

THE VOTE,
MARCH 28, 1924.
ONE PENNY.

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THE VOTE

THE ORGAN OF THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE.

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FRIDAY, MARCH 28, 1924

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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A FAMOUS WOMAN ECONOMIST.

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. BARBARA WOOTTON.

The new Government evidently means to make full use of the services of its distinguished women citizens. Only a short time ago, every feminist in the country was rejoicing at the admission of Miss Bondfield, M.P. to the Ministry—that hitherto exclusively masculine preserve—whilst last week they learned with pride and pleasure that a highly technical Committee, appointed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to undertake one of the most important and exhaustive inquiries yet held into the financial position of this country, would be graced by the presence of a famous woman economist—Mrs. Barbara Wootton.

Mrs. Wootton is an enthusiastic adherent of the Party now in power. When quite a girl (she is still well under 30, and so not eligible for a vote!) she became desirous of making the Labour movement her life work, and for the last two years has been attached to the Joint Research Department of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party, at their London headquarters in Eccleston Square. A brilliant college career at Girton, where she won first class honours in Economics with a distinction never previously awarded to any woman or man, preceded her present work. (Mrs. Wootton has not yet decided whether she will make use of the titular M.A. degree which a churlish Alma Mater grudgingly offers as a reward for her exceptional attainments!)

Asked by a representative of THE VOTE how it was she came to specialise so successfully in matters of high finance, Mrs. Wootton laughed, and then looked thoughtful.

"It could not have been a case of heredity," she replied, "for my father, Dr. James Adam, was senior tutor in classics at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and my mother, Miss Adela Kensington, was Classical Lecturer both at Girton and Newnham. Indeed, I myself read Classics for the first part of my degree. It was my keen interest in the Labour movement which later led me to the study of Economics, after which I specialised in the study of finance.

"My recent appointment to Mr. Snowden's Committee on the National Debt marks my first acquaintance with Government Committees, and I hope to acquire an immense amount of useful knowledge from my colleagues, who include Directors of the Bank of England, well-known writers on Economics, and eminent authorities on taxation and statistics. The investigation of the National Debt, which, as you know, forms the chief part of the work of the Committee, promises abundant scope for inquiry. It probably conveys nothing to the average person merely to be told that this Debt now stands at £7,700,000,000; but if it is explained to him that this sum is equivalent to a person spending £7 a minute since the Birth of Christ, it is possible to realise something of the gigantic burden which is sapping the life-blood of this country. The interest alone is 350 millions—roughly, a million a day.

"The late war is responsible for almost the whole of this vast sum. True, we had a National Debt previous to 1914, but it was very small in comparison—only about £600,000,000. This, too, was a war debt, being an ill-gotten legacy from other wars, including



MRS. BARBARA WOOTTON.

that with Napoleon. Other countries have their National Debts, but those of the nations which did not engage in the recent war are much smaller in comparison, and—as in the case of Australia, for instance—these are frequently debts contracted owing to productive measures, such as the building of railways. In our own case, however, we have nothing productive to show, the bulk of the money having been spent on warfare.

"The ex-belligerent nations also have large National Debts, but by depreciating the currencies they have for the most part reduced the real burden of these debts to fairly reasonable proportions. The German debt, for instance, has been reduced to virtual insignificance in this way. Such a policy, however, can only be carried out at the cost of a great rise in prices and the cost of living generally.

"Another feature of the Committee's investigation will be the incidence of taxation. Taxation will be discussed with special reference to its effect on trade and unemployment."

In addition to her research work at the Labour Party's headquarters, which involves writing reports and pamphlets on financial questions, such as currency, trade conditions, and taxation, and giving information on these subjects, Mrs. Wootton finds time for a considerable amount of literary and journalistic work. She is now busy over an abstruse volume dealing with "The Scope and Value of Economic Theory," which is to form one of a series of scientific treatises in course of preparation by Messrs. Kegan, Paul. She frequently contributes articles on economic questions to the *Labour Magazine*, and has recently undertaken to edit *The Highway*, the monthly organ of the Workers' Educational Association, for which body she is also a lecturer.

WOMEN AT HOME AND ABROAD.

"Beatrice Norman, Mate."

Mrs. Beatrice Norman, of Devonport, whose husband is owner and captain of a small coasting vessel, the *Aurora*, now laid up in Swansea Docks, has been going to sea as mate to her husband for the last 19 years. Mrs. Norman possesses the medal for service in the Mercantile Marine, 1914-18, with ribbon, the British War Medal with ribbon, the British War Medal and clasp, and a British Victory Medal with ribbon. She is the only woman in the Mercantile Marine who served throughout the war, and the only woman to receive these medals.

Miss Lilian Baylis, M.A.

The honorary degree of M.A. of the University of Oxford is to be conferred on Miss Lilian Baylis, Manager of the "Old Vic." Hitherto, only three women have been honoured in similar fashion, and all three held important posts in connection with the Women's Colleges at Oxford. Miss Baylis, therefore, is the first woman outside the University to be thus honoured, and the third woman prominently associated with the theatre to receive an honorary degree, the others being Miss Ellen Terry, honoured by St. Andrew's, and Dr. Sybil Thorndike, honoured by Manchester.

Woman Archaeologist.

Miss Lucy Wheeler, of Chertsey, whose death is reported at the age of 70, was a well-known archaeologist, and author of the standard work on Chertsey Abbey. Her researches for this work were of an extraordinarily careful and complete character. She was also an authority on Surrey archaeology, and for some years was local secretary of the Surrey Archaeological Society.

Woman Assistant M.O.H.

Dr. Enid Ann Williams, who is only 26 years of age, has been appointed Assistant Medical Officer of Wolverhampton Pool Law Institution.

Woman Engineer's Test.

A Brighton woman, who claims to have discovered a product called "etherium," which prevents corrosion in water-pipes, tested results of an experiment this week. Cylinders containing etherium crystals were placed in the inflow pipes at the Corporation baths nine months ago. The pipes were opened this week. Instead of a hard deposit there was merely a thin film which would easily wash off. It is claimed that the experiment has been a success, and that etherium will result in the cost of boilers being lowered. The discoverer is Mrs. M. Dickinson, a member of the Royal Institute, the Royal Society of Arts, and the Women's Engineering Society.

Women Musicians.

The British Women's Symphony Orchestra, of which the Queen has consented to become patron, is making its debut at the Queen's Hall on April 3. A representative list of English women musicians figures on the programme, including Lady Maud Warrender, Miss Louise Dale, Miss Beatrice Harrison, Miss Dorothy Howell, and Dame Ethel Smythe. The latter will conduct her own contribution, the Prelude to Act II. of "The Wreckers," and will address the audience upon the project of the Women's Orchestra.

Votes for Frenchwomen.

At the close of the Annual Congress of the French Union for Women's Suffrage, held at the Lyceum Club, Paris, recently, several hundred members gathered from all parts of France carried unanimously the following resolution:—"The Congress, deeply moved to learn that the women of Spain have obtained the vote before those of France, expresses the hope that the forthcoming elections may be the last from which Frenchwomen will have the humiliation of being excluded.

Votes for Turkish Women.

The first 17 clauses of the Constitutional Charter were passed, last week, by the Grand National Assembly in Turkey. Under Article 10, every Turk having reached his eighteenth year is entitled to vote in Parliamentary elections, and it was acknowledged by the Assembly that this applied to women as well. Several of the Deputies present were also willing to allow women to become eligible as Deputies.

Honour for Airwoman.

The Legion of Honour has been awarded to a number of airmen and one woman aviator in recognition of the part they have played in the development of aviation. The woman is Mlle. Adrienne Bolland. For more than four years she has taken part in flying meetings, and has given flying exhibitions in South America, where she flew over the Andes.

Women Liberals in Conference.

The Women's National Liberal Federation is holding its Council meetings on May 27th, 28th, and 29th, at the Kingsway Hall. The resolutions include Proportional Representation, Housing, the improvement of Children's Courts, and the restoration of the provisions of the Fisher Education Act.

EQUAL FRANCHISE IN MYSORE.

A correspondent of *The Times* reports that a notable feature of the far-reaching constitutional reforms ordained by the Maharajah of Mysore in the autumn, and now being brought into effect, is the removal of all disqualifications for the franchise on grounds of sex. In British India the question of admitting women to the franchise has been left, under the 1919 Act and rules, to the decision of the Provincial Legislatures, but so far only Bombay and Madras in India proper have removed the sex disqualification. Mysore, which has a population of 6,000,000, is the first Indian State to embark on far-reaching constitutional reform, and to accompany it by a full recognition of women's rights.

IN PARLIAMENT.

Allowance for Wife.

CAPT. W. BENN (Leith) asked the Minister of Health if his attention had been drawn to the fact that, if the wife of an unemployed man takes temporary work, he cannot claim allowance in respect of her for six weeks after the work has come to an end; and if he would consider taking steps to have this regulation modified? MR. SHAW (Minister of Labour) said he had been asked to reply. One of the rules laid down by the Act was that the 5s. allowance might not be paid in respect of a wife who was in regular wage-earning employment. Owing to that rule, it sometimes became necessary to decide at what date a wife who had been in regular wage-earning employment, and had lost her employment, should be held to be no longer in regular wage-earning employment; the rule laid down administratively in such a case was that the 5s. allowance, if otherwise permissible, became payable after she had been unemployed for six weeks. It would be observed that that rule had nothing to do with the case of a wife, not in regular employment, who took temporary work. In such a case, the 5s. allowance was not withdrawn on account of the temporary work, if the work was not of such a nature as to constitute regular employment, and the question whether it did so or not was decided on the recommendation of the Local Employment Committee. MR. SHAW promised that, if CAPT. BENN would let him have particulars of any case of hardship known to him, he would have it sympathetically considered.

Maternity Wards.

COMMANDER BELLAIRS (Maidstone) asked the Minister of Health if, in view of the prevalent overcrowding, and the resulting increased need of maternity wards at hospitals, he would state what assistance the Government would give in regard to capital expenditure and annual outlay, so as to enable welfare centres, borough councils, and hospital committees to prepare schemes at once? MR. WHEATLEY replied that he was ready to give sympathetic consideration to proposals for the provision of maternity beds in areas where there was need for additional accommodation, and to pay grants not exceeding 50 per cent. of approved capital and annual maintenance expenditure. The grant-in-aid of capital expenditure usually took the form of an annual payment based on the sum required for interest on, and repayment of, capital within a fixed period. MR. SIMPSON (Taunton) asked if the right hon. Gentleman would let the medical officers of health know of that decision? MR. WHEATLEY said he had already intimated his readiness to adopt that course in a circular to local authorities.

Lunacy Laws (Inquiry).

MRS. WINTRINGHAM (Louth) asked the Minister of Health whether, when appointing the Committee of Inquiry into the Lunacy Laws, he would include two women, one of the medical profession, and one with special and practical knowledge of asylums visiting committees? MR. WHEATLEY replied that the hon. Member's suggestion would be carefully considered, but he could not at present give any undertaking on that point.

Civil Service (Women Clerks).

MR. PENNY (Kingston-on-Thames) asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury if he would give an undertaking to replace women clerks holding posts in the various Departments of the Civil Service by competent temporary ex-Service men, so that they could be absorbed without being discharged; and whether he would refrain from engaging any new entrants until those men were placed? MR. GRAHAM replied that the great majority of the women temporarily employed in Government Departments had already been discharged, in pursuance of the policy of preference for ex-Service

men. As would be seen by a reference to paragraph 8 of their Second Interim Report, the Southborough Committee were satisfied, in July last, that the scope for further substitution amongst the temporary women employees was extremely limited. The number of those women had been substantially reduced since that date, and he doubted if the process of substitution could be carried much further.

Nursery Schools.

MR. MCENTEE (Walthamstow, W.) asked the President of the Board of Education if he was prepared to remove the restrictions imposed on local authorities in regard to the establishment of nursery schools, under paragraph 10, Circular 1,199, and paragraph 5, Circular 1,269, and to sanction the opening of nursery schools under conditions to be approved by his Department? MR. MORGAN JONES (Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education) replied that he was prepared to consider sympathetically any proposals which might be made to him for the establishment of new nursery schools in suitable localities. The experience of the last few years had shown that it was possible to do useful work in those schools by fairly simple means, and without prohibitive expense, and he would be ready to entertain proposals which reached a reasonable standard of usefulness and efficiency.

Juvenile Employment Centres.

SIR JOHN MARRIOTT (York) asked the Minister of Labour the number of children and young persons under and over the age of 16, respectively, at present enrolled in the present cost of the centres? MR. SHAW replied that, during the week ending March 12th, the average daily attendance of juveniles between the ages of 14-18 at juvenile unemployment centres was 6,289. Of that number, about 5,100 were over the age of 16. The actual cost of the centres could not be given until the final accounts were received from local education authorities. On the basis of the estimates supplied by the authorities, it was anticipated that the cost for the seven months ending April 17th would not exceed £50,000, of which 75 per cent. would be borne by the Exchequer.

First Offenders.

MR. STRANGER (Newbury) asked the Home Secretary if he was aware that first-offender prisoners were in association, in London prisons, with second-division prisoners having previous convictions; and if he would take immediate steps to have all London first-offender prisoners transferred to one of the London prisons which had a separate wing suitable to their accommodation, in which it would be impossible for them to come into association with past offenders? MR. HENDERSON replied that the Prison Commissioners had now under consideration a scheme for transferring offenders of good previous character in London to a prison with a separate wing, and they hoped to be able to carry it into effect before long.

Women Prisoners.

MR. GILBERT (Southwark, Central) asked the Home Secretary how many prisons there were in the country specially reserved for women prisoners, and where they were situated; if women were kept in any prisons where men prisoners were detained; and, if so, how many prisons were so used? MR. HENDERSON replied that there were 16 prisons and one Borstal institution into which female prisoners were received. They were situated in the following places:—Birmingham, Cardiff, Durham, Exeter, Holloway, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, Maidstone, Manchester, Newcastle, Norwich, Nottingham, Portsmouth, Preston, Winchester, Aylesbury. One prison (Holloway) and one Borstal institution (Aylesbury) received female prisoners only.

F. A. U.

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To the Secretary—on all other business, including VOTE orders,
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Telegrams: "DESPARD, Museum 1429, London."

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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.

OUR SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The Seventeenth Annual Conference of the Women's Freedom League will be held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Saturday, April 5th, at 10 a.m., and will be presided over by Councillor Mrs. Schofield Coates, J.P. It is acknowledged that women have travelled some distance along the road towards equality since the Women's Freedom League, seventeen years ago, first set out "to secure for women the Parliamentary vote as it is or may be granted to men; and to use the power thus obtained to establish equality of rights and opportunities between the sexes." In those days, the gallant band of women had an uphill fight to break down an overwhelming mass of prejudice and opposition on the part of men and of many women. We rejoice that some women over 30 years of age gained the Parliamentary vote in 1918; but we are still struggling to secure for women this Parliamentary vote at the same age and on the same terms as men have it. We rejoice that we now have eight women Members of the House of Commons; but no Peeress in her own right is yet allowed a seat and a vote in the House of Lords. It is very clear, therefore, that women have not anything like equal political power with men in this country. It is true that we have a number of women magistrates, but they are by no means appointed to every Bench, and, where they are appointed, it is usually in the proportion of one woman to 13 men! Women are able to act as jurors, but the necessary qualifications are such that the number of women on juries is infinitesimal compared with the number of men who serve. Women are able to qualify and practise as barristers and solicitors, but a few more years must roll before it is possible for any woman to become a Judge. A married woman is still not a legal parent of her children. A glance at our Conference Agenda will disclose the fact that members of the Women's Freedom League are continuing to protest against many other inequalities and disabilities which press hardly on women. Unequal pay for similar work for men and women in the teaching profession, the Civil Service, and in industry is one of those inequalities; and unequal opportunities for women with men in all such work is another. Members of the Women's Freedom League strongly resent the dismissal of women from their employment by the Government and by local governing authorities simply and solely because they marry. Other resolutions on the Agenda call for the raising of the age of consent for girls to 18, and a similar protection for boys; that in all solicitation charges the person "annoyed" or "molested" should appear in Court to substantiate the charge; and that the penalties for child assault should be increased. There are several resolutions on Penal Reform, urging that the object of our penal system should be remedial rather than punitive; that Capital Punishment should be abolished; that no child should be born in a prison;

and that all officials in women's prisons should be women. There are resolutions on Housing, and the necessity of women's advice being sought in regard to housing plans. One resolution recommends that it should be compulsory for women to be appointed on all committees of management for hospitals and asylums where women are admitted as patients. Another resolution demands that the "exemption clause" be restored to the vaccination form given at registration of birth, and that the mother shall have equal rights with the father in claiming exemption. Lunacy Reform is dealt with by another resolution, and the Government is urged to amend the Lunacy Laws so that early cases may be treated without certification, this treatment to be carried out in hospitals in which no certified patients are received. A hardy annual again appears on the Conference Agenda—that married women's incomes should be separately assessed, and that married women should pay the tax on their own income only, not the tax on the joint income of husband and wife. A protest is raised against the fact that women have no kind of equal share with men in the Honours Lists issued from time to time; and the last resolution deals with Local Option. All these resolutions have been sent in by our various branches, and will be discussed and voted upon by delegates at the Conference, who have been instructed by their branches. An election will take place for members of the National Executive Committee, who will be responsible for carrying out the policy of the League for the coming year, as defined in its Conference Resolutions. At 5 p.m., Miss Elsie Morton, M.B.E., has kindly consented to give an address, to be followed by a discussion, on "How to make the Work of the Women's Freedom League effective." Only members of the Women's Freedom League can be present during the Conference proceedings; only branch delegates may vote; and only members of the National Executive Committee and branch delegates may speak on the resolutions, amendments, and reports. We hope that as many members as possible, in and near London on April 5th, will be present at this Conference, and that they will also attend the Reception to members of the National Executive Committee, branch delegates, and members and friends of the Women's Freedom League, to be held at the Minerva Club, 56, Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, on Sunday afternoon, April 6th, at 3.30. We appeal to our members to help us make both the Conference and the Reception a thoroughgoing success.

PEERESSES AND THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

Last Tuesday afternoon, Mr. Briant (Lambeth, N.) moved for leave to bring in a Bill to enable Peeresses in their own right to sit and vote in the House of Lords. He said that the object of the Bill was to remedy an obvious injustice, and also to add to the power and good advice of the House of Lords. It was evident that the motion had a good deal of support, but Mr. J. Jones (Silvertown) opposed it, explaining that he did so because he was a democrat, and therefore believed that no one had the right to legislate who had not been elected by his fellow-citizens. He was proceeding to express the hope that his Party "would never sink to do—" when the rest of his sentence was lost in laughter. We are not surprised, for only a few weeks ago that Party created three of its own people Members of the House of Lords, and "borrowed" two or three other Members of the Upper House to help in the work of the Government. On a division, the motion was carried by 313 votes against 45, a majority of 268! The Bill was then brought in by Mr. Briant, and read a first time. We warmly congratulate Mr. Briant and the promoters of the Bill on this result. So long as there is a House of Lords which deals with legislation affecting not only men and women generally but the special interests of women and their children, women are as necessary in the House of Lords as they are in the House of Commons.

MISS BONDFIELD, GOVERNMENT APOLOGIST?

In spite of the prophecy of Miss Susan Lawrence, M.P., at our last Votes for Women meeting at Essex Hall, that we should soon be putting up our shutters because we should get all the reforms we are working for, under a Labour Government, it seems to us that Governments may come and go—no matter what their colour may be—but that the Women's Freedom League is likely to go on for ever, if its existence is only to come to an end when we secure what the original members of our League set out to obtain for women. Miss Bondfield, the first woman in this country to hold a position in the Government, is undoubtedly a woman of many gifts. But why should she use them as a brilliant apologist for the present Government? We confess we were disappointed that, in the Debate in the House of Commons on Unemployment, she could suggest no other means of providing for workless women than making a large grant for their training in domestic work. Speaking at Kettering, last Saturday, Miss Bondfield said she was glad that the proposal further to extend the franchise to women had been endorsed by the present Parliament, and added that, while business might not allow that measure to go through this Session, she profoundly hoped that it would be possible to find time to do it before the next General Election! This has a curiously official sound. Miss Bondfield also rejoiced that the House of Commons was in favour of pensions for widows and mothers. She explained, however, that that was, of course, simply a declaration, and was not a Bill, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer had frankly said he inherited so many commitments that he could not get the money for reforms of that kind! Did Miss Bondfield forget that the Estimates have been variously interpreted as showing a surplus of anything from 40 to 68 millions? Could not the Government afford 15 millions of this surplus for Widows' Pensions? Miss Bondfield concluded her speech by stating that the Prime Minister would overcome his difficulties, because he towered head and shoulders practically above everyone in the House of Commons. Well, we are not so much interested in the Prime Minister's measurements, but when his Party entered office we hoped that it would do what is easily possible—give consideration to women's questions, and grant the redress of their grievances so far as our franchise laws and the unemployment of women were concerned. Does Miss Bondfield think we were unduly optimistic in our hopes?

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

Last Monday morning, the Home Secretary received a deputation from societies working for the abolition of capital punishment. Among those attending were Miss Margery Fry, Major Christopher Lowther, Mr. George Lansbury, M.P., Mr. J. E. Remer, M.P., Mrs. Wintringham, M.P., Miss Jewson, M.P., Mr. Baillie Weaver, Miss Maude Royden, the Rev. E. Orchard, and Mrs. James (representing the Women's Freedom League). The deputation was received in private, and the discussion lasted over an hour and a half. The following official report was subsequently issued from the Home Office:—

The Home Secretary received this morning a deputation of members of a number of societies, who placed before him various considerations and statistics in support of the abolition of the death penalty in this country. The societies in question were: The Committee for the Abolition of the Death Penalty, the Society of Friends, the Women's Co-operative Guild, the Howard League for Penal Reform, the Central Council of Societies Working for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, Manchester Society for Abolition of Capital Punishment, Women's Freedom League, and the British Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Mr. George Lansbury, who introduced the deputation, drew special attention to its representative character as indicating a recent rapid growth of public opinion on the subject. He was followed by Major Christopher Lowther and Miss Margery Fry, who argued the case in greater detail, and produced various figures.

The Home Secretary, in replying, thanked the deputation for waiting upon him, and for their full statement of their case, and promised that what they had said would be brought before the Government in an appropriate form before any decision was reached by the Government on the question of abolition. He pointed out, however, that any Government must take public opinion into account, and that, so far as his long Parliamentary experience went, there was little evidence of any general public desire for abolition, the subject not having been debated for many years. He also pointed out that, before a Government could recommend an alteration in that law, they would have to consider very carefully what satisfactory alternative punishment they could properly suggest.

LABOUR WOMEN'S CONFERENCE.

The National Conference of Labour Women will be held, this year, on May 13th and 14th, in the Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, London. The Conference programme is an extremely interesting one, from the Women's Freedom League point of view. The first six resolutions, in different wording, demand votes for women at 21 years of age, and on equal terms with men. Several resolutions urge the Government to consider the granting of adequate pensions to widows with dependent children; others deal with the education and employment of boys and girls, calling upon the Government to raise the leaving age to fifteen or sixteen years, and, where necessary, to grant maintenance allowances; to extend the scholarship system; to set up vocational training centres, with full maintenance, for all adolescents, at a minimum of full subsistence level. Three resolutions protest against sending young children to the Colonies. There are several resolutions on Penal Reform; and we note with satisfaction that the appointment of a woman Prisons Commissioner is asked for, and at least one woman inspector of prisons. There are resolutions on the position of wage-earning women, which urge the acceptance of the principle of equal remuneration for similar work, and the levelling

up of the wages of women to those of men; and that unemployed women be given work or maintenance on the same terms as men. One resolution demands the ratification of the Maternity Convention adopted by the International Labour Conference at Washington in 1919, and establishment of the special provision required therein for women employed in industry and commerce. There are no less than eight resolutions urging the necessity of information on the subject of Birth Control. Four resolutions deal with Food Prices. Housing naturally forms the substance of several resolutions, and we are glad to see that one of them urges the Minister of Health to make it compulsory for Housing Committees to have women who understand the needs of the working class as members of such councils. Other resolutions deal with Old Age Pensions; one asks that £1 per week be granted to all persons of 60 years of age, irrespective of income; another £1 10s. a week for all, with no penalisation of thrift, on reaching the age of 60.

The Labour Party is now in office, and we hope that Labour women will bring as much pressure as possible to bear on the Government to bring about some of the urgently needed reforms which have been on their Party programme for so many years.

THE LEGITIMACY BILL.

A Public Meeting under the auspices of the St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance was held, on March 15th, at Bedford College, by kind permission of the Principal and Council, to discuss the Legitimacy Bill now before Parliament. Miss K. Fitzgerald, B.A., was in the Chair, and the principal speakers were the Hon. E. A. St. Aubyn Harney, M.P., K.C., and Mr. F. W. Sherwood, Recorder of Worcester.

The following resolution was carried:—"This meeting calls upon the Government to adopt, and pass through all its stages, a Bill to legitimate children on the subsequent marriage of their parents, and welcomes the fact that thereby, after 600 years' divergence, it will bring the law of the land into harmony with Canon Law."

Mr. Harney said that he was wholeheartedly in favour of the legitimation of children wherever possible, but confessed that his enthusiasm had been damped by the insertion of the proviso in the House of Lords, and that, for his part, he would do all he could in the House of Commons to drive it out of the Bill. At the same time, if not successful in this, he would vote for the measure as it stood.

Mr. Sherwood said that he had taken much interest in the question for many years, and intended to speak on it from a non-Party point of view, in keeping with the spirit of St. Joan's Social and Political Alliance. The question had been a burning one for at least 600 years, and since the Council of Merton, in the 13th century, there had been a "bifurcation" between Church and State upon it. By the customs of England, children born out of wedlock were deprived of all title to inheritance; by Canon Law they were legitimated by the subsequent marriage of the parents, and this the present Bill was an attempt to restore. The Bishops, in 1296, attempted to bring the Civil Law into line with the Canon Law, but the Barons made the famous answer, "We will not change the old and approved laws of England." Thus Austin Harrison was quite wrong when, in 1916, he denounced the rule, "Once a bastard, always a bastard," as the creation of narrow-minded ecclesiastical superstition. The Church was, in fact, always more liberal than the present Bill as it left the House of Lords; it objected to the term, "Nobody's child," and always deemed legitimate the children of putative marriage even of those subsequently annulled. Scotland preserved the old Canon Law, and now perhaps the wrong will be righted, after 600 years. As regards the proviso, he would not go so far as Mr. Harney, but thought that some sort of proviso might be necessary. If the House of Commons was determined to have one, it would be well to see whether Canon Law did not provide a much more liberal form than that brought forward in the House of Lords recently.

WHY WE WANT WOMEN ON THE LUNACY COMMISSION.

On general grounds, because the best all-round view of a question, and the best solution of a difficulty, can only be obtained when men and women study it together.

On special grounds, because there are thousands of women under certification—far more women, indeed, than men—and we know that women Commissioners will understand their needs and welfare much better than men can possibly do, and there are many questions and details relating to the female staff and the management of the women patients which cannot be investigated by men themselves, and which they would have to judge on hearsay evidence only.

HONG KONG—GIRLS IN BROTHELS.

Mr. JOHN HARRIS (Hackney, N.), in the House of Commons last Monday, asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he was aware that the official appointed to the position of Secretary for Chinese Affairs in Hong Kong, was informed, prior to his appointment, that his duties would include the examination of girls as to their suitability to enter brothels, and then to pass them into the various classes of brothels in the Colony; if that practice was peculiar to the Colony of Hong Kong; and, if not, in how many other British Dependencies was it the practice to require British officials to issue passes for girls to become inmates of brothels? Mr. THOMAS replied that he had no doubt that the official in question knew, before his appointment, of those duties, which, as he had already stated, were in this regard purely protective. It had been found necessary to give similar protection in the Malay Peninsula, but there was no other part of the Empire containing a large number of Chinese women requiring protection of this nature. Mr. HARRIS then inquired if the right hon. Gentleman was prepared to accept the view that it was a violation of British standards to expect British Civil Servants, not merely to take the oversight—as in this case—of 3,000 prostitutes, but of continually passing into these brothels young girls, and not merely passing them in, but of telling them the street and the house they were to go to, and—as he understood the document—the very floor they were to occupy; would he give the House a promise to look into the matter? Mr. THOMAS, in replying, said that the hon. Gentleman knew that there was no more distasteful subject for any Member of the Government to deal with; and that he was also perhaps aware that he was meeting a deputation on the same subject the next day. A distasteful subject of that kind could not be dealt with by question and answer. The Government were alive to the difficulties and dangers of the subject; they had to deal with it in a common-sense way.

Mr. AYLES (Bristol, N.) asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he was prepared to take steps to refuse recognition to the existence of brothels in Hong Kong and other parts of the British Crown Colonies, as a step towards abolishing the international traffic in women and children? Mr. THOMAS answered that he was not convinced that the suggested measure would have the desired effect. The Governor of Hong Kong reported last June that there had been very few cases there of international traffic in girls for immoral purposes, and that very careful precautions taken by the Secretary for Chinese Affairs and the police tended to check abuses of that description.

BRITISH PEACE AWARD.

"How can Peace and Prosperity be restored in Great Britain and in Europe through International Co-operation?" Under the auspices of an influential Committee, an Imperial Competition is being organised to stimulate thought and study upon this problem. Thirty-eight prizes are offered, of a total value of £2,000, for "plans" by British citizens at home or overseas. Latest date, June 28th. Plans will be judged, not on literary merit, but on their soundness and practicability. Particulars from Dr. Albert Mansbridge, 13, John Street, W.C.2.

POSTER PARADE.

Will readers of "The Vote" please help? All those wishing to increase the circulation of our valuable little paper, please join in the Parade and advertise "The Vote". We are arranging to have the Parade on Friday, April 4th, from 6—8.

Write to the Vote Secretary, 144, High Holborn, and say which date and time will suit you best. Do it now.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS W.F.L. LONDON AND SUBURBS



DARE TO BE FREE.

Tuesday, April 1st, at 8 p.m. Thames Valley Branch. Members' Meeting at Holmwood, Waldegrave Road, Teddington, to discuss Conference Agenda.

Tuesday, April 1st, at 8 p.m. Whist Drive, at 75, Hereford Road, Westbourne Grove.

Friday, April 4th, at 11 a.m. Organisation Sub-Committee Meeting, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Friday, April 4th, at 2.30 p.m. National Executive Committee Meeting, at 144, High Holborn, W.C.1.

Saturday, April 5th, at 10 a.m. Caxton Hall, Westminster. Women's Freedom League Seventeenth Annual Conference. Address by Miss Elsie Morton, M.B.E., on "How to make the work of the Women's Freedom League effective," at 5 p.m.

Sunday, April 6th, at 3.30 p.m. Tea and Reception at the Minerva Club, Brunswick Square, W.C.1, to delegates, members and friends. Visitors are especially invited.

Monday, April 7th, Jumble Sale, at Bosworth Hall, Bosworth Road, Kensington.

Friday, April 11th. Conference on Personal Hygiene. Time and place to be announced later. Speakers: Dr. Lewin, Dr. Lucy Naish, Dr. Jane Walker, and others.

Friday, April 25th, at 8 p.m. Thames Valley Branch. Public Meeting, at Holmwood, Waldegrave Road, Teddington. Speaker: Chief Inspector Champneys, of the Women's Auxiliary Police Service. Subject: "The need for Women Police."

Wednesday, April 30th, at 8 p.m. Hampstead Branch Meeting (open to non-members), at the Isis Club, 79, Fitzjohn's Avenue, N.W.3. (by kind permission of Mrs. Harverson). Speaker: Mrs. Miall Smith, B.A. Subject: "Poor Law, and Reform."

Monday, May 5th, at 3 p.m. Hampstead Branch Meeting (Members only), at 62, High Street, N.W.3. (by kind permission of Miss Goodliffe and Miss Vibert).

Friday, May 16th, at 3 p.m. "Fair" Sub-Committee, at 144, High Holborn W.C.1.

PROVINCES.

Monday, March 31st, at 3.30 p.m. Hastings. Annual Meeting of Members, at Glenroyde Hotel.

Monday, April 7th, at 8 p.m. Middlesbrough. Meeting at Suffrage Café to discuss Conference Report.

Tuesday, April 8th, at 7.30 p.m. Portsmouth. Public Meeting at 2, Kent Road. Speaker: Miss Eva Clark. Subject: "The new Children's Charter."

OTHER SOCIETIES.

Sunday, March 30th, at 6.30 p.m. Kingston Church of Humanity, 39, Orchard Road, Kingston-on-Thames. Speaker: Mrs. Tanner. Subject: "Galsworthy—Novelist and Feminist."

Wednesday, April 2nd, at 8 p.m. Women's League of Union, Oak Room, Kingsway Hall, W.C. Speaker: The Rev. Mary Collins. Subject: "The importance of our Social Relationships."

BRANCH NOTES.

HAMPSTEAD.

There was a large attendance of members at the meeting held on March 19th at 51, Willow Road, N.W.3 (by kind permission of Mrs. Harvey James). Miss Lyndon presided. The resolutions and amendments for the Conference were voted for, also nominees for N.E.C. and the Political and Secretarial Reports were read. It was decided that the Branch should again undertake the Handkerchief, Soap, Scent, and White Elephant Stalls at the Green, White, and Gold Fair at the Central Hall on November 28th and 29th. Miss Goodliffe, Miss Lyndon, and Miss Vibert undertook to take charge of the Stall. The date of the Annual Meeting of the Branch was fixed for Monday, June 2nd, at 3 p.m., and the next Members' Meeting for Monday, May 5th, at 3 p.m. Miss Goodliffe and Miss Vibert kindly giving the use of their house for the afternoon. Mrs. James kindly entertained those present to tea.

Mrs. Miall Smith, former member of the St. Pancras Board of Guardians, will address the Branch on "Poor Law and Reform," on the evening of April 30th, at the Isis Club (by kind permission of Mrs. Harverson). Members and friends are asked to do their utmost to be present on this occasion.

(Hon. Sec.) Miss E. BERRY, 16, Denning Road, N.W.3.

WALLASEY.

An excellently attended meeting was held at the Town Hall, by the Wallasey Branch of the Women's Freedom League, on Thursday, March 20th, to hear Alderman John Airey, J.P., speak on the subject of "The Capital Levy." A most interesting discussion arose after the lecture. Alderman Airey thought that the most suitable name for the capital levy would be "war redemption." The proposal of the levy was that the net personal wealth of every citizen should be ascertained, and that a portion, according to an agreed scale, should be handed to the State, and applied for the redemption of debt. The statement of his wealth as made by each citizen would, of course, be thoroughly investigated, as in the case of the present income tax, readjustments would be made where necessary, and penalties imposed where money had been concealed or withheld. The income tax was an annual recurring tax, but the levy would differ, inasmuch as it would be imposed once and for always. The levy was often denounced as robbery, but it could be safely said that there was never any tax imposed which was not objected to; in fact, religion and taxation had been the cause of all the wars in history. To-day, when a man died,

inquiries were made concerning his possessions and the extent and value of his wealth, certain expenses were deducted, and on the balance the death duties were paid. The capital levy proposed to do with a living man what was now done after his death. It was only when the capital levy was approached from the point of view of self-interest it appeared disagreeable. When regarded with good will, all objections became imaginary. One of the objections raised was that of the form of wealth. If in cash, the matter was fairly simple. The big problem was in the form of estates and capital. But there were two methods applicable to a man who had all his possessions in land. He could raise a mortgage on it, and out of the income could spread the payments over a period of years, and thus pay in instalments instead of in a lump sum. Or he could pay in kind by transferring land to the Government, to be used at their discretion. Everyone would have the option of paying in a lump sum or over a period of years; the effect would be the same on the Government. People said, "Why not tax companies?" This would probably mean taxing the shareholders unequally. Such a position would be absurd. Five years ago he had advocated the capital levy, and, if it had been accepted then, the country would now have been vastly wealthy. This was not the time for a capital levy. The country was in the trough of a slump in trade, and the levy would be inapplicable until they had climbed out of it. But here was the cure which was wanted by those who groaned under the intolerable burden of taxation, and the people who opposed the capital levy were really the enemies of that which they so jealously preserved.

[N.B.—We regret to hear that Mrs. Andain was not successful in her recent contest of St. Hilary Ward, Wallasey.]

(Hon. Sec.) Mrs. M. ANDAIN, 22, Cromer Drive, Wallasey.

THAMES VALLEY.

By the kind permission of Mrs. Foster Lumb, a Public Meeting, presided over by Miss Double, was held at "Holmwood," Waldegrave Road, Teddington, last Friday evening, and was preceded by a Branch Meeting. Mrs. Mustard, in a delightful speech, gave some very interesting reminiscences of the struggle for the vote in pre-suffrage days, and urged that women should work with all their power for equal political enfranchisement with men. The young women were as necessary to their country in time of peace as they were in time of war, and they should certainly have an equal say with young men in the affairs of their country. In dealing with unemployment amongst women, Mrs. Mustard pointed out that 70 per cent. of the women in the labour market were under 30 years of age, and therefore voteless. She insisted that there was some connection between that fact and the further fact that, in all the schemes devised by the Government to give employment to men, no provision was made to give employment to workless women. The following resolution, moved by Mrs. Mustard and seconded by Miss Underwood, was passed unanimously, and copies were sent by the Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the local Member, Sir Philip Pilditch, M.P.:—"That this meeting of the Thames Valley Branch of the Women's Freedom League calls upon the Government either to give immediate and full facilities to Mr. Adamson's Equal Franchise Bill now before Parliament, or themselves to bring in at once a simple Equal Franchise measure, and pass it through all its stages into law, so that women shall be able to vote at the age of 21, and on the same terms as men, at the next General Election." (Hon. Sec.) Miss BREWER, 15, Fleece Road, Ditton Hill, Surbiton.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

Shop Assistants' Wages.

The Times reports that at the Woolwich Police Court, last Monday, a girl, 18 years of age, was placed on probation for six months on a charge of stealing 1s. 5d. belonging to her employers, Messrs. F. W. Woolworth & Co., Ltd. Detective Batch said the girl was employed at the firm's Hare Street, Woolwich, branch as a "half-timer." She received 12s. 6d. for 40 hours' work, and had to pay 4s. a week in fares to and from Erith. The Magistrate (Mr. Tassell), to the branch manager: "Is that how Messrs. Woolworth pay their assistants?" The manager explained that the firm did not work it out that way. Girls (he said) worked afternoons and evenings for 12s. 6d., and subsequently received 25s. a week. The Magistrate: "I don't care how you work it out. Here is the result" (pointing to the girl in the dock).

Married Women Teachers.

Norfolk Education Committee, by 15 votes to 7, has given the Education Authority power to call upon women teachers to resign upon marriage. No more married women are to be appointed assistant teachers, except in special circumstances. In the debate on this question, one member pointed to the fact that married women were in Parliament; but Archdeacon Buckland gravely reminded the Education Committee that a woman's first duty was to her husband and children, if they were ill, and she could only carry out her duties as teacher by neglecting them. We wonder how long men will continue to think it is their business to lecture women on their duties and to prescribe women's sphere of usefulness?

BRITISH OVERSEAS COMMITTEE.

For Our Wembley Pavilion.

Whist Drive at 75, Hereford Road, Westbourne Grove (by kind permission of Miss Hoe), April 1st, 8 p.m. Tickets 2s. 6d., including refreshments, from Miss D. D. Solomon, 64, Pattison Road, N.W.2.

Jumble Sale at Bosworth Hall, Bosworth Road, Kensal Road, North Kensington, on April 7th. Goods to be sent to the Caretaker, Bosworth Hall.

FRIDAY,
MARCH 28,
1924.

THE VOTE

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NOTICES.

FELLOWSHIP SERVICES.—Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1. Sunday, March 30th. 3.30. Music, Poetry, Lecture, Dr. Dearmer. 6.30. Miss Maude Royden.

PROFESSIONAL Woman desires post as travelling companion, would escort invalid or children anywhere for expenses and commission.

INCOME TAX RECOVERED AND ADJUSTED. Consult H. M. BAKER, the only woman Income Tax Expert, 275, High Holborn. Telephone: Holborn 377.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

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THE PIONEER CLUB has reopened at 12, Cavendish Place. Entrance fee in abeyance *pro tem*. Town Members £5 5s.; Country and Professional £4 4s.

ISIS CLUB, 79, Fitzjohn's Avenue (2 minutes Hampstead Tube Station), Magnificent Reception Rooms. Central heating. Sunny bedrooms. Sundry soil. Lectures, dancing, listening-in. Telephone: Hampstead 2869.

SOUTH COAST.—Lady, on Exhibition route, wishes to exchange her four-room London flat for similar accommodation at any South Coast resort for the months of July and August.—Apply No. 40, **THE VOTE**, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.

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TO LET.—Bed-sitting room, furnished, with or without attendance. After Easter. Comfortable.—1, **WELLINGTON AVENUE**, Westcliff-on-Sea.

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