 6th, when Miss Froud came to speak to us on her experiences whilst on a visit to Russia. All the conditions in Russia are so very different from our own—the position of women, for instance—their women are not debarred from any work, either in factories or professions, they are perfectly free to choose their method of working for a living, and have equal chances with men as wage-earners. The factories are equipped with crèches, so that mothers can leave their babies to be competently looked after by a reliable staff of nurses and doctors while they are at work.

We learned that 47% of the people of Russia can neither read nor write, and very ingenious are the plans of the Government to try to arouse the desire for learning these two subjects in the hearts of the people.

Their prison system is again very different from that prevailing in this country. Their minor criminals (probably what would be the second division here) have beds to sleep on, and are not in separate cells; but in the majority of cases several prisoners are together, which, of course, makes their conditions easier. The girls or women are allowed to do their own dressmaking, and Miss Froud says some of them have quite a number of pretty dresses hanging behind their beds.

Another very interesting thing, of which Miss Froud spoke, was the homes established in various centres for homeless children. Apparently many hundreds of children are either lost or run away from their homes every year, and it is difficult to trace them owing to the huge tracts of forest spread over Russia. These children often stay in the homes during the winter in the bitter weather, running away again in the spring, as they prefer to live a gipsy life in the warmer months. When they leave these homes, they more often than not decamp with a blanket or two; but here again the Russians say, "Discipline must come from within," and "if we have not made the children want to stay with us, we have failed in our object."

(Hon. Sec.) MRS. JAYNES.

PORTSMOUTH.

The second of the series of Tea and Politics-up-to-date Meetings was held on Saturday afternoon, at 2, Kent Road. There was an excellent attendance of members and friends. A short business meeting was held at which resolutions were framed for the Annual Conference. After tea, Miss Peacock gave an instructive address on Politics-up-to-date. She first referred to the King's Speech and said how disappointed women were at the vague allusions to Equal Franchise. Among other up-to-date questions she mentioned the unemployment problem, peace and disarmament, and the unsatisfactory carrying-out of the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act. An animated discussion followed, and the Women's Freedom League Manifesto on the King's Speech was put as a resolution and unanimously carried. This was to be sent to the Press and the Prime Minister. Mrs. Poole made a very able chairman, and thanked Miss Peacock for her interesting address.

(Hon. Sec.) MRS. WHETTON, 89, Festing Grove, Southsea.

GLASGOW.

On Thursday, February 9th, Miss Jane Thomson, F.E.I.S., presided at a Branch Meeting of the W.F.L. in the McLellan Galleries, when Dr. Alison Hunter very convincingly put the case against the proposed compulsory treatment of Venereal Disease. She said that those who were in favour of compulsory treatment were endeavouring to draw a parallel between venereal disease and other infectious diseases. This, said Dr. Hunter, was impossible. The infectious diseases notifiable at the present time—such as fevers, etc.—were easily traced to their original sources, but in the case of venereal disease it was very difficult to trace it. If compulsory treatment came into force, there must be some standard of cure. Another point which was agitating the minds of the medical profession was that, under compulsory notification and treatment, it would be necessary for the doctor to divulge the name and condition of the patient. Such procedure would induce persons suffering from this disease to resort to quack doctors. The two countries with voluntary treatment, Great Britain and Holland, compared very favourably in the matter of statistics with those countries which had compulsory treatment. In our own country, Dr. Hunter said, each year found new cases decreasing and attendances at the free clinics increasing, which showed that people were carrying out their treatment and endeavouring to help themselves. Referring to the free clinics, which had been in existence for 11 years, Dr. Hunter said that as the numbers suffering from venereal disease had decreased within those 11 years she thought it would not be giving the voluntary treatment a chance if it was superseded in so short a time by compulsory treatment. The speaker advocated improved housing, education, and an equal moral standard as the best and surest means of combating venereal disease.

After the speech there was a considerable amount of discussion, in which many members of the audience took part.

Dr. Chalmers Smith proposed a vote of thanks to Dr. Alison Hunter for her kindness in giving us such an interesting and instructive lecture, and Mrs. Kaye thanked Miss Thomson for the able manner in which she had presided.

Later, business was discussed, six resolutions being drawn up for the Annual Conference in London, and March 15th being fixed for the Glasgow Annual Business Meeting and Social, which is to take place in the "Cadora."

Organiser: LILIAN LENTON.

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FELLOWSHIP SERVICES.—Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W.1. Sunday, February 12th, 1928. 3.30. Music. Lecture. Lady Maude Hoare. 6.30. Prof. Percy Dearmer, D.D.: "Modern Psychology and Religion."

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